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## 9. Appendices

### 9.1. Appendix A: interview guide

**Estimated interview time:** 45-60 min

**Criteria to be checked before the interview:** The respondent works in marketing and makes active use of AI

#### Description of the research

Research question: The impact of artificial intelligence on marketing.

The purpose is to analyse the impacts of AI on marketing with its recent mass adoption. The research aims to understand if and how AI may have significant impacts on marketers and explain the impacts in as much details as possible.

## Interview questions

### Section 1: Personal and organizational information

1. Can you introduce yourself and describe your current role in marketing?
2. How long have you been working in marketing/this company, and what significant changes have you observed over the years?

### Section 2: open ended questions

1. How would you define artificial intelligence in the context of marketing?
2. Can you describe some specific AI tools and technologies you currently use or have used in your marketing activities?
3. How has artificial intelligence impacted your marketing strategies and campaign effectiveness?
  - (Are there specific areas where AI has made a significant impact?)
  - (Have you noticed any impact since you started using it? Has it changed your work?)
4. Can you discuss some challenges you faced when integrating AI into your marketing strategies?
  - (How have you addressed these challenges?)
  - (Have you also faced successes?)
  - (Are there any limitations of AI in marketing that you have encountered? How did you address them?)

5. How has AI changed the way you approach market research and customer segmentation?
  - (Have you noticed any changes in customer feedback or satisfaction due to AI-driven marketing efforts?)
6. How has AI changed the way you analyze and utilize customer data?
7. How do you see AI affecting the creative aspects of marketing, such as content creation and design?
  - (Has AI played a role in content creation and management in your organization? If so, how?)
8. What impact has AI had on marketing analytics and the measurement of campaign effectiveness?
9. What opportunities do you believe AI presents for the marketing industry?
10. How do you see the role of AI in marketing evolving over the next five years?
11. Do you think there are any ethical considerations or risks associated with using AI in marketing?
12. What advice would you give to other marketing professionals considering adopting AI technologies?
13. Is there anything else about the impact of AI on marketing that you think is important to discuss that we haven't covered yet?

End of interview.

## 9.2. Appendix B: interview transcriptions

### 9.2.1. Interview 1

Date & time: 01/07/2024 11:00

[Interviewer]

I'll hop over immediately to the first question, which is, first of all, for personal and organisational information. If you could first introduce yourself and describe your current role in marketing or your current role in general.

[Participant]

Yeah, thank you. So my name is Expert 1. I'm a co-founder at Imagine Studio.

And we help organisations in Europe and the Middle East with driving digital innovation. And next to that, I have two kids from the alpha generation who are 12 and 9 years old and also a newborn who is just close to one month old. So they keep me young and energised for the future.

[Interviewer]

I can imagine. So how long have you been working in marketing or in this sector? And what significant changes have you observed over the years?

[Participant]

I started my career in market research in 2007. And I have been in marketing domains and business innovation since then. I think the main evolution has been, first of all, of course, the entrance of the internet, which shaped the marketing transformation in, I would say, the 2000s, where businesses had to switch from doing only communication through traditional channels like television, radio, magazines, and newspapers to online channels.

Then came social media with Facebook in 2004 and Twitter in 2006. And then, of course, today all the other channels, which connected the people behind the machines. And then later on came the switch to mobile with the rise of the iPhone in 2007 and the first tablets in 2010.

And I think now we're entering, indeed, this new paradigm shift where AI, again, will change how we interact and how content is created. So I think those are the four main transformations. First one, the internet.

Then came social media. Third wave was mobile. And then the fourth wave now is AI.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. Thank you very much. We'll then hope over to the core of this interview, the open-ended questions about the research.

So first of all, how would you define artificial intelligence in the context of marketing?

[Participant]

I think it will be a co-pilot for some aspects of marketing, where it will help to create, to brainstorm, to generate ideas, to make things better, to provide different angles. And I think it

will act as an autonomous agent over the longer time, where it will be able to perform certain tasks in an automated way. So I always say it's augmentation and automation.

I think those are the two dimensions where it will transform marketing.

[Interviewer]

Okay, very interesting. And can you describe some specific AI tools and technology you currently use or have used in your marketing activities?

[Participant]

Yeah, so for me, there are three levels. The first one is the generic tools, like the GPT models from OpenAI. Then there is Claude from Anthropic, Gemini from Google, Grok from X.com. And there will be potentially some others. Like in Europe, we only have Mistral, but it's also one that can compete with the American models. Then there are on the, I would say, level two, more domain-specific tools, which are for the different departments and organisations, like finance, IT, legal, customer service, and then also marketing.

And within that, you have tools for, for example, image generation, like Midjourney or Flare, which can help you to do product shots, or Luma with the prompting to video or even image to video, and Runway, which is doing more or less the same. Then also for music and jingles, there is Suno and Udio, which help to create the audio part of things. So those are, I would say, the main ones.

And then Elevenlabs, which is also quite interesting for synthetic voices. So I would say those are the main ones. And then the third level for me are what I would call custom bots that companies can generate based on their own data.

So the first level are the generic tools. Second level are the domain-specific ones, like I've mentioned. And then the third one are bots that you can create, for example, on the Azure OpenAI Cloud, where you can really train an AI algorithm on your own custom marketing data or customer data.

[Interviewer]

Okay. And have you used, because it's a very, very large list, do you use or, yeah, do you actually implement all of those tools in your activities?

[Participant]

Yeah, I do, yeah.

[Interviewer]

Okay.

[Participant]

Indeed, yeah.

[Interviewer]

So that, okay, now to the next questions about the impact. So how has AI impacted your marketing strategies and campaign effectiveness?

[Participant]

Well, I think it's, first of all, helping to take away parts of the boring work, because mostly in marketing, you have like a general idea of where you want to go and what you want to create, but then you still need to make it happen. For example, if you need to create a social media plan, you know in generic terms where you want to go, but AI can really help to map that out. It can help to create more in-depth insights on a customer or creating cohorts for your social media campaigns and come up with ideas on how to reach those.

It also helps to, yeah, of course, generate the right keywords and also helps to write out the social media posts in itself. So creating a LinkedIn post or writing a tweet storm, writing a blog article to read the execution. You still hear me?

[Interviewer]

Yeah, yeah, and there was a little cutoff, but I hear you now.

[Participant]

Okay. So it's really hanging from the, yeah, you still hear me?

[Interviewer]

Yeah, there's a small cutoffs. I don't know if it's my internet, but go ahead, I'll tell you if it's worse.

[Participant]

Okay. Yeah, so it's helping from the ideation up till the planning over the execution and then also the analysing part. But I would say the analysing is mostly still the human thing for me.

It's in the ideation creation parts that I'm using those tools the most and also where I see our clients using it the most.

[Interviewer]

So in content generation mainly?

[Participant]

Mainly in content generation, yeah, but also like coming up with ideas. So I call it the second brain. I really think it's helping to come up with out of the box ideas or different perspectives, more variations.

So yeah, it's acting as an execution partner and as a second brain partner.

[Interviewer]

So that leads me actually to another question I had, but you already partly answered this is, how do you see AI affecting the creative aspects of marketing such as content creation and design?

[Participant]

Yeah, I think it will do most of that, especially on the longer term. So we are now 19 months since ChatGPT was launched. So I always say we are still in AI kindergarten.

It just came out. So yes, it's still not perfect. Yes, there are still things that we do better as humans, but it will take away all of that in the longer period.

So I think in terms of content generation, that AI will do probably 95% of the job. And then also the translations to other languages. And then, as I said, I think that the next step will be the AI agents that will be able to speak to one another, where for example, an agent that is creating your social media plan and posts will be able to speak to your agents that is using your website to an agent that is doing the keyword planning.

So I think on the longer future, it will automate the full funnel where now you still have to copy paste, right? If I create something on ChatGPT, I have to paste it to LinkedIn. I have to copy that piece of content.

If I want to my blog, then I need to generate some keywords, but still add them manually. And I think that will all be automated in the longer term.

[Interviewer]

Okay, very interesting. And to hop over then to the actual integration of AI, can you discuss some of the challenges you faced when integrating AI into your marketing strategies?

[Participant]

The channel today, or sorry, the channel challenge, that was the word, challenge today is still that you need to, of course, tune it to your brand DNA, to your tone of voice. And I still think the systems today are not perfect for that yet. So they still work on quite generic terms.

So you still have to adapt quite a bit and make sure it's fitting your strategy and the other content that you're putting out. So it also still has no large memory capabilities. So it doesn't know all the things that you're creating on the different channels.

And I think once it starts to integrate your tone of voice, your brand DNA, your entire strategy, and it has memory on all the things that it's creating, I think it will get much better. So today it's still a bit ad hoc copy-pasting, but I think in the foreseeable future, I think this will be in the coming three years, it will start to create from your brand DNA, from your guidelines, from your customer persona, et cetera, et cetera. Where now you still have to do a lot of those things multiple times, or you still have to manually adapt it to your own brand voice and customer profile, and et cetera.

So, and I think that's still where you need to tweak it today.

[Interviewer]

Yeah, I agree. I have experience with that too in my internship. So, okay.

How has AI changed the way you approach market research and customer segmentation?

[Participant]

Well, I have a background in market research because I started my career there. And so that was in 2007 till 2011. Yeah, we had to create manually the questionnaires.

We had to create manually the conversation texts that we were using for focus groups. Now you can just do that with the push of a button. If you say, okay, I'm researching for Kraft Heinz.

They're bringing on the market a new bottle of ketchup. Give me all the questions I could ask in a focus group. Think about some projective techniques.

Think about icebreakers to bring people in the mood. And it will just spit it out in a few seconds where those were things that we were working on for two days to create those questionnaires or those conversation texts. So it will help on that part.

Then on the actual research, probably we'll still research humans, but there will also be synthetic data and AI respondents. That will be able to act as a certain persona. So you would be able to say, this is a 60 year old American.

Then I have a 30 year old Spanish girl who is doing this type of job, et cetera. And give me how she would answer or react to this bottle of ketchup. And it will be able to do so.

So I think we will go to some kind of blended market research or the real humans and AI respondents. Then of course, doing the analysis. Yeah, we had to work in SPSS and crunching Excel files.

I think those days are over. It will be all AI that will do the analysis from different angles, much more accurate, much more in depth. It will also take over all the translations.

So we were making money as a research company. For example, making the English questionnaire and then sending it over to a translator agency that did the translation to Polish and Spanish. And we were making money on that.

So that money will also be gone because AI will translate all of those things. So I think in the full funnel of market research, it will take over a lot. Only the human real answers will still need to be coordinated.

And you still will have to find the people that are willing to answer questionnaires. If you're not getting enough from your synthetic or AI respondents. But I think in market research or creating the questionnaire, coming up with the concepts that you want to put forward, doing the analysis, doing the translations, making the reports, it will eat away 95% of that full funnel.

[Interviewer]

Okay, so from what I hear, could it then actually be fully automated from creating the questions, having an AI persona answer it and AI analyse it? Could this be like one press of a button and your market research is done?

[Participant]

Yes, I think that will be very realistic in the coming years. I think for the coming two years, it will mainly help on creating the questionnaires and doing the analysis. I think there will be still quite some manual work to connect with the client, of course, checking if they like the questions, seeing if the report that comes out, it will still need to be tweaked in PowerPoint because it will not be perfect yet.

But most of the graphs and data will be there. And then I think we will still rely mostly on human respondents for now. But I think that's the coming two years.

If you look in the coming 10 years, I think 95% of that market research funnel will be fully automated.

[Interviewer]

Okay, very interesting. Now about the measurement of your campaign, what impact has AI had on your marketing analytics and the measurement of your campaign effectiveness?

[Participant]

That's a difficult question. I have a bit less experience on that front, I would say, because we are mostly into the branding side of things and building both personal brand and company brands. So not so much in the conversion side of things and sales or in-depth analytics.

But I think my assumption is that the content will be better. There will be both qualitative and quantitative. So there will be more and it will be better because you will have more options.

It will be better tweaked to your customer persona. It will have better keywords and more complete keywords. And that obviously in your analytics, AI will help you to understand better the reports that you get.

Also in terms of products that you offer them on your website, you will have better content descriptions. You will be able to detect errors more quickly. So I think it will optimise that whole funnel in a big way.

The question will be obviously how to stand out because my assumption is also that AI will become a commodity. Every player in the industry will use it. So all the brands, all the competitors, all the people in organisations will obviously use those tools and so forth.

So the question is how you will stand out. And my assumption there is that if you talk about analytics and so forth, I think the real trick will be how you can build community. I think that's the real answer to the whole equation, which is not copyable and not creatable with AI.

You cannot create a community now with AI. You can address people with AI. You can create content with AI.

But creating the trust between people and creating that group feeling is something that is still being done by humans. And I think that will last for at least our lives. Maybe in 200 years, it will look different.

But I think in our lifetime, building community will still be driven by trust and trust is created between people. And I think that's where AI will help to create content for the community. But the community feeling in itself will be driven by people.

And so I think it's a bit of a broader answer to your question on analytics. But I think the real output for me is how you can build community because that will be the ultimate competitive advantage that is not easily copyable and is also not doable with AI. Because I think now it's still a competitive advantage if you use AI because you're faster than the competition, better, more perfect in your content.

You can address more cohorts. You can just do more with less. But over time, everybody will adopt it.

And everybody will have AI specialists and the right tool sets and so forth. So I think in the longer perspective, community will be the ultimate battleground.

[Interviewer]

Okay, very interesting. Next question is, what opportunities do you believe AI presents for the marketing industry?

[Participant]

Yeah, the opportunity is to really transform the business and to take away the executional part. Which should leave more room for the truly unique elements that marketing always have to bring to the table. Like how do you address a certain group of people to accomplish your ambitions?

Where now, obviously, marketing is a lot of executional work. It's shooting the campaign. It's reaching the influencer.

It's creating the content for social media. It's looking at Google to see what the analytics are bringing. So there's a lot of execution after the actual idea phase and the actual creative part. And I think the creative part will get more room because AI will bring more space for that as you're leaving a lot of the executional part to the systems. So I think that's the real opportunity where you really can think, how are we going to set ourselves apart? And how can we devote creativity in our products, our market penetration and our campaigns instead of having 95% now in execution?

If you look at advertising agencies, most people are just making stuff happen. And I think AI will take away most of that, which is also at the same time the challenge. I think we need to be realistic that advertising agencies will have a hard time to transform on such a short period because AI will be a comet in their universe that will shake up things like we've never seen before.

So it's an opportunity, but also a challenge because they're making money on the execution. And AI will do most of that work. So the question is how you can transform that volume of work to be more devoted to the creative side of things and the relationship building of things.

That will be the opportunity. So you will have more room for that. But at the same time, the challenge is how are you going to compensate for the loss and invoicing on the execution part?

[Interviewer]

Okay, I see. We're entering now the last two questions and you already talked about it pretty much through the interview. But how do you see the role of AI in marketing evolving over the next five years?

[Participant]

Yeah, so I think it's now ad hoc. The tools are not connected and they're all working on one element. And I think the next phase is definitely the automation where it's, yeah, like you have funnels already now in marketing that work together.

I think that's what we will see with the AI platforms that they will start to connect and do the work collaboratively. Where now you use ChatGPT to, for example, create a questionnaire, but then you still have to go to another tool to transform it, to translate it, to ask the question to your respondents. And I think AI will automate that full funnel.

So the next phase is definitely the AI agents in the next five years.

[Interviewer]

Okay. You already talked about the AI respondents in the market research. And that's kind of related to my next question is do you think there are any ethical consideration or risks associated with using AI in marketing?

[Participant]

Yeah, there's just one thing that I forgot to mention is of course the boom of AI influencers. So I think we'll see more, but that's nothing new, I guess. You will see many more of those synthetic personas that are either the mascot of a brand or influencers that are now being created already at scale.

So there will be disruption for the real influencers. Because if you have to send somebody to Dubai now, it's costing you quite a bit of money and those influencers are people, which means that they have a certain DNA, which sometimes is good, but sometimes it's very demanding and annoying. And I think we will see many more AI influencers in the coming five years as well.

So I think the social media will be dominated by virtual AI influencers that attract a certain consumer base. And I think that that's definitely something to look into. And I believe that maybe agencies can create those AI influencers and use that as a unique opportunity to sell something to clients if they can build an audience.

So I think that's definitely also an evolution that is happening. Then your last question was, sorry, can you repeat it?

[Interviewer]

Well, it actually also relates to what you just said about the AI influencers. You already talked about the AI respondents in the market research. And the question was, what advice would you give?

Sorry, do you think ethical consideration or risks associated with using AI in marketing?

[Participant]

Yeah, obviously. But I think the ethical part for me is transcending marketing. I think it's related to society, government and institutions that really look into that.

Because yeah, obviously there is bias. So if you say, give me a CEO, it will mostly give you a male instead of a female. And then some of the systems will be the opposite where they're called too woke between brackets where they will go the other side.

So I think that will be something to take into account like how unbiased is the data in those AI platforms. But I think that's not the role of a marketer to think about that. But I think

that's the discussion that goes on a higher level, what the ethical implementations are, implications.

Also on copyright. Yeah, obviously we need to think about it. But it's again, a discussion that is really out of our hands.

We can have an opinion, but it's the rule makers that need to decide whether open AI has scraped the data of the New York Times, yes or no. For us as users, I think, yeah, we are not breaching copyrights, but maybe those systems have done that. So if you look at platforms like suno.ai that is creating music, a lot of people in the music business say that they scraped music artists and that they're breaching copyrights. But we as users are not doing that. They maybe did so, but we don't know. And it's also not in our hands to decide if they did or not.

So I think it's a discussion that transcends marketing as a profession, I would say. But I think you need to be aware of what ethical implications there could be. And I think you need to be aware of the bias that might be in the data.

But for the rest, I think the ethics are transcending our roles. And I think it's a discussion that needs to be held on another level and not just in marketing, because it's the same for IT. If you make code, it's also code that is being scraped from people that made that code before.

So it's the same discussion there. Same for legal. If you think about contracts, obviously the clauses that AI can generate are made from clauses that it has absorbed in the data.

So did they do that in a legal way? Most likely not. But again, it's transcending the different verticals in a business.

So I think the only thing that needs to be taken into account is not sharing, of course, customer data into the open models, because then you know that you're using data. And for GDPR reasons, you need to rest assured that you're not sharing any sensitive data of customers into open models. So I think that's something to take into account.

But honestly, I think my two cents are those are marginal discussions that will solve itself out of our hands. So we can do very philosophical discussions about that. But I think it's up to the governments to decide how they play upon that.

And it's up to us to just make sure that we are not using customer data in feeding the models if the customer has not given their consent to do so. But I don't see that as a showstopper personally, just like digital and social had their limitations that we had to think about things. But I also hope that as Europe, that we are not running in circles around that issue, because the Americans and the Asians will continue to push forward.

And we already have too much rules in Europe. So let's hope that we use this opportunity as an advantage instead of trying to be the rulemaker of the world and not having any real innovative businesses, because now we only have Mistral, which is the only one in Europe that really makes a difference on a global scale. And it's already clear that some players like Apple are not willing to roll out their Apple intelligence because they think it's breaching European rules.

So yeah, I hope that it's good to have rules to be clear. And I'm supporting, of course, any ethical considerations, but it's going beyond our heads. And I think as marketeers, you need to think about your specific job to happen and follow the rules that are in place.

But I don't think that it's up to us to make the rules or to think about the ethical constraints. Let's play into the rules and the frameworks that are in place and just make sure on a practical level that we're not breaching any data that is coming from customers where they did not give consent. But that's a very personal opinion.

But I just hope that marketeers don't lose themselves in philosophical discussions where they could be executing and taking and grasping this opportunity.

[Interviewer]

Very interesting too. Yeah, it's beyond marketing. It's from higher up indeed.

Another question, and I think you're very well placed to answer this, is what advice would you give to other marketing professionals considering to adopt AI technologies?

[Participant]

Yeah, for me, so it's a tool. It's a tool that is going to do a large part of the job that were invoicable before. So if you take the job of a farmer, if you see that the tractor is coming, then you need to understand that you won't be able to invoice work that was being done on a horse or with your hands.

So I think it's very clear that the tractor is moving at light speed into the industry and that it will eat away a large part of where money was made. And so the question is, where will you be unique? So I think that AI is now on top of the hype cycle and you need to educate yourself.

So I always say, for example, in summer, spend at least 25 hours of your time using AI instead of reading about it. So use the tools, try to create with it, and then you see what the up and downsides are of it. But at the same time, consider that this will not be the ultimate battleground because it will become a commodity.

Everybody will use it. Everybody will adopt it. So you need to find where you will bring unique added value.

And I think that will be the role of a marketer in general, because otherwise the profession will be gone or the big volume will be gone. It will be only the top 5% that will remain and oversee kind of the efforts that AI systems are doing. But I think it's up to us to redefine where a marketer is adding human added value and where as a brand and a company you can be unique if all your competitive brands are using AI.

So imagine your Nike. Yeah, obviously you know that Adidas will use AI as well. So now maybe if you're a bit faster than the competition, you can do more and grasp the opportunity by being better, just like in the early days of online, social media, e-commerce.

But in the longer run, it will be a commodity and everybody will use it. So the question is, how are you going to be better than Adidas? If you're a marketer at Nike, what will be your unique human added source?

That's, I think, the million dollar question for the future.

[Interviewer]

Okay. Yeah, then we're pretty much done with the main questions. I just wanted to ask at last if there's anything else about the impact of AI on marketing that you think is important to discuss that we might not have covered.

[Participant]

Yeah, there's maybe one thing is that people in marketing often believe, of course, that they are more creative than others and especially more creative than machines. And I think that's bullshit. I think machines are now already more creative than a lot of average human beings.

If you ask it to write a poem or a haiku or create a visual for an advertisement, it's already better than I am, but I'm not the most creative person in the world. But marketeers sometimes tend to believe that they're uniquely creative, like it's on the balance with artists where they think like, oh, I'm so creative that a machine will never be able to take that over. And I think that's absolutely not true.

So I think that could be a huge pitfall that they think that they can outsmart the machines on the level of creativity. And I think that could be a huge, huge danger because it's already now more creative than a lot of people. And I think it's coming for all the creativity that we can think about.

And also on the level of emotions, sometimes we think those machines have no emotion, but studies show that they can show emotion, although they don't feel them, but those machines can show emotion. They can be more empathetic than us. And that has already been proven in studies.

So let's not think that we are smarter, more creative, or more emotional than those machines. I think we need to be very humble and understand that 19 months after the launch of ChatGPT, it's already outperforming us on many levels. And that's a sign of where it will go in the next decades, and especially in the next 30 years.

So we need to find other areas where we are better than the machines. And if we hold on to our current beliefs, that might be a huge pitfall. I'm not saying that human creativity will have no place anymore or human emotion, but in many parts, it will be more efficient to use AI for creativity than humans.

For example, Toys R Us just launched a full campaign video in the US. You probably saw it. So it's already happening.

Those are campaigns that would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars that were thought about humans in a brainstorm room and then some workshops and then shooting and then blah, blah, blah, and a script. It's all gone. It's all gone.

This is just the first instance of where it happens. But in an economic climate where there is less money, where there is inflation, where salaries are high, and in a world where AI is already outperforming us on many levels of creativity, even if it's not fully beating us, a lot of companies will go for the AI system because it's more efficient and more cost effective. So

therefore, I really think that the alarm signal is to find where we are unique and where we bring added value.

And I think for that, we need to let go of our beliefs that we are more creative than the machines. And that's something where marketers might struggle because they consider themselves often as artists and that might be a danger.

[Interviewer]

Yeah, it's very interesting about the creativity part. Do you then believe then that human creativity will actually disappear if the models can outperform us or will it become more of an assistant to augment our creativity by combining the forces?

[Participant]

Yeah, I think in the short term, it might be augmenting, but I think on the longer term, it will outperform us. But that doesn't mean that we cannot have the joy of creativity. I think AI will be better at creating music.

It will be better at projecting what will be a viral hit and what not. It will be better at creating a campaign spot that will answer the ambitions better than a human can do, or at least at the same level. But I think in many cases better.

But that doesn't mean that there is no place anymore for human creativity or no joy anymore to do that. But will you be paid for it at the same scale as today? No, that's for me crystal clear.

So therefore, I believe that if you take the four dimensions, knowledge, I think we are already surpassed. The second dimension, creativity, I think we're already being surpassed. Emotions, we're very close to being surpassed.

They did studies comparing AI with doctors and AI shows more empathy to patients than a doctor. So it's clear that we will be surpassed. It will have tonality, understanding, nuance.

And for many people, it will be much more empathetic than human beings. And so the last frontier for me is building relationships. And I think that's still something uniquely human.

And therefore, my answer to everything that is happening is that community building is the only thing where we still make the difference. Community building in a digital space, but also in a physical space. I think that's still where we excel compared to the AI machines.

And if I would be a full-time marketer, I would try to find solutions in that space.

[Interviewer]

Okay, very interesting. That's pretty much it for all of my questions. So I wanted to thank you for all of this information.

### 9.2.2. Interview 2

Date & time: 01/07/2024 15:00

[Interviewer]

So I'll then start first with personal and organisational information. So first of all, can you introduce yourself and describe your current role in marketing?

[Participant]

Okay, so my name is Expert 2. I'm from Charleroi. I worked in Charleroi since the beginning of my 20s.

After a degree in marketing, I started my company about computing. It's a passion since I'm, yeah, at the end of my childhood, I was one of the first to get a computer and internet. So I'm born in 1989 and I got my first computer at the age of four, I believe.

It was still under Windows 3.1, something that not a lot of people remember without internet because internet was not available then. And yeah, and so I, you know, I discovered internet at the beginning, but at the same time, it was not common. So I have seen the, yeah, the society without internet and with internet.

And so, yeah, it was really a passion. And after my degree in marketing, I started a company that was at first, you know, a running event and everything. So I was doing a promotion on the internet, Facebook and everything, community management before it was called community management.

And then I decided to provide what I did for myself to clients. And yeah, bit by bit, yeah, it become bigger. My company was called Citrusio in the past.

I ran Citrusio for almost 15 years. Then for some personal reason, I was away for a little bit of time. But now I'm restarting the company with a new name called Incroyable.

So it's not a typo, it's on the purpose. And aside my own company, I was a teacher in high school for, not high school, it's in English, it's college. Yeah, for web marketing in HeLa, what they call Louvain, I know, in La Louviere. And also I was the director of head of school for B-Code during one year. And so I don't know if you know B-Code?

[Interviewer]

No.

[Participant]

No, B-Code is like MolenGeek, maybe?

[Interviewer]

No. Yeah, that's Hackathon, no?

[Participant]

Yeah, they do Hackathon. And in fact, B-Code provides computing and development, teaching for people that have some trouble with, they don't have a high graduation and

everything. So yeah, we try to integrate them in the work market by teaching them development.

And yeah, so it's a few of my experience.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. You already partly answered the question, but how long have you been working in marketing? And what significant changes have you observed over the years?

[Participant]

So for a long, yeah, I start my own event, I was like 16 years old. And it was kind of marketing that I didn't heard about marketing at that time, but it was that. But for me, the most significant change is that, you know, marketing was about, yeah, psychology, philosophy, understanding customer.

Yeah, okay. When the marketing developed in the last centuries, okay, you have radio broadcast, television broadcast. So we say a lot that marketing was just sending one message to the masses.

But it's true for the big company, but it's not so true for a lot of other companies that were running marketing also. So we have, yeah, more and more understanding of the human behaviour. But then with internet, it was more, yeah, how to say that?

How to explain that? You know, it was personalised, but without, I don't know how to explain that. That is in English, you know, I have my idea in French.

[Interviewer]

Yeah, if you have it, if you really can't find it, just say it in French.

[Participant]

Yeah, I speak English, you know, regularly, but not for so philosophical idea. Yeah, so it's paradoxal because we had a lot of way to target the customer with precision, but it was not, I don't know how to explain that. Because we lost the humanity in a certain way.

So that's marketing on screen. But no, I feel that we are getting back to the, yeah, to the humanity, to the sense that there is a human behind every screen. And maybe because we had that development of the marketing and also the technology.

And yeah, we were able to target, you know, a very small group of people. But now we can target every individual. So even if we were targeting small group, it was still group.

But now we can target every individual in a different way. And so, yeah, that was my idea. At first, we had to personalise for everyone.

Then it became groups. And now it's again individual.

[Interviewer]

Okay, interesting. We'll then head over to the core of this interview with the open-ended questions. And my first question to you is, how would you define artificial intelligence in the context of marketing?

[Participant]

A game changer, but I believe it's not only for the context of marketing. It's a tool, by the way. Yeah, it's a tool, you know, it's not...

Yeah, it's a massive tool. It's like, you know, the apparition of electricity or steam energy before. Maybe like the writing, I don't know.

We will see in the future. And we will certainly not be there, still there to see that. But yeah, it's a huge game changer, but it's still a tool.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. Can you describe some specific AI tools and technologies that you currently use or have used in your marketing activities?

[Participant]

So, you know, we didn't scale with AI still. But it's the project with incroyAible. But after looking...

So I will begin with what I tried first. I didn't want for chatGPT so far. I went directly to Gemini from Google because I'm just like Google addict, you know.

And so Gemini, but the advanced version, it's exactly like ChatGPT. Then I went a little bit deeper with Vertex AI. So it's when you go to the Google Cloud Console, you have the tool.

It's like Gemini. It's Gemini, the LLM Gemini or Gemini in English. But you have way more parameter that you can personalise.

But I stopped my subscription for Gemini for Vertex AI. And now the only tool I use is Dust.tt. It's a French startup. And what is very nice with that is you have within one user interface.

You have ChatGPT, you have Gemini, you have Cloud, you have Mistral. And what is very nice, you can send a request to all of them, for example. And you will see the answer of each one.

But then you can also configure your own bot. So you put your system instruction for your bot. You choose if you want to use GPT-4 or other.

And then you give a name to your chatbot. And so when you are in a discussion, for example, I have a bot that will make my note clear. But I have another bot that will write an email for me.

But so I can, I just say vocally myself. Then I ask the bot to clear my notes. And then I have the other bots.

If I need to send my notes to someone, I just have to say, write an email to. And it will write the email. So I can jump from one bot to another.

Because I believe the key with AI, and I'm talking about the mainstream AI at this stage, is you need to cut your task in small tasks. In fact, sub-tasks. And so with Dust.tt, you can do that. So and also, yeah, that's for the content creation and text tasks. But for the video, Synthesia is the best. And for the vocals, it's ElevenLabs. So they are, at this time, they are the best one. There is Jasper. I try Jasper.

That is marketing assistant. But pretty expensive, according to me, at this stage for what it does. Yeah, it's more user-friendly than other solution.

But for the price, if you can do it yourself, it's more interesting.

[Interviewer]

Okay, very interesting. A large, large amount of tools. The next question is, how has artificial intelligence impacted your marketing strategies and campaign effectiveness?

[Participant]

Okay, just can I go back?

[Interviewer]

Yeah, no problem.

[Participant]

There is a tool that is very interesting also. It's called [notebooklm.google.com](https://notebooklm.google.com). It's a startup that Google bought recently.

And so if you go to [notebooklm.google.com](https://notebooklm.google.com), you will see that there is no landing page, nothing. You connect with Google. And I don't know if you know this tool.

[Interviewer]

No.

[Participant]

And in fact, it runs Gemini. But you have an interface where you can add. So you create a notebook, for example, about one topic for your thesis.

And you will add as many sources as you want. It can be a website. It can be text.

It can be from your drive. It can be a lot of stuff. And it will run like in a closed loop with the sources you give.

And it will interconnect all the sources. And you have a chat where you can ask questions about the content. But you can ask.

So they show an example. You have one article about the creation of the light bulb. And you have the economical impact of the apparition of the light bulb on the economy.

And then it can make links between the content. And also, it's good for studying or preparing some work. Because you can ask to have a study plan directly in one click.

Or you can also ask me questions. So if you are a teacher, it can be interesting. You put all your courses in it.

And you have your exam done. And to go back to your last question. So that was the impact.

[Interviewer]

Yes. How has it impacted your marketing strategies and campaign effectiveness?

[Participant]

At this time, it's too early to say. But marketing effectiveness, in my case.

[Interviewer]

No problem.

[Participant]

But the effectiveness in the meaning of conversion, direct implementation of the artificial intelligence on the process. Because it's still experimental. But what is crazy is, now we can do in four hours, what we can do in five days. The big change I had with artificial intelligence, I began my day at 8 o'clock. And then at 1 p.m., I have nothing else to do. And that's a great sensation. Because there is nothing else to do. Because you can post on social networks.

But at the moment, you need to delay your posting. And to have some schedule. But here, it's very intimidating and interesting.

But it opens a lot of possibilities. Like I told you, I configured some bots. And now I have bots.

My social presence. If I take one of your publications, one of your posts, I just need to copy the text into one of my bots. And I have the answer to give you.

And it respects my tone. It reads my view and everything, my content, my career. To adjust the answer, I just have to re-read behind.

And so, yeah. It increases the potential. A lot of new opportunities.

And it saves time.

[Interviewer]

Okay. It's interesting. Because you also talked about your socials.

I can already jump to a question I had about this. It is, how do you see AI affecting the creative aspects of marketing, such as content creation and design?

[Participant]

About that point, you know, I believe that from now, we cannot believe nothing that is on the screen. From now, you know, I will say that in French. Because in English, I don't know.

On est dépossédé de la forme, il nous reste que le fond It's scary because now, the AI is really near human creativity in a lot of stuff. But I believe that humanity, every human, has way more potential than we have now.

And about that, I'm not so afraid. Because what will happen? Now we can go back. AI will, yeah, will meet all standards. And what we have to do, it's as human beings that we are. And with our ability to be more and more creative is the evolution.

We went always more creative. And we will be more creative. So we don't have to be afraid of seeing the AI go near us.

Because the solution is to go far, yeah, more far. So yes.

[Interviewer]

About creativity, do you then believe that the AI will outperform our creativity? Will it match? Will we be able to combine forces?

Or will our creativity completely disappear due to AI?

[Participant]

You know, the true creativity is something that doesn't exist yet. And at this time, AI is trained on human data and existing data. So yeah, it can help to achieve some combination that we didn't think about.

But the true creation, creativity, innovation, it's thinking about something that doesn't exist yet. So at this time, I'm not afraid of that. And I believe that, yeah, it can, you know, like be a creativity booster.

And I take a feel, I'm not so in that field, but video games. I saw recently, you know, the, yeah, AI augmented NPC, it's great. So, but the creativity will not be, because, yeah, you can put in an NPC, you put the whole chat GPT in it, and you have your player will talk with the chatGPT-4 But if you take all your NPC and you think about, okay, I will give you this personality, this opinion, everything. And you will have to think about all your NPC in one environment, one place to reflect one opinion, one idea, one atmosphere that needs more creativity, you know? So, yeah, but I'm optimistic about that, you know?

So, yeah, I believe that if we had a true lack of creativity, we will not be where we are now. But, yeah, for my, it's also, the problem is that there is low creativity, there is high creativity. And so, yeah, if you are just an artist, but you copy, in fact, if you copy, yeah, if you are someone that copy, that take inspiration of someone without recreating something really new, really fresh, yeah, you have to be scared, really, because from now the machine, but that's not true creativity.

If you just repeat and, yeah, and you know, I'm not able to draw anything, I cannot draw a straight line, impossible for me. And if I see someone take the joconde and just redraw it, I will be, yeah, like, wow, that's crazy. But that's not creative, you know?

So, yeah, let's see. And also maybe, you know, a lot of creativity, when either, if we think about creativity on a screen, but as I said, a lot of stuff will happen now outside the screen.

And so maybe there are a lot and a lot of creativity that remain unexplored, but not on a computer, not on a screen.

So let's see.

[Interviewer]

Okay, very interesting. I don't know, so if it's already the case, so if you will be able to answer the question, but can you discuss some challenges you faced when integrating AI into your marketing strategies?

[Participant]

It's like every new technology, so you have to spend a lot of time to choose the right tools. It's not easy. But what is good right now is that the tools are not expensive and there are a lot of trial periods.

But, yeah, it's a learning curve that you need to go through. And it's like every technology. So above that, AI is not more difficult than any other technology, you know?

So, yeah, I'm thinking about someone that was working on marketing when internet appears. Yeah, he had to dig a little bit in the code and everything to understand. Maybe hire someone, but maybe my profile, because I'm, yeah, I consider myself as a tech savvy.

I have some skills in web development and everything. So I have that. But it's something that was really already true in the past.

It's what I call, I forgot also in French. Yeah, algorithmic logic, you know? That algorithmic logic is no more important than ever.

But it was already the case with other technologies. And maybe it will be more, yeah, more crucial right now. But not so, you know, there are not so many break, you know, barrier to introduce for someone that was in digital marketing.

[Interviewer]

Okay, yeah. So mainly the time you need and choosing the right tools is the most important challenge. I don't know if you do market research, but I have a question about how AI changed the way you approach market research and do customer segmentation.

[Participant]

Yeah, it was a big change for us because, yeah, you can have really good insight and yeah, it changed a lot. And also, I give you an example with Dust.tt, I created a scrapping bot. So scrap the information on the website.

And before you wait for every website to look at the code and to develop a little scrapper for that website specifically, if there were a change. Here, I can just tell what I see. And yeah, and it lists me all the email, but not just on the pages.

It goes in the sub-level of the pages and take the information. I just have to tell him, okay, you go there, you do that, you do that. And yeah, that's very crazy.

I had the case a few days ago. You know, normally in the past, it's for a sports club management application. And in the past, what we used to do is to ask for someone in Madagascar, a subcontractor.

And she goes on the website. We say, okay, we need for that sports federation. We need all the email of the club of that federation.

And we receive, you know, so an Excel spreadsheet with all the info. But in just four hours, I did what I... Because my client was asking, yeah, can you ask to Madagascar if they can do that?

And I said to myself, okay, I'm going to try just with a bot if I can get the same result. And it was better result. And in the time, I would write the email with the instruction to her to do the job.

I got all the information. And also, you know, it's a subtle difference. But I got a list of clubs with just email, but not the name of the contact.

But I turned to my bot. Okay, according to the email, if you can detect what is the name, first name, last name, add it. And it's perfect.

So if you have Laurent.dequerqueaux at gmail.com, you have Laurent Dequerqueaux that appears. Also, there was some club with a phone number missing. I just asked him, go to internet, have a look and find the numbers.

That's crazy. Also, yeah, you know, a very tricky part, for example, when you need some data for customer. We don't think about it.

But if you take customer's data or prospect data, and you have the address, the mail address, with the number, the street, the postal code, the city in the same field, or maybe just the number. But to be really effective with marketing tools, it's better to have one column for each data. But from here, I got all the address in one column.

And I just asked him, OK, separate everything. And in a few seconds, you get it. You have it.

Also, I had one of the list without postal code. And I talked to the bot, can you find them? So yeah, that point is massive.

[Interviewer]

So big, big time savings.

[Participant]

Yeah, we go back to my previous answer. It's time saving, in fact.

[Interviewer]

OK, OK, perfect. How does, it's a bit connected, but how has AI changed the way you analyse and utilise customer data, if applicable?

[Participant]

Yeah, it's linked to the fact that you gain time. Because in the past, you have, before doing something, you know, to make some test or experiment, you had to think about, OK, how can I do that? And it will be money, it will be time.

So you had to choose which experiment you were going to do. But from now, you put your sources in the AI, you imagine something. OK, can you do that and that?

Can you, yeah, you can imagine whatever you want and make tests very quickly. So yeah, that's a huge, huge game changer also for the customer data. But in my case, I don't have so many examples at this time.

But yeah, certainly, certainly there are a lot of stuff to do.

[Interviewer]

OK, perfect. So I don't know if you, because if I understand you have not yet fully implemented your new AI concept, but what impact has AI had on marketing analytics and the measurement of the campaign effectiveness?

[Participant]

About campaign effectiveness, to be honest, for me, then I cannot say anything because it's too early. Because about campaign, you have campaign on Metagroup, you have campaign on Google. So at this time, the algorithm of Meta and Google and everything were already really good at understanding where to put your advertisement, which placement, to whom and at which moment.

And when you use the business manager of the Google Ads Console at this time, they don't tell you, OK, there is artificial intelligence behind or not. So you don't know if it's still algorithm or if they put artificial intelligence in it. Um, yeah, you have some option, for example, on Meta.

From now, yeah, when you type a title or a description, you can ask it to generate more description or more title correct. That's not a key step. You take your certificate, you do it by yourself.

That's the same. So I'm waiting. I'm waiting about campaign.

I'm still waiting. But to create the campaign, the description, the text and everything. Also, time, you need time.

[Interviewer]

Again, the time saving. And also, yes, yes.

[Participant]

And about the analytics, I'm using Google Analytics for most of my analytics, of course. And you don't have AI tools in it. At my step, you don't have so many change.

[Interviewer]

Now about a bit about the future. What opportunities do you believe AI presents for the marketing industry?

[Participant]

But what I hope, you know, it's just not only for the marketing, what I hope is to see that we will use that not to work more, but to work more efficiently and maybe less. So because, as I told you, it's a huge gain of time. But so and it will be so massive that it's time maybe to rethink a lot of stuff.

For example, you have the universal revenue about the economic side of it. And it's something that I'm preaching for a decade. And yeah, for sure, we will need to think about it and maybe to experiment some new way of paying people or to work or not to work.

And it's about freedom. So for the future, and I want to go back to my previous show. So, you know, the future, we cannot say anything about it because I like a lot of history, philosophy.

And every time that something happens in the humanity, I try to find something where, OK, something that's that is similar enough to the thing or we will react. But here there is just one parameter that is different from all humanity. All the story is, you know, I told you about the steam energy. We have electricity and everything. Also the computing, smartphone, everything. But every technology has, you know, between the operation of that technology and the full deployment of it, there were a little bit of time.

We are still deploying the fibre network here. But here, what is crazy? So in French, I will say it in French.

Because you have one update of your smartphone, you get AI ready. And there are a lot of technology or so people need to subscribe or to try. But here they will go to the SMS. We have that in the SMS. When you type your answer, you have some proposition. And it's not on a AI. So it's very, you know, not so accurate answer. But just one update and your answer are perfectly accurate.

So that's something that is very interesting. It's like you have a horse in front of your house and you go to sleep. And the morning after there is an electric car with the charging station and everything.

So that characteristic of that technology and that new technology, it's a characteristic that you cannot find any similar. Yeah, you know, like I don't know how to say that in English, but you will correct it. But yeah, the emerging aspect is something that is completely different from any technology.

And at the philosophical level, at the human level, I don't see any similarities. So we are really in the unknown. And so it's always about adaptation.

But you know, at the end, if really it's so sudden and it's so yeah, it's something that the humanity cannot take, we will. Because at the end, it's on the electricity system and everything. So yeah, OK, the screen is there and we just put the telephone away, the computer, the smartphone away, the computer away.

Or we see the tendency more and more people, they go to the world. They are in front of the computer, smartphone and everything. But they can disconnect.

The people really want it. So, you know, let's see. Let's see.

But yeah, I'm still in my nature. I'm optimistic about what will happen. But yeah, but in fact, it's more than just the marketing field.

So if we go to that direction, we will, yeah, we will go a little bit aside of the topic. But, you know, hey, hey, it's a very, yeah, it's something really incredible. But if we are thinking about because when we are in the sector, in the field, we see how massive it is.

But if you look just yesterday at the election in France, you see that people, a lot of people, the majority of people are so away from that reality that we are living because we are in the field of marketing, digital and everything. And yeah, and it's not the AI that can, you know, if tomorrow there is a big strike in the street or a massive, you know, civil war. And it's not it's not impossible.

So there are way more chance that AI will start to develop because they are political or economic troubles that are not related to AI directly than seeing AI, you know, being the massive stuff that will extend humanity or everything. Yeah. Also, you have, yeah, the climate change and everything that will go way more faster to stop the AI marketing and everything than the AI itself. But and also I see. But yeah, it's the problem is the humanity. We always react often later.

But nuclear was a thing to, you know, for the energy and everything. But what we see is now with the AI and the huge demand in energy, we have billions and billions that are put in energy, new sector like fusion nuclear, nuclear fusion and everything. So we are now talking about technology that the scientists and everything were working on it.

But it was for four or five, six decades from now. And now we are. Yeah, we are planning that we can see serious article about the fact that in 10 years we will have the first nuclear fusion centre. So let's see.

[Interviewer]

Yes. So if I go back to the start of your answer, the biggest opportunities and the fast implementation from one day to the next, you have you have big AI tools that can change your entire marketing efficiency.

[Participant]

The best tool.

[Interviewer]

So the biggest opportunity is the fast implementation of the tool. Is that what?

[Participant]

Yeah, yeah, yeah. And if I have just one advice at this time is, you know, because marketing is about selling. But before trying to put AI in your product, be really comfortable with AI for yourself.

Be your own product. Put, yeah, accept AI in your life. And it's really too early for someone to say, yeah, I have AI in my life and get used to it.

No, that's not possible. As I told you, there is a new update every week. So be comfortable with it, accept it and use it and be comfortable with it.

And so according to me at my step, so I'm an SME company, it's way too early to really create an AI product. So and about IncroyAible, yeah, IncroyAible also because there is another project with that is that I want to have some academic studies with that company because, yeah, just for parenthesis, I will start a master in September in political, social and economics. And so what I want with IncroyAible is to learn from how my customer will accept or not accept. Or maybe we should be surprised with AI. So I will do what you do. So maybe I will be able to interview you.

But I want to read your thesis when it's done.

[Interviewer]

Yeah, you will be able to. So actually, that was one of my questions. But you just answered this is what advice would you give to another marketing professional considering adopting AI?

It is then to be comfortable with it personally before implementing it.

[Participant]

Yeah. And also, you know, AI is also there are so many opportunities. But I was I'm working on a project, a major project that is called Memo Vivo. And, yeah, the idea is to create, you know, avatar of people, but not of dead people, but people that know that they are going to die or everything to let, you know, living memories. But yeah, it sounds a great idea. It's feasible.

There may be some money to do. But you know, the market, I know the market. Is it something that we can stay with it for lifelong?

No. So, yeah, if you if you have the opportunity, if you want to do that, you know, like, yeah, okay. You do a startup project, you put an MVP and you go to some investor that know nothing about the digital and you show them.

Yeah, they are impressed. They buy. Okay.

And you take the bank and bye bye. Okay. It's something if you are comfortable with that, you can do it.

But it's something, yeah, something risky and maybe not so ethic. But let's see. But yeah, I believe it's better yet to be really, really confident with AI to understand it and also to.

We talk about the concern, we talk about the energy that there is behind that, you know, and when you go a little bit deeper or so company like Microsoft OpenAI. Okay. But Microsoft is working with OpenAI, but why Microsoft didn't buy OpenAI fully, for example, or something like that.

But OpenAI at this stage, there are a lot of scandals about OpenAI, you know, it's something shady that Microsoft can be. But Microsoft OpenAI at this stage copilot is OpenAI. They are the same.

But yeah, Microsoft look like, yeah, we have ethics and everything. And but it's too experimental at this stage. So there are, yeah, there are some concerns about, okay, with which partner I want to work.

And so, yeah, so I give you an example. If right now I can go to the first Bitcoin and mine Bitcoin with my laptop. Yeah, we do it, of course.

But why so few people did it at the first? Because it was way too risky. And there are a lot of other people that, yeah, that lost a lot of money.

And also something that is like, you know, when you have a gold rush, it's not the one that is seeking for gold that make the most money. It's the people that send the shovel and the bucket. So, yeah, be that guy.

[Interviewer]

Okay, and about you talked about ethics. So I have a question about this, actually. Do you think there are any ethical consideration or risks associated with using AI in marketing?

[Participant]

But it's not so it's, yeah, it's related to the fact that AI is like, you know, explosive technology. We are telling people to be careful about what they put on Internet, about content and yeah, because you can be like, oh, my God, they find that of my social network or something like that. Yeah, but you put it, you know, data leak is something else because normally, yeah, you are a customer of PlayStation.

The PlayStation server is hacked your data also. That's not normal. But except that, yeah.

The thing is. You will be at the moment. Yeah, you will have to ask yourself, OK, I know well, because as a marketer, we know well when, you know, when we when we do everything correct or if we do something not correct about the customer and you have like a grey zone where you know that the customer is stupid.

But yeah, I'm not stupid in the bad sense, you know, but if I if I want right now, if you see maybe I see that you are a videographer, photographer, I'm pretty sure that on your Instagram, you have a lot of people. Hey, do you want to see my super course at 495 euros, 5 euros, etc.? We know that those people exist, but not the one that, you know, that sell that course.

But so you mean if we want to do that, we can do that. We don't have to go to school. We don't have to, you know, we can really with AI right now.

We take AI, we can recreate on Facebook a fake account of yours with a picture. We generate the picture. We can generate the people. You and me, We get 5k, 10k per month. Easy. We can do it.

But that's the black zone. OK, that's legal zone. But with the.

Yeah, the clear zone. And behind that, there is a grey zone and every marketer know well. So the ethics, you know, the ethics.

Yeah, there is an ethics to respect. So but everyone has his own ethics. OK, so, you know, but ethics at the moment is and it's not about marketing, it's not about digital, it's just don't do to other people what you don't want that the other people do.

That's quite simple. And it was written in the Bible 2,000 years before.

[Interviewer]

OK, so we're up to our last few questions now. You already kind of answered it, but I will ask it again. How do you see AI, the role of AI in marketing evolving over the next five years?

[Participant]

It's difficult.

[Interviewer]

Moves fast.

[Participant]

Yeah, but it's difficult. Yeah, it moves fast. But, you know, there are two considerations.

First of all, what I have seen recently is that as AI is educated on human content, but the project that in fact, in 2026, 27, maybe we will have used all the human data. So so, yeah, there will be like a big acceleration and then, yeah, you know, like it's going to stop really quickly. So I believe that a lot of people are going to make a lot of money and then a lot of people will lose a lot of money in the marketing, in the entrepreneurship sector in general.

But about marketing, don't think about, OK, is AI the new the new stuff? No, it's a step. Just use it to improve classic marketing.

It's not a new marketing. It's not a new. No, it's just a tool.

It's not it's not, you know, it's not like if you if you take the book of marketing. From Kottler. OK, it's a guy that defines, he defines marketing.

He created that. It's a reference of the marketing. And but yeah, so AI is not Kottler. So, you know, in a certain way, Kottler is just a guy who gave way more, he created marketing himself. So he's not a tool. He's a thinker.

And at this stage, but and I yeah, I hope that it will not change. But AI is a facilitator of the thinking process. So just take it as it is a facilitator.

But not more, not less. So but yeah, maybe one of the most efficient facilitators is time. And it will become more good and good.

But for the rest, yeah, it's just a tool. Take it as it is. And and, you know, by the way, it's very amazing at first when you you begin to chat with it, when you see Synthesia that create video avatar.

And but at the moment, now. OK, we have seen everything in a certain way from now. I can take a picture of you.

I can make the picture talk with your voice. But there is not as a marketing. I'm talking about, you know, mainstream marketing and digital marketing.

So I'm not talking about innovative marketing, you know, in research lab. And now way more beyond my understanding. But for the mainstream marketing at the moment, what we can do.

Yeah, I give you one example of the marketing. But from now, it's really easy. You take your customer support.

You put someone you put a picture and you have someone that talk. And if the people ask, my order is lost. But the AI will go to the database. I get that order. OK, that's that's the most impressive stuff that you can have at this time. And we have seen that.

So, yeah, but that's crazy because I said that like two years ago. It would be crazy to think that it was possible. But now, it's possible. That's it. So, yeah, pretty curious. But yeah, just take it as a tool simply.

[Interviewer]

OK, and you said that it was in 2027 that the data will all the so you're talking there about the training data. Do you believe then we as humans will stop generating enough data in the coming years due to the automation of AI and GPT and all those kind of tools?

[Participant]

No, it's not. That is the amount of data already produced by humans. OK, we'll be consumed by by 2026, according to the study.

OK, so so the way artificial intelligence is working now will not work more than the next few years.

[Interviewer]

OK, then we'll need to find something else.

[Participant]

Yeah, yeah, yeah. And that's where we go back to creativity, because, yeah, we will need to create new new stuff. So and finally, I don't know how to say that in English.

I would say in French it's la barrière à l'entrée. That's la barrière à l'entrée. It's no, you know, yeah, you have way more people that can do impressive stuff.

It's like in the past without a computer. Yeah, you went to the university and that's it. No, with a computer, you have people that that are in countries where there are no universities and they can they can learn from Harvard.

They can learn CS50 and everything. They are pretty good. And yeah, they are hired by country and they start business.

It has never been so easy to start a business. Then no. And with AI, it will be easier, but it will be easier to have a business.

But it will be still difficult to sustain a business and run. That's because it's staying the same. Yeah.

[Interviewer]

OK, then I have a final question. It's just is there anything else about the impact of AI on marketing that you think is important for us to discuss that we haven't covered during this interview?

[Participant]

Um. No, we discussed about ethic. We discussed about, as I say, I hope that people will stay ethic. I hope that people, the global population will understand that it's no really. Yeah, it's mandatory, you know, to to to understand a little bit what happened on the computer and everything, because, yeah, in the past, if you were not able to read that, you lost a lot of competitive advantage to the people who were able to read. You know, knowledge is yeah, knowledge is a power.

And so from now, I believe that you need to be digitalised the same way that you need to be able to learn to to read and and for the rest. Yeah. I hope that people will use AI, as I say, not not only to to win more money or to do more or no, but that it will change maybe to reduce, reduce the the war charge and that we will be able to transform that.

That will say that that and yeah, that that time that we can regain know that we the society, but so it's not just marketing matter of marketing's matter of society. And yeah. And last point is, I'm a little bit, you know, maybe afraid on a more philosophical reflexion is, yeah, it's a form of maybe colony, colonialism, digital colonialism.

And, OK, you have I believe that you have 70 percent of people that doesn't have access to Internet on Earth and like that. So just having access to Internet or no, as I say, it's good. Yeah.

It's massive change. So, yeah, I just hope that we will not go back to to that, you know, to that mentality because, yeah, but it's more philosophical.

### 9.2.3. Interview 3

Date & time: 02/07/2024 10:30

[Interviewer]

So first of all, I have two organisational simple questions. So first of all, can you introduce yourself and describe your current role in marketing?

[Participant]

All right, so I'm Expert 3. I'm 40 years old. I'm the CEO of Stairway.

We're a full service marketing agency and CEO of BABLR, a market research company. And next to that, I'm also assistant professor at the University of Ghent, where I teach strategic communication to marketing at the Masters in Communication Sciences.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. How long have you been working in marketing and what significant changes have you observed over the years?

[Participant]

Well, I started my career back in 2005 when I graduated as a marketer. I studied business administration at HOGent and I started working at a rather small company. Then I thought, yeah, I'm just an executive secretary for the company and I restarted a different education.

I studied computer sciences and afterwards, I also started a master's degree in communication sciences. But I mean, I was always busy with marketing, doing my own projects, trying to do some SEO, building my own websites, programming websites. So it's been quite a ride.

My first real job was in 2008 at Netlog, where I was the product manager and it was the early days of social media. It was an exciting time. It was a new time, a bit like the new shift we have now in AI.

And it was, yeah, almost 20 years. I've seen changing a lot. Marketing became more technical, more content-driven, but also we had less ways to change the algorithm.

We had to do less ourselves. So everything was written by algorithms, by the platforms themselves. So that's the biggest shift.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. Thank you very much. I'll then head over to the core of this interview about the questions about AI.

So first of all, how would you define artificial intelligence in the context of marketing?

[Participant]

I think AI could be defined as a way of speeding up things for marketers, a new way of finding information, finding new solutions, so we can focus on the things that really matter, not the tedious stuff like the marketing. So it's a great way of ideation. So giving new ideas, giving new insights, but still not that great at creation.

You still have to change a lot with the outcome of AI to make it natural and don't have the uncanny effect of certain... For example, the journey, when it's too realistic, people, they see it's AI, but it's too realistic and they don't have any trust anymore.

[Interviewer]

Okay, I see. Could you describe some specific AI tools and technologies you currently use or have used in your marketing activities?

[Participant]

Yeah, sure. Of course, ChatGPT, this comes top of mind, but I'm a bigger fan of Gemini lately. The outcome is way better, way natural.

Midjourney, Udio for sound clips, I don't know if you know that. I tried with Synthesia for videos. Yeah, I'm experimenting a lot.

And of course, there's a lot of AI in the Google Ads Manager, Facebook Ads Manager as well, but we don't always see it that way.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. Could you share how artificial intelligence impacted your marketing strategies and campaign effectiveness?

[Participant]

Well, it's a lot easier to create assets for certain campaigns. We don't have to rent a photo studio anymore. We can just create a new image that's quite impossible also to create or too expensive.

So it speeds up a lot of processes. We can do a lot of more A-B testing, come up with creative imagery. So it speeds up a lot of things.

Next to that, we have to be more sceptical about the outcome. Is it really valid what it creates? Doesn't it look like too much made by AI?

There are some signal words in the outcome of Gemini and ChatGPT that really shows, yeah, this is written by AI. And actually with new employees or young employees, they need to develop a sense of, is it real or is it not real? And how do you produce real organic content?

[Interviewer]

Okay, interesting. So mainly time-saving and cost-saving is what I hear.

[Participant]

Time-saving is cost-saving. It helps creating a lot of ideas. It helps standardise processes.

For example, when we create quotes or invoices, yeah, it's easier to create a text or a plan of action with AI than to write it all down yourself.

[Interviewer]

And would you say there's a certain part of marketing where AI has made a more significant impact than other parts?

[Participant]

More in content creation, it's more visible for us. At the time, enhancements are in content creations. On the other hand, also in how the algorithms work at Google, how they find the possible customers or interested people.

But we can't really manage that part of AI.

[Interviewer]

It's interesting you talk about the content creation because I actually have a question about this. It's how do you see AI affecting the creative aspects of marketing, such as content creation and design?

[Participant]

I think there will be a lot more content when it usually takes two hours to write a proper blog post. Or you can do it with some post optimisation within half an hour. But you need to have the knowledge of the contents to optimise posts, to make it natural, to see if it's really about what's written.

And the creation is a lot faster, but you really have to have the knowledge to optimise a post.

[Interviewer]

Could you discuss some challenges you faced when integrating AI into your marketing strategies, if there were some?

[Participant]

There are a lot of different tools. And each tool comes with a payment plan. And then it's hard to select the right tool if you have a subscription of one year.

It can be an investment where some other tools come up next month and could be more interesting than the one you signed up for. That's a challenge.

[Interviewer]

Also, what I heard from other people is that today AI is really scattered into a lot of tools. The main challenge is choosing the right tools.

[Participant]

Yeah, that's correct.

[Interviewer]

Perfect. I heard you did some market research with BABLR, that was it? So I have a question about this.

Is how has AI changed the way you approach market research and customer segmentation?

[Participant]

Well, it's easier to make segments based on data with AI. Because now you have the tools to, yeah, for example, the code interpreter and the chatGPT. You just drop a file with data and you ask some questions to make segments.

So therefore, it's more interesting. It's faster to do segment analysis. For example, when you have reviews on a website or on Google reviews, you can just download them and ask AI, what's the sentiment in each post?

And what, for example, the key motivators of this person. We used to do some NPS and the promoter score surveys. And then we had, yeah, a scale one to 10 and an open question.

And we had to use more advanced statistical methods or tools to find the key motivators. Now it's a lot easier to just drop in the results in chatGPT and find the key motivators and the impact of each verbatim.

[Interviewer]

Okay. Quite related to this question. Another question is how has AI changed the way you analyse and utilise customer data?

[Participant]

Yeah, for example, we used to have SPSS in place to do analysis. Now it's easier to do a sample t-test with AI. You can just write your prompt and ask the data for insights.

So it's more cost effective than having a SPSS subscription. And yeah, you can just calculate a lot more parameters. For example, facial expressions, when you have a video interview, you can match what you are saying with what they are expressing.

So you can actually tell if people are lying or giving just wanted answers.

[Interviewer]

Okay. Perfect. About campaign effectiveness, if this is applicable, what impact has AI had on marketing analytics and the measurement of your campaign effectiveness?

[Participant]

Um, most of our analysis on web analytics, we still do ourselves. Because we have information the system doesn't have. For example, seasonal variability.

That's information we know by working with some clients for over a couple of years. Um, for example, weather can be an important variable. And we don't have always the opportunity to include those data points in your dataset as well.

So for random analytics, we don't really use AI at this moment. Um, we tried with, um, Watson, um, but it's been a little while from, from IBM. And then you can just ask questions to your data.

But still external variables aren't in there. So we need a big data platform with a lot of data points to have a full view and full understanding of data. And most of that knowledge is still in our heads.

[Interviewer]

Okay. So, uh, yeah, still a lot of variables that I cannot take into account today. Yeah.

[Participant]

It's difficult to connect them.

[Interviewer]  
Yeah. Yeah. I see.

Um, we'll talk a bit more about, um, the future now. So, um, what opportunities do you believe AI presents for the marketing industry?

[Participant]  
Well, I think it can optimise the tedious tasks, quite well. It can just help us to find new ideas. And I hope the creation part will be a lot better in the near future. For example, for video, if it makes the same shifts as it does with Midjourney, for example, in imagery, it can help us a lot to create good video content. But it's still, still early for, for video. We saw a lot of demos, but if you really try it, it's still not that good. And I hope, really hope that AI can process hands in the near future.

[Interviewer]  
Okay. Um, still about the future. How do you see the role of AI in marketing evolving over the next five years?

[Participant]  
Well, I think AI will take a lot of the creation parts, and optimisation. And yeah, just optimise processes, but we still need good strategic marketing consultants to prompt, to give the real prompts. Doesn't mean that AI, can create, blog posts or videos or images. You still need someone who has an understanding of a client and of the business to write the right prompts.

[Interviewer]  
Okay. Do you think there are any ethical considerations or risks associated with using AI in marketing?

[Participant]  
I think there are a lot of profiling based on AI, can be manipulative as well. For example, if you post a lot of, dark images, negative feelings on Facebook, and they come up with, and you can buy that data, for example the target audience with the pessimists and you have a product like Xanax, it wouldn't be that ethical to promote towards that people. So profiling is, is one thing. Yeah, for example, I have heard a thing about, there were a group of nuns, they were, were like 70 years old. And they were in the, in the convent since their youth or their childhood. And based on the drawings they made as a kid, they could forecast if the nuns were going to have Alzheimer's or not. So imagine I have some drawings of my kids and based on that data, I could forecast if when they're 60, 70 years old, they get Alzheimer's. First thing is, would you like to know as a family member, would you like to know it yourself? And would you like to know, for example, insurance companies to know that you're going to have Alzheimer? So on, on medical information, health information, based on, on those data points and doing marketing or business related to those items, I think it's very, yeah, not ethical.

[Interviewer]  
Okay. So it's, it's quite paradoxical that on the one hand, if we could identify Alzheimer's at a young age, it would actually help with the treatment, but on the other hand, insurance would, would go up then because yeah.

[Participant]

Okay. So there would be need of, big restrictions on who can use the data.

[Interviewer]

Okay. Okay. Very interesting.

Uh, I hadn't, I hadn't looked at it like that. Um, one of my last few questions is what advice would you give to other marketing professionals that are considering adopting AI technologies?

[Participant]

Really start now. Don't wait until, the market is saturated. Other agencies are speeding up, are trying things. And for, yeah, for companies or not an agency, for example Neuhaus, they could, they should invest in getting educated in AI. And that doesn't mean only the youngsters at the company, but also the more senior people should know what AI can do. And yeah, have to adopt it.

[Interviewer]

And, um, do you believe that, that actually companies who are ahead and were ahead before the AI age could get, um, out, outperformed if they don't get on hop on the train?

[Participant]

Definitely. Okay.

[Interviewer]

Yeah.

[Participant]

I think AI will be a main factor in outperformance of certain companies, conservation to other companies.

[Interviewer]

Okay. Um, perfect. Uh, is there anything else about the impact of AI on marketing that you think is important for us to discuss that we haven't covered?

[Participant]

What may be the role of AI in education of marketers? I know the education system is very careful with implementing AI in their lessons, in their thesis. And the biggest problem is there because, the professors, don't know enough on AI themselves. And, yeah, they really need to invest time to, to have students work with AI, but on a very strategic and smart way and not just for writing papers and their thesis. So yeah, every part of the society needs to wake up on AI and especially education.

[Interviewer]

Okay. Interesting.

#### 9.2.4. Interview 4

Date & time: 03/07/2024 10:30

[Interviewer]

I have first two organisational and personal questions to get to know you a bit better. So first of all, can you introduce yourself and describe your current role in marketing?

[Participant]

Yeah, absolutely. So my name is expert 4. I'm 25 and I work as a solution engineer at Salesforce, specialised in marketing cloud and data cloud.

So those solutions indeed revolve around unifying the data from different sources to aggregate them into one unified profile, right? So that you really have a sense of who your clients or your leads are, and then trigger marketing automation. So yeah, automated campaigns across the customer life cycle.

So let it be to create new leads, but also upsell, cross sell, et cetera, et cetera. So that's my role within Salesforce. What I specifically do is that I support the sales and discussions with the client to understand their current IT ecosystem and the current business challenges around marketing, and then try to map that to our Salesforce solutions.

And hopefully based on this technical deep dive, they're convinced about the product and in best case scenario, they buy our solutions.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. How long have you been working in marketing and what significant changes have you observed over the years?

[Participant]

So I don't have a marketing background. I started at Salesforce also in non-marketing. I did a graduate programme in Dublin, which was more general.

And then back in the summer of 2023, I transitioned into the marketing team. And so my experience is mostly about learning the solutions by myself first, and then talking to the clients. Have I seen a shift?

Yes, absolutely. You see that AI is coming into marketing a lot more. Yeah, I assume this topic will cover most extensively later in the interview, but the adoption is a little lower than you would expect.

So it is there. Are people using it with full power? Not yet.

[Interviewer]

Okay. Well, that's perfect. It's a perfect shift into the core of the interview about AI and marketing.

So my first question is, how would you define artificial intelligence in the context of marketing?

[Participant]

Yeah, good question. So it is about, I think, understanding pattern based on existing data that you have about your customers, right? So to give you an example, if I am a man of 25 living in Belgium and I've purchased this product, then based on all of this data and. So based on this and on data from a lot of other customers like me, we're going to predict, okay, what would be the next best product for me to purchase? And the goal is to always predict based on historical data, what will be the next best move. And I think it's, yeah, just when you as a marketer can't really identify those patterns because it's just too much data, too much process and it takes you tonnes of time and analysis, it's doing the job for you and helping you to personalise at scale and predict at scale, which you would never be able to do with a normal schedule and a human brain.

[Interviewer]

Okay. Could you describe some specific AI tools and technologies you currently use or have used in your marketing activities?

[Participant]

Yeah, yeah. I could go for long. I think the most obvious ones are generating content, right?

So let it be text. In that case, yeah, it's just a great base to start, right? I'm going to quickly describe the email that I want to write, for example, and then, yeah, in a few seconds, I already have an email draft.

Of course, it's never final, but it's a great base. Also, if you work in multiple languages, it helps a lot because, again, translating tools are getting better and better, so you can generate content in multiple languages. You also have image content generation.

Some tools are way better than others. I don't know if you've used it yourself, but for now, I wouldn't suggest, I wouldn't recommend brands to really go with image content just because it still looks fake, but I'm confident that it will get better and better, and that will, of course, for creative people also save a lot of time in generating, yeah, branded content because, again, the algorithms, they're embedded into your brand guidelines, into the charts, and so that's, yeah, that's helping a lot.

Then, you have all of those predictive algorithms, so next best product, next best offer, next best action. Those are super important for any campaigns. Also, automating triggers, right?

When is the good moment to push that promotion? So, let it be also in the B2B context, for example, or when a company is about to go bankrupt, for example, and then you could predict the moment when it's the time to push a campaign and having a plan to put them back on track, for example, if you're a bank. So, yeah, the moments, also just the moment of the day.

When is the best time? If I'm a guy, I'm always opening my emails in the metro when I'm on my way to work, also being able to identify automatically those patterns and send the email at the time when it's most probable that I'll open it. Choose the channel that I prefer.

So, am I a person who goes on a mobile app or do I go on the website mostly? And then also push the offers on the right channel. It's also a lot about optimising the revenue, right?

Because, yeah, advertising, messaging, all of this is expensive. So, you want to just push the messages when it's worth it. And that's what AI also can help you do, just optimise the way that, for example, it's not worth it for me that I receive 10 emails.

So, the AI algorithm can identify when, at what point, at what amount of messages I am saturated and I'll stop being engaged. And this will stop having an impact on my conversion as a client. So, those are already top of mind, I think, where it helps.

And I think also in terms of analytics, things are getting a lot more advanced. So, you have your reports and usually you drive the analysis yourself. But now, thanks to the algorithm, you're also able to dig into the data, give you explanations of why you're observing those trends, and also give you suggestions based on what has worked in the past, what has not worked.

All of this you could do yourself, right? But it would take you a lot more time, especially when you're working with a lot of data.

[Interviewer]

Okay. Very interesting. A lot of applications.

And it was interesting you talked about content. I actually have a question about this. How do you see AI affecting the creative aspects of marketing, such as content creation and design?

[Participant]

Yeah. So, just to clarify, when you say content, you say like body or you say really like images and...

[Interviewer]

Yeah. More the creative imagery and... Yeah.

Yeah.

[Participant]

So, as I was saying in my previous answer, the tools are there, but they are not to the level that you would expect yet. It's coming for sure. And you can see that some tools are doing better than others.

But for what's out there, and I've tried it myself, even the paying versions, it still doesn't look like a picture. You can tell that it's AI generated. It's already very impressive.

But as a marketer working for a real brand, I would never, I would never to this day use it as a final output. People would just be like ugh, what you do see though, and you see it a lot now on LinkedIn is those videos, like from brands that are AI edited. So, for example, you have this Vedett ad where they had those big hot air balloons of Vedett cans at a festival. And honestly, you cannot really tell. So, it's a real video, but it's been edited and it's really well done. Some luxury brands are also doing this.

Some better than others, but you can see that if you're talented at editing, then it can do the trick. I think videos are easier than photos for now, but you do see it and it's going to get more and more and you can get super creative. So, I do see that future.

We still have some work to do.

[Interviewer]

Okay. How has artificial intelligence impacted your marketing strategies and campaign effectiveness?

[Participant]

Yeah. So, where it's a bit different is that I'm selling the solution more than using it, right? But what I do see at my clients is that indeed in terms of content generation, but more in terms of text, that's been saving a lot of time because of course, drafting the content still takes time.

You want to use the right words. You want to phrase things. You want it to be in accordance with your brand guidelines.

And if you have a proper algorithm that is grounded in your brand, then this can save a lot of time. Again, never a final output, but with a bit of a human touch, you can, first of all, save a lot of time and push your own creativity to the next level. So yes, that's for in terms of productivity.

Sure. In terms of, I think, engagement and conversion, if you're picking the right channel, you're picking the right time, if you're sending the most relevant offers, you're increasing the engagement of the people. Probably they open your emails more or your mobile push, whatever, no matter the channel.

And I think if you're coming up with the relevant offers, then you also see an increase in conversion. And probably you're able to set up smart abandoned cart journeys, smart upselling cross-sell journeys. Then I think you can really, really drive revenue from it a lot, especially when you work in retail.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. My next question, I don't know if you could really go in depth answering this, because as you said, you sell the solution more than implement it. But can you discuss some challenges you faced when integrating AI into the marketing strategies?

[Participant]

Yeah, yeah, no, absolutely. I think the most important is that most of the tools that are out there, they're public, right? Except in the context of your own business, asking chatGPT to do a strategy for you is pointless.

Why? Because they don't have access to your context, they don't have access to your customer data. So as such, those tools in a business context, they're pointless.

Meaning you need to have your own AI into your tools. That's a challenge, because either you develop it yourself, and it's very expensive, and it's very time consuming. Or you buy a solution, and there you can really ground that into your flow of work.

And I think that's a challenge already, because you need to be aware of that. And if as a marketer, I'm going to try to just draft emails on chatGPT, then I'm going to lose a lot of the potential that AI has. And I think a lot of companies don't really understand that for now.

And I think the second and the most important point is, of course, the data quality. Because the problem is the algorithm, they don't really know what data means, right? So you're going to have an Excel file, for example, and you're going to have first name, last name, interest, but the algorithm doesn't really understand that always.

So you need to tell them, in this cell, this is what it means, and this is what you need to take as an input. And that's difficult. So what does data mean for you?

And if you can't really make sense of that, if you don't have a tool that allows them to also understand data about data, what we call the metadata, then it's going to be very difficult to use from a business perspective. Also, another point is that for a lot of companies, their data is not really in order. It's in different systems.

It's also not up to date. You have bits and pieces everywhere. And again, if you want to make an algorithm run on top of that, if the input is shit, pardon my French, the output is going to be the same.

So that's really the tough one. If you don't have the right data foundation, then no matter what you're going to add on top, it's very likely that it's going to be very disappointing.

[Interviewer]

Okay. Very interesting. A lot of challenges around data.

Have you addressed these challenges around data and how?

[Participant]

Yes. I think it's about centralising first. The problem is, of course, there are some business critical applications, right?

So you need a system for customer support, you need for sales, you need it for your product catalogue. So all of this often sit in different systems. The solution is to find the right one where you can unify all of this, where you can make sure that aren't the disconnected points about one customer that they get together so that you really have a full view on this customer, because that's how then the algorithm is going to have one view on this and understand, okay, this is who this person is.

So you unify this, you give a structure to your data, a common structure, so that the metadata that I was talking about, and once you have all of this into one place, that's where you're going to be able to then add the AI on top once your data is clean, structured, and up to date. And then it's also a lot of effort to just clean it up, right? Unfortunately, it's going to be a lot of manual work, but you need to understand that this is the future.

And if you don't want to, let's say, miss the boat, data is the way to start now. The AI can come after.

[Interviewer]

Okay, very interesting. This is probably very applicable to your position. How has AI changed the way you approach market research and customer segmentation?

[Participant]

Yeah, no, absolutely. Well, the thing is that the big advantage when all of your data is then up to date and it's structured, that means that the AI can do the job for you, right? So mostly, usually, when your data was spread across different systems, then that would mean every time you want to draft a segment, then you need to go to IT.

And you're like, I'm looking for people who've got this product, who are in this region, who have visited this store. That's going to take a long time because it's very technical. It's just putting a lot of Excel together, or maybe even worse, just doing a lot of SQL queries.

So it's a mess. If everything is in one place and the algorithm understands, okay, what does the data mean? Then you can just ask, right?

You ask a question as if you would do it through an IT. And then based on this, the AI can translate that into a query and already draft the segment for you. And it's going to be done in a matter of seconds, right?

That means that also, if I'm not happy with it, I can just have a conversation with the AI, right? Oh, no, I actually would rather have that. What you can also do then is say, for example, you have a segment of clients.

I don't know, you were expecting 50,000, but you actually end up with 30,000. What you can ask if you have a good AI assistant in your flow of work is ask, for example, to expand this segment to people that look like those people. And that way, you're going to make sure that you expand them in a relevant way and not just adding for the sake of it, just because you need a bigger audience.

So it's again about optimising each single task, let's say, and finding people that are most likely to also be interested in that regard. So I think it's a revolution because that means that as a marketer, you're able to do your job yourself. You don't have to every time go to IT.

And every time you want to make a change, have that back and forth and send an email, and then they're going to send another file. And in big organisations, getting a segment, this can take you up to three to five months, very expensive. And of course, I just like to imagine in terms of agility, what that means, that by the time you're running your campaign, probably your segment is out of date.

So those are all things to keep in mind, that this is a big thing. To me, the biggest shift in terms of marketing.

[Interviewer]

So I hear a lot of efficiency and time saving. How big is the time saving? You just said that by the time you run your campaign, your segment is almost out of date.

So are we talking here about months of time saving?

[Participant]

In large organisations, yes. IT can indeed take months to just build that request because of course, marketing is not the only department that needs this data. So you are into a backlog and your request is going to be handled whenever they have the time and whatever priorities of the business.

So that's always the reality.

[Interviewer]

Okay. Still on the topic of data, how has AI changed the way you analyse and utilise customer data?

[Participant]

So, yeah. The thing is, the danger is always this black box effect, right? Where you need to be aware of the fact that you don't really know always what makes the AI make the decision.

So when you design or tweak the algorithm, you need to be aware of that. You need to be aware of the potential biases that are going to be replicated. And because of course, an algorithm learns over time, it means that whatever bias is already existing.

I'm going to give you an example, very simple. If I'm working in a bank and granting loans to people and I decided that people who are not from Europe, for example, they are not really as financially to be trusted. And that's always what you see.

And I don't grant the loans to those people. If I then train my algorithm based on this historical data, then the algorithm is just going to be like, this is the way to go. Just replicating this and replicating the human bias.

So if all of my employees are biased in some way, then the algorithm is going to do the same. So that's something to be aware of and be aware of your own bias before you train an algorithm on that data. So that's one thing.

And I think it's very important that the human remains in control and understands how the AI is making a decision and it's not easy.

[Interviewer]

Yeah. You do the black box. Actually, do you think we might lose touch with some of the systems and algorithms we make?

[Participant]

It's a risk. I'm not sure I believe in it, but it's definitely a risk. I think you can avoid it or at least limit the risk is by auditing your own processes, right?

You're going to analyse, okay, what is the data that comes in and what is the output? And there try to understand what the potential biases may be and then treat the algorithm based on that feedback. So it's about really staying aware and really driving a serious analysis on what you get out of those algorithms.

Because if you don't, then indeed you lose control. And at some point it's indeed you're just out of touch. And it's a big risk that I think you can mitigate if you're serious about it.

[Interviewer]

Okay. We'll go back to the risks later on. I first have a question about campaign effectiveness.

I don't know if it applies since you sell the solution more than implement it, but what impact has AI had on marketing analytics and the measurement of campaign effectiveness?

[Participant]

Yeah. So reporting has always been there. That's nothing to do with AI.

But as I said now, I think it requires a lot less thinking from the marketers because you're going to be able to have tools that tell you why things are happening. And I don't know if you've worked with the BI tool, but sometimes you have a chart and okay, you see a trend, right? The sales are going up or the sales are going down, but you don't really know why.

And driving that analysis is tedious. It takes a long time. So for a company, it's also expensive.

It's a business analyst that needs to dig into the why's. Whereas here, the AI is going to do that job for you. So it's going to indeed look into the historical data and tell you, hey, based on what we've seen in the past, this is a pattern that we have identified.

It may be because A or B. So doing that analysis for you saves you a lot of time. And then if your algorithm or your AI tool is powerful enough, it can also give you recommendations based on what has worked or not in the past.

So again, a revolution in terms of marketing. Also, because most of the time, those analysis wouldn't be driven always by marketers because they're not really into data. And if they're more on the creative side, then they're more and more able to do that job themselves.

I do think that the job of a marketer has to be a lot more data-driven than it used to be, because you need to understand how the algorithm works. You need to understand what it means in terms of data. And if you don't, then you're a bit there and not really understanding what's going on.

And that's also dangerous.

[Interviewer]

Okay. We'll switch over to a bit more about AI in the future. What opportunities do you believe AI presents for the marketing industry?

[Participant]

Yeah. I mean, I think it's just going to keep getting more accurate. Getting more accurate in the way that it predicts what a client is interested in, what they may be interested next.

So being a lot more proactive into their needs based on the data that you have. So just the accuracy of the models and about understanding better than you what you need, which may be scary, but at the same time, I would rather have that and have really targeted communications rather than a lot and they're just shooting in the dark, right? So that's a bit of depends on the people.

I personally believe that I would rather have something as relevant to me rather than something at random. Then, yeah, in terms of image and video, that's, again, going to save a lot of time. And also, again, if you're a creative person, I think it's just supercharges you, right?

Because then you can play with the AI and still, you have a big role. I think the human will always have a role to play. You need to just be able to learn how to work with those tools and evolve in your role as a marketer.

So I think there are tonnes of opportunities there as well, where you're going to be able to create that piece of art really based on AI. What else? Yeah, no, to be honest, it's just what's, I think what's already there and it's going to get just better.

And then maybe you're going to be able to strategise a lot more. So I can already imagine that you're going to be able to go a level above. So now you're able to create the content, but maybe now you're going to be able to also create your strategy, maybe able to create your own marketing automations based on a prompt, which is crazy for now, but I do believe that's where we're going.

And in that sense, it's going to be a lot more about asking the right questions to the AI to make sure that the output is right. So I think the skillset that you require as a marketer is going to change a lot. It's also going to bring a lot of opportunities because then all of those annoying admin tasks or just the building stuff, which doesn't really require a lot of brain power, just a lot of time, you're going to be able to invest that time into something else and just really the pure strategy and where you want your company to go.

It's all about learning to ask the right questions and also tweak the outputs. And that's a very important skill.

[Interviewer]

Okay. You also talked about where we are heading and this is also my next question. We'll not go too far, but how do you see the role of AI in marketing evolving over the next five years?

[Participant]

Over the next five years? Yeah, I do believe we'll have something in terms of image and video content. We'll have something that the brands can use.

That's what I expect. I do expect a lot more companies to get on board because as I was saying, the tools are there, but for now, I believe that if a company is using AI just to draft an email, that's already a lot. So the tools are there.

It's a big buzz. The companies are not using it. I do expect that this is going to come more and more.

And so you're going to have best practises and use cases that arise a lot more from, because at the end of the day, it's the marketers that are going to find the best use cases because they're the one doing the job. So I do expect that we also have some use cases that we don't know right now that are going to come up. But yeah, in the next five years, maybe we're already really going to see the AI drafting campaign briefs and maybe already the first journey.

So what I was actually saying in the question before, but everything is gradual and everything is going to get better over the years. So yeah.

[Interviewer]

Okay. We talked about risks earlier on. So this goes to my next question.

Do you think there are any ethical considerations or risks associated with using AI in marketing specifically?

[Participant]

So I do think if you don't have a proper content management tool in place, that's going to be, of course, a risk, right? Because you need to make sure that your customers, that they gave consent for you to use the data and also what type of data. So you need to make sure that you gather all of the consent.

And for now, it's also not that easy for brands because all GDPR and all of those regulations are also quite new and you need a proper tool to handle this. So I think companies are already struggling a bit with that. And if you're going to use AI on top and really have used that data for marketing purposes, you need to make sure that your legal framework is also up to date.

So that's one thing in terms of ethical consideration. We touched upon this a bit before, but it needs everything related to biases. It's a key concern.

It's a key concern and also who has the responsibility, the people drafting the algorithm, the people using them, people who selected the data, which is going to come in. Who can you blame when shit hits the fan? That's really tough.

And from a marketing perspective, yeah, things can go wrong, I guess, just as in any area of the business. But yeah, specific to marketing, yeah, I guess targeted campaigns based on ethnicity, that's a bit of a touchy topic and it can really happen. And I don't think that's desirable.

So it's always about having a balanced sample, really taking into account different types of people, making sure that you don't replicate those biases that we all have in our heads, even unconsciously, making sure that we don't go down that path.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. I will then enter the last few questions. What advice would you give to other marketing professionals considering adopting AI technologies?

[Participant]

So A, get the data right. That's the most important. Otherwise, you're not going to be able to use it.

Embed it in your flow of work. Don't just use ChatGPT or another tool. That's just not the way to go because in business it's pointless.

Learn a new skillset, which is asking the right questions to get the output that you're looking for and really learn to play with those tools, right? The role is evolving. That's true for marketing.

It's true for other jobs, but there are a lot of opportunities that you need to shift in the way that you work or then that's where the AI is going to replace you if you're not learning how to play with it. So I think it's about keeping yourself informed, becoming a bit more data savvy than you used to be. Yeah, just being open to change and see what opportunities are out there and not being scared or reluctant because the change is coming and there's nothing you can do about it.

[Interviewer]

Okay. Is there anything else about the impact of AI on marketing that you think is important to discuss that we haven't covered during this interview?

[Participant]

No, I think we've covered most of it, to be honest. Yeah, no, I think.

### 9.2.5. Interview 5

Date & time: 03/07/2024 15:00

[Interviewer]

And before starting with my questions, do you have any questions for me?

[Participant]

I have one, because you're talking about the impact of AI in marketing.

[Interviewer]

Yes.

[Participant]

That means the entire spectrum of marketing, like the physical and digital marketing, because...

[Interviewer]

Yeah, it's a pretty large scope.

[Participant]

It's really important to understand. AI is driven by technology that implies that sometimes coding is also part of marketing, if you see what I mean.

[Interviewer]

The scope is pretty large. So we're looking really at the job of a marketer in general, but that can be from someone working more in the communication aspect. So generating content or copy, but this is also valid.

My studies also valid for a digital marketer working with data, working with customer data, doing market research. So it can be pretty large. It's really to try and look at the impact, but on various aspects of marketing.

[Participant]

Okay, perfect. Clear.

[Interviewer]

Okay, so I first have two simple personal and organizational questions so that I understand more of your background. So first of all, can you introduce yourself and describe your current role in marketing?

[Participant]

Yeah, let's introduce myself. I am a digital marketer. That's, in essence, what I do for 23 years now.

So I've been in professional business for 23 years, always in digital marketing, but in the broad spectrum of digital marketing, which means everything which is driven by data and sales and marketing. That also includes that it's digital and also non-digital and digital. So I've been around for 23 years of data marketing.

First 10 years of my professional career, I had my private owned company that I founded in 2001. There was specialized in back then email marketing communication and marketing automation with IP technology and we built it out. I sold it in 2011.

Then did a lot of consulting work specifically in the field of marketing automation on several companies, Yellow Pages, De Lijn, Colruyt. I ended up in an agency after a couple of doing exactly the same, but then I wrote the digital transformation and implemented the digital transformation for Philip Morris International, which meant that I was traveling around the globe all the time. Why my kids didn't like that very much?

Because I was never home. So I switched to another job, did four years of Microsoft where I was responsible for partner management and IZ partner management, being part of the management team at Microsoft and last summer. Yeah, big story.

But working in the corporate when corporate decides that they will no longer do this kind of jobs. You just, yeah, you are left behind. You were thanked for services.

So I was thanked for services last summer and I was approached by Forward, Forward who is part of the commercial and who is a Salesforce implementation partner or an SI partner system integrator. As I say, my current role here is I'm responsible for all the whole is divided. Forward is divided in three Salesforce teams. One is commerce and e-commerce is one team. Then you have the team that specializes on CRM and ERP, which is the Salesforce and Sales Cloud team. And then you have a marketing team and that's my responsibility.

So I'm a head of marketing forward, which I'm not a head of marketing as in the sense I'm not a marketeer at Salesforce, but I'm leading the marketing team that is implementing marketing technology for Salesforce, which means marketing clouds and personalization and data clouds and such. And I'm doing this now for 11 months, I think.

[Interviewer]

Very nice. And you're also already partly answered my second question, which is how long have you been working in marketing? 23 years. And the second part is what significant changes have you observed over the years?

[Participant]

Over the years. Let's say that you guys, probably seen your age. You won't even you can't imagine this.

But I started when my professional career was started, it was all about websites and email. That was it. We even had stuff called fax marketing.

You still have companies faxes where like these printers, connected printers. So that was it. So back then email marketing was a big fuss, big hype already beginning in the years of 2000.

But and everything was possible scripting was possible. You could have all the fancy stuff in there because yes, they were spam, but not in the same kind of volumes that we have it now. So and then over the years, what did I see?

I see the first smartphones coming in. So that means that, yeah, as in the beginning of my career, it was like a mobile phone and the mobile phone turned into a Symbian phone, which was already a little bit smarter and then turned out into a smartphone. And from that smartphone, then revolutionized a little bit.

The way digital marketing was working because not so long later, there was also the birth of Facebook and there was a birth of Twitter and then first online. And then they came on the mobile phones because the mobile phones were there. And then you saw the social media that got into place.

And so in essence, 23 years. But if you see the speed of technology adopting and every time a company needs to adapt because every new hype becomes a real, real big hype. Some hypes were successful on those fields and something that you probably don't know, but there was something based back in the years, days. It was called Second Life and everybody thought that we were going to live in a virtual world on an island somewhere that never came into life. Yeah, and we had VR and AR that came up later. That was a little bit based on the same content and what Facebook is doing right now with Meta is trying to go back in the same universe.

But while it definitely varies in all these years, everything, some hypes are there to stay, others are there to vanish. But the basics still remain. And during 23 years of email marketing, marketing automation, and after those 23 years, people tried to adopt all these new technologies and actually still failed to adopt the basics.

Everything goes so fast that we try to embrace the new thing, but forget that we still need to fix the basics. And that's quite an interesting intro if you look to AI as well. Everybody's talking about AI.

But what we sometimes get is AI is driven by data. Because without data, there is no AI. AI needs to learn from data.

And the thing that a lot of companies struggle is legacy data. Bad data, badly synchronized data, legacy data, polluted data, biased data. And so if we start to train models on this kind of data, AI fails.

Because we get crap in, crap out. So that's an interesting point of view. And sometimes I'm super interested in what AI is going to bring onto the table.

Instead, I was, well, not so long ago, I was four years at Microsoft and I experienced firsthand what data and AI can do. Because, yeah, Microsoft was one of the first companies worldwide to really adopt and accelerate AI. Also with the integration and the funding that they gave to ChatGPT, and then co-pilot and the explosion of everything AI. But it's still there. But you see, it's there. But we underestimate the power.

And I don't think we already really know how to use it. And we underestimate. We really underestimate what the impact will be.

And one of the biggest cases I remember was when Samsung first jumped on ChatGPT. Right in the beginning when it was released, they used it for code enhancements and they even used it for generative AI to write some marketing materials for a new model. They just forgot that

ChatGPT is an open data concept, which means everything you put in there becomes property of ChatGPT.

They can use it. And Samsung forgot that. And that means that basically they put all their source code and all their new stuff to become into a ChatGPT environment.

And then they suddenly realized, that was maybe not the smartest thing to do because we just gave all our properties to ChatGPT. And these kind of things you see are happening. You see people that believe that AI will solve everything.

It's not there, it's there to help. You also have people that fear that their jobs will be lost in an instance. Someone will probably be impacted, or else I don't think so.

So that's the beauty of being around a little bit. I'm not that much scared. You know, in 23 years' time, there was always one kind of digital Guru and was saying that it was the end of email or it was the end of the internet and everything was going to move on mobile. It changed, but email is still there. And if you want to go on social media, you still need an email address to basically just create your account.

[Interviewer]  
Okay.

[Participant]  
We have creatures of habits. Habits die very, very, very slowly.

[Interviewer]  
Very interesting summary of the biggest impacts. I'll then head over to the core of my interview about the impact of AI. So first of all, how would you define AI in the context of marketing?

[Participant]  
AI in the context of marketing, it all depends what kind of AI you use. Because people talk about AI, but then again, AI is very different. You can have predictive AI and generative AI.

So AI, it's a concept, right? And a concept that basically says we learn, we train, and based on training, we gonna predict some scenarios or we gonna create new stuff. And I think those two things are already very important when you look at marketing.

This one, of course, you have predictions. Predictions, super interesting, and not only in marketing by the way. We see a huge acceleration on medicine development based on AI because they basically can run models where normally people should need to do everything in a lab, now they can simulate this, and really fasten the development in medicine. But when you look at marketing, I think we have something called a concept like big data. Now, big data was big stuff in the past. When you have all this data and people basically struggled on how to integrate and learn from all this big data.

So the next concept came into place, and they said, look, you have big data, but honestly, as human beings, we have so much difficulty to analyze all that big data. Let's first go to smart data. What do we want to investigate to learn from it?

So that was the first step. Now, what AI is not doing is you can basically enlarge the smart data to big data because right now we have the possibility of actually training machines to try to understand stuff and maybe sometimes understand stuff that we didn't even see, search for correlations, but everything is based on predictions, based on what happened in the past. So I think the first thing that we see a lot is customer 360, all the data points from brick-and-mortar shops and digital footprint where people click and open and buying behavior combined with complaints and NPS service. We put that in a big melting pot and we basically run AI models and these AI models are now being able to predict the next best action way more faster than human beings. So what we see there is we see a really good evolution of centralizing all that data and helping salespeople and marketing people to understand what will be the next action and the future development of a company and a business plan. And it's there, I think, to help.

At the end, we're still human beings. We need to analyze if the assumption of AI is the right assumption because sometimes they are wrong as well. And mostly they are wrong because our data was crap.

Also, if you... One of the famous examples there, if you want to basically predict insurances and if you want to give an insurance to... It's not marketing, but still it's related.

What we've seen in the past is that basically definitely in the US, insurances were given automatically by AI people because it's a lot of work and risk assessments. And they found out that basically, if you were a white male in the 40s, you have way more chance to get an insurance to be accepted than if you were like a 30-year-old black man. And they thought that really astonishing, a normal astonishing, but it was a little bit like...

It didn't feel right. The data and the AI only did what he learnt. It was like data was there.

The data proved that if you were a white male, you had more chance to get it because it was driven by humans. So the first thing is analyzing, predicting, and it's really getting faster. More data, more insights, faster actions.

Sometimes way more data than we can actually...

[Interviewer]  
No. I think I lost you.

[Participant]  
Yes, best actions.

[Interviewer]  
Hello? Yeah, still there? Yeah, I lost you for like 15 seconds.

[Participant]  
Is it okay? Yeah, yeah, yeah. Did you lose a lot?

Anyway, so the data, and it's going to predict faster, next best actions. And that many next best actions that, as a human being, you would need an army of marketers to basically produce all that content and all these next best actions in order to just provide what data is given to you. So automation, combined with generative AI, really it's going to help. Instead of

writing new copy, basically your AI will say: For that little section, I advise you to use this copy. Instead of basically searching for a target group and doing a lot of fine tuning data and segmentations in query, you will now be able to say, no, you will.

No, you are now able, because it's not the future. It's really happening. You are able to say, give me all the people that were interested in sports articles in the last six months.

It's going to look at your data pool and say, these are the people that I analyzed with a higher possibility of buying behavior and by the way. Okay, then you go to the AI and say, look, if you want to mark our new product to these people, write the copy. Write me the copy, create me the visuals that go linked to the products that I have in my database and AI will generate new copy for you.

Really build whatever you want, a blog post or a short marketing message or an email or whatever. And it even goes that far. If we talk about emails, for instance, you could even ask AI to create your email, not only the copy of the images, but just your email.

He's able to generate code, he's able to generate HTML code. And so the combination of predictive AI and generative AI really, really makes it super interesting to go fast and adapt and automate. But still, to do so, somebody will need to build these other issues, to push the button and make sure it happens.

And there is one last thing that's really interesting because that means that you start as a marketer to automate a lot of stuff. Now, if you look at the legal impact of this, sometimes we forget this. But there is a concept where even in Belgium, for instance, companies were allowed and then they declined later on.

But in agencies, people got kind of tax evasion because they've produced IP and based on the production of their own IP, intelligence property with like, I wrote this text, I created this concept, I created this. But if you are going to use AI for it, it's no longer actually your IP. If you're going to use AI as an agency for your customer, who is owning the data?

Who is owning the custom? Who is owning the IP? So even on a legal base, we need to be very, very careful.

The stuff that we produce as agencies and marketers are still our concepts. And that when we embrace AI, and we as a company, we fully embrace it, but we also say to our people, look, you can use it to generate code. Just be careful that it's still your code, that you also implement, analyse and you do these kind of code generations like GitHub and Copilot are definitely Microsoft products that can help with it as well is that these kind, they use the same algorithms, large language models and algorithms, then ChatGPT, the only difference is they are basically in a bunker. So your codes stays your codes and is enhanced, but it's not shared with others. That basically limits the problems of IP generation. But that was a super long answer to tell you like, if we as marketers are going to go faster, we need to use AI to analyze and understand data, to predict next best actions and even products, and then use generative AI to enhance and make sure that we can basically keep the pace of what the prediction is telling us.

[Interviewer]

Okay, thank you very much.

[Participant]

Does that make sense?

[Interviewer]

Yeah, it was, thank you for the recap at the end, that was very useful. Can you describe some specific AI tools and technologies that you currently use or have used in your marketing activities?

[Participant]

I'm not a coder, that means that I'm, for instance, not using coding technology, I'm not here doing this. What I did use is some AI to analyze data, so I have actually data analysis. Of course, we are a Salesforce company, that means we use a lot of Salesforce embedded AI, and Salesforce has their own kind of AI concept, which is called Einstein, that is actually an enhancement of some large language models enhanced with their own IP and data, and there I use it a lot. A lot of things, content generation, subject line, and also targeting, sometime optimization, so in the marketing products we use it a lot, and we actually encourage our customers to use it as well, and then on a personal basis, I'm writing a lot of, producing also a lot of marketing materials for the company. I use, for instance, a lot of code pilots to help me to write blogs and come up with content. The way I do it, and it's different than some other people, but some people just prompt and ask AI to write an article and say, look, write me an article, I don't know what artificial intelligence is, and in the next five years, I want you to emphasize this and this and this, and then the article is written on AI.

I don't like to do it, I still like to have it under my control, which means that I mostly write an article myself, try sometimes a little bit more rough, but most of the time not, and then I pass it through the AI of a code pilot, for instance, and say, look, with all the things you read here, can you enhance, can you read it through, can you eventually come up with new ideas and make sure that spelling and grammar are probably in place, and sometimes it really, really helps.

Also, for image generation, I use DALL-E a lot to come up with a new image for a PowerPoint or an email or whatever, if you want to just put an extra tone there. Okay. So these are mostly the ones that I use on an almost daily basis, to be honest.

I also do search, search, and where in the past, basically, search was like typical Google search, and now I'm using mostly the code pilots, which is embedded in Bing. Probably a little bit biased by my four years at Microsoft, but it really worked well, because instead of needing to click and trying to find something in page number 16, now you basically, and even on study, I do a lot of study, and sometimes, you know, you have these kind of multiple choice answers to prepare for you in kind of an exam, and then I sometimes use copilots to basically go faster and say, look, if I will be given those four answers, what would be your answer? And then it comes up with the whole concept of why you would give that answer, and that's brilliant, because then I don't need to search and research all the kind of different answers, and basically, I use it to feed the answers behind the questions.

[Interviewer]

You talked about content, and that's also related to one of the questions I have, actually. It's how do you see AI affecting the creative aspects of marketing, such as content creation and design?

[Participant]

So as described and discussed, I think content generation and copywriting is going to be way faster. You can even have copywriting that's looking at your data that will personalize the copy for you, and you even have tools to do this in the salesforce marketing world that actually is going to combine and make sure that your copy is personalized based on the information, so you have different kind of copies. So copywriting and generative copywriting is really there, really, really useful, and then image generation, of course, even looking on habits and buying habits of images and even products related to these images are really, really helpful. So that's typically the kind of content we mostly use as marketeers.

[Interviewer]

Okay, very interesting. How has artificial intelligence impacted your marketing strategies and campaign effectiveness, if this is applicable?

[Participant]

I think I use it really as a companion. Let's put it that way. I'm pretty sure some people use it as a mule, and they put everything in AI, and then they don't even question what comes out of it. I use it as a companion, so I go faster. That means that I could, if I need a concept, a screenshot, a copy, a blog post, you know, before, I'm 20 years in business, I used a lot, I was blogging a lot, and I was even a ghostwriter, and writing actually took a lot of time. It still is.

If you want to really write a good article, you need to think about it. You need to think of a concept, create a canvas, start to put in that content in that canvas, create the content. Sometimes it's a matter of days before you actually produce a good article.

AI is really helping me with this, because now I basically create my canvas. I'm creating a high-level concept of a kind of copy, and then I basically put it through AI. It goes way faster.

Sometimes I lack inspiration, and you go like, could you help me to find some interesting thoughts and topics about this, or you need to research something, and then for this article, you actually say, look, can you tell me what, I don't know, the history of this or that is, or do you have a relevant useful case to explain that, and you basically put AI to work. So I use it really as my companion, a little bit as my personal assistant when I'm writing an article, and that's really speeding up a lot of things. Definitely.

Desk research and research based on what's in your mind used to be a lot of work. Now you have the world at your fingertips, and you just chat with your personal companion to let him do the work.

[Interviewer]

Yeah, time-saving. It's what I hear a lot coming back from others too. I don't know if you could discuss some challenges you faced when integrating AI into your marketing strategies.

[Participant]

I think one of the biggest challenges right now is, you know, there are two, but before you even think, one of the big challenges is, the biggest one is... AI actually was the birth of so many different AI applications that you could spend months investigating and trying to actually use all these different AI applications. You have definitely so many to generate images, now you have AI to generate videos, and then you have even AI.

AI is everywhere. Sound, video, copy, imaging, concept, data, and everything is, so the whole different, it's impossible to keep up with everything which is available, and then if you finally find something, you still need to find, you still need to investigate, like, can I use it, and when I use it, will it be mine, or is it a legal implication, and can I use it for a customer, because if this AI is going to produce content through, and then I put it in the marketing campaign for my customer, but basically it's no longer my marketing campaign, nor the one from the customer, but property from the AI with the legal implications, so sometimes I really think about that, so that's also another, and then I think one of the biggest challenges right now, you can do anything with AI as long as you basically speak English. If you start to really have, you know, Dutch campaigns, or French campaigns, Spanish campaigns, it is working some tools so better than others, but still you feel that the native language of AI is still English or even American, and that has an impact, but it's great to have a tool that analyzes subject lines, but if my subject lines are in Dutch, and the computer says no, because I can't analyze because it's in Dutch, what's the use? So this is something, and then finally, and maybe that's less important, but it will be, that is capacity. You see more and more tools that AI is just getting slower and slower. It's way more people are using it. Processing power is basically getting eaten all across the globe, and we do underestimate, I think, the infrastructure that needs to run behind it, and as I said, I was at Microsoft on the boom of AI, really starting to happen, and basically we saw Azure Server parts being eaten by AI applications from Microsoft, and you actually sometimes had to say to customers, sorry, that server is no longer available in your region.

It has been proclaimed to run AI now. So keeping up with and going with it, I guess, as well, is energy consumption. We do underestimate the whole energy that goes into running these servers 24-7 uptime guarantee to make sure that it answers all our stupid questions, and I'm pretty sure that 89% of all the questions that run through AI is bullshit questions.

So I think someday we will need to stop and say, I would say, sorry, this question is not important enough for my superpowers. Just go and use something else, I guess, and we're not even talking about what's even yet to accelerate AI: it's quantum computing. Quantum computing will even have a way bigger impact because now we run on regular processors and wearing your machine, but with quantum computing, it's there, and it's already there, but it's way too expensive, and we only use it for specific cases.

At the moment, quantum computing becomes available for larger markets. I mean, it's scary. We will see stuff happening that we didn't even imagine.

New language, I mean, the thinking of new languages will be produced. New algorithms for new coding, and then even new concepts. New concepts in life, new way of operating, and it's going to be really impactful.

[Interviewer]

You talked about that AI, you see that it's mainly English, that when you start working with it in Dutch or other languages, it may struggle or not be as accurate. Do you think this is due to the fact that AI was mainly trained on English data and that this could be solved by training it on other languages?

[Participant]

There are several factors, but one is, first of all, the English language or the American language is not really, if you compare it to Flemish, for instance, Flemish is one of the most difficult languages in the world, based on the fact that we have more anomalies than regularities in our language. If you look at unified Chinese or Mandarin Chinese, because unified Chinese is a digital version of Mandarin Chinese, there are way more characters. You have the combination of the availability of the languages to train upon and then the complexity of the language itself.

If you look at the two parameters of how much data do I have, which is just training the language, combined with how complex is the language, really makes English the first choice, I think, because there's a lot of it. You see that AI started in English and the next models were typically Spanish models, again, a lot of data available in Spanish, South American, a lot of Spanish Hispanics, and so you basically see these more Chinese, a lot of people in Chinese, a lot of data available. It's a combination, I think, of availability, the complexity, and also the people that basically wrote the algorithms.

A lot of this stuff comes from Asia or the US, so it's based on one of these mostly influenced countries, or regions of the world.

[Interviewer]  
Okay, interesting.

[Participant]  
Yes, it's kind of cool because sometimes we get that we Belgians historically produced a lot of stuff. HTML, invented by Belgian. The fact that you have Siri, we basically used the Shazam engine, is actually a Belgian invention. Speech to text that is implemented now in almost everything combined, it's still based on dragon, which was invented in Flanders Language Valley with Yo, Legnault, and Houseby. So, yeah, we were some kind of clever people who just were really bad to market it.

[Interviewer]  
I don't know if this is applicable to you, but how has AI changed the way you approach market research and customer segmentation?

[Participant]  
Research? Really impactful. Because research, I said before, I needed to basically invest days to scroll from one block to another and try to find the articles and links and interlinking right now, to be honest, I become lazy and just ask me to AI and wait for the links to come and then start clicking from there. So, it really helps me in that kind of research. So, summarizing is also one that I use a lot. If you get a real big document that you need to read it through, and you still have two hours to do, yeah, you know, sorry, but I'm also become lazy as in, this is the document, can you please summarize the essence and tell me what to do?

So, it's been a couple of hours. So, that's all and segmentation. I started to experiment more on, you know, I've been around already a couple of years.

That means that I've done a lot of different concepts with customers. So, the basis of segmentation is basically what I live for. So, I still apply my own learn concepts.

But I do start to elaborate more to grow more in the fine tuning of the segmentation and the little splits and using AI and data analysis way more and more intense than before. Sometimes to spot like, you know, the big dots on the canvas that we all just didn't see because it was too big. And that's where I use it for mostly.

[Interviewer]

Okay, also related to this, you talked about data. How has AI changed the way you analyze and utilize customer data?

[Participant]

I think, and it's going to maybe sound weird, but I'm way more precautionous even with trying to get clean data. And I don't. That also means that when I use data and I put it in AI to be analyzed, I really, really, really am very skeptical of sometimes, okay, depending on the outcome.

Because if the outcome is what you expected or it looks like what you expected and AI just confirmed it, then it's okay. But I'm really anxious sometimes to use AI to analyze data because I'm always wondering if the data is correct. If the data wasn't biased, if the data was well cleaned, if I'm not missing data, if there are data points that are not in there that can change the entire concept.

So, and that's where I'm mostly afraid to use AI on data. Like, is the data, is the core of what I'm putting into the machine, is that good enough?

[Interviewer]

And is the data cleaning, is it more a manual work or is this already something AI can help us with?

[Participant]

Yeah, it can help. It can help. It's really accelerating things and we do it.

And it's based on the principles that we've done for ages already. But at the end of the day, you still have stuff that you do need to do manually. And on top of it, cleaning data is one thing.

The cleaning part, you know, the cleaning part was never really the real complexity. Basically, cleaning data is putting all the data in one big data lake and trying to understand if you have connection points and use those connection points. It's getting all that data in, But then the cleaning part is not the complex thing.

It's keeping it clean because data is changing every millisecond, every second, the data is changing. So in order to have a clean, really efficient data, it's not you don't take a helicopter view and clean data and then, oh, data is clean. No, you need to make sure that all the synchronization processes are still kept synchronized and are cleaned on the spot or enhanced.

And that's the real difficulty because we all have as marketers some kind of, you know, historical Excel database still been designing somewhere on a hard disk that we just forget not to use an input in and they have all the information that we needed we just forgot that it wasn't existing. And so that's the real difficulty, is keeping it synchronized and up-to-date and

secure. We sometimes forget, we just basically, we are so obsessed by using all the data to put in AI and sometimes we get where we store all the data and the output that comes out of it.

[Interviewer]

Yeah. We'll come back to that later about security and the risks. But first, a question about campaign effectiveness.

What impact has AI had on marketing analytics and the measurement of campaign effectiveness?

[Participant]

We get even more data and more efficient data and more analytics and more insights. So we really have now a zillion insights and very detailed. So that's fantastic.

And I think we could, there is maybe the real problem. We already had a lot of insights, just marketers are lazy and we don't use those insights. We all need those kind of graphs and saying, oh, that campaign was effective and that was less effective and the idea behind reporting an insight is that we basically, when the insights come out, we do something with it.

We try to understand why it was less effective or better effective. And we find, you know, next campaign. But the reality of the game is most marketers, they don't use it. They basically keep the lights on. They do every day the same thing. They still will send their emails on Monday, Tuesday, Friday.

We're not in the weekend because they're not in the office, which is insane. They will send it at 11 for everyone except they have all these tools to basically spread it over the night and the devices and other things. So we have everything on our fingertips.

We just don't use it. You still have marketers sending paper letters. So we get way more graphs and insights and stuff.

And at the end of the day, who is really using it? And that's sometimes a pity, I guess, some marketers, some will really do it and some will examine it. But most of us.

[Interviewer]

Okay.

[Participant]

Habits. And we have always done it like this syndrome is really, really difficult to change.

[Interviewer]

Old habits die hard. Is the expression anything?

[Participant]

Absolutely.

[Interviewer]

We'll head over to talk a bit more about the future of AI. What opportunities do you believe AI presents for the marketing industry?

[Participant]

Bigger better faster more.

[Interviewer]

Bigger better faster more.

[Participant]

I think bigger better faster more is how I would summarize it. We can spend hours debating and discussing it, but we will have better insights, better data. We will go faster because we can automate and the stuff is produced for us. And since we go faster, we can produce more and more intense. So bigger better faster more. And it's going to be better if we use it in AI.

[Interviewer]

Okay. You talked about this actually earlier on when you talked about the article about the next five years. That was one of my questions.

How do you see the role of AI in marketing evolving over the next five years?

[Participant]

You know, AI is on every hotspot of every CIO in every company. But you need time. You need money to implement.

Now, the first thing was they actually bought a lot of tools because it was part of the corporate agenda. We need to do something with AI. So everybody had at least a couple of millions or whatever percentage on their budget to spend in AI.

So that means a lot of companies already rolled it out of the AI are now actually doubting what they bought and what they bought. And are now looking and seeing that they basically have difficulties to implement it because people don't use it or use it properly or they have bad data and so on. So it will take a couple of years.

I even think more than five years to really start to use it probably because we have so much we have neglected so much legacy in the past that we will need to retrain our systems, reintegrate our data, optimize our data models, make sure that people start to really understand the technology, use the technology and while we're doing it, the technology will grow faster and more efficient than we are it actually can grow. So it's going to be a rat race and only a couple, a few in the industry will be able to keep up with the speed of development on AI.

A lot will basically start to fail and be emerged and go back to their old habits and AI will just be something, the companion and they probably will die at the end because they didn't have the opportunity to change faster. So I think in the next, I don't know man, I even don't know what's going to be produced because AI is producing AI as well. The new insights from AI will bring new tooling on AI and the quantum computing will be growing even faster.

So I would already be happy if people start to adopt the basics and make sure that in five years time they at least have clean data and use it in a proper, legal and really good way. At the end of the day there's something that people forget. AI should be used for what I call 4D's.

Something which is difficult, dirty, dull or dangerous. That's why you need to use this. There's a lot of things in 4D's.

But creativity, is that dull? No, but basic creativity, maybe yes, so you can go. Is it difficult for some people? It is, for others not. There's one book that you need to read. It's a very small one.

It's called Who Took My Cheese? And then you will understand what potentially the impact of AI can bring to a modern day society. I don't know.

Very good question. If I would have had a crystal ball, but being around a lot I think we expect more than AI. No, AI can produce way more then we will be able to adopt. Let's put it that way.

[Interviewer]

Okay, very interesting view. You also talked about the challenge of B2 implementing in a legal, in a right way and this adds over to my question about risk. Do you think that there are any ethical considerations or risks associated with using AI in marketing specifically?

[Participant]

Absolutely. We all have biased data. All the data that we have as marketers is all biased.

It's biased data. It's biased data. Data with a lot of errors in it. So there is a huge risk that's really, and as a data marketer, that's the first thing I said. When people started to scream AI gonna solve everything, my answer, and even once wrote an article on it like, yeah, is it? Is AI going to solve your data?

No. People think it is. You need to solve your data in order to properly use AI.

So the risk is huge. Biased data. Imagine that tomorrow we just own the AI to come up with the next best product.

He will come up with the next best product you always have done in the past because that's what he learnt. you need to challenge your own insights as well to challenge. And sometimes people forget to challenge AI.

AI sometimes can be challenged. And it's fine. He loves to be challenged.

Sometimes he will give you, I think you're gonna do this and it's a great answer. And you go like, are you really sure? Because I was expecting this.

Yeah, great insight. So go into discussion. It's a Copilot. It's really an assistant. AI should help you. But don't take it for granted.

Ask for other insights. Ask to double check AI. If you talk to it like a human being, the best thing I basically would advise for people to do is learn to prompt.

Prompting is the language you use, how to ask and inform AI. And the better you prompt is, the better you actually express your expectations to AI. And where can I find the data?

And what should you do with it? And what's my expected outcome? And how should you write it?

And which kind of copy? Is it a neutral copy or a more creative copy? And what kind of imagery you do?

And is this image like a painted image or photographed image? Be as specific as possible and prompt it and you will get an amazing stuff. And if you just say like, make me a campaign, you will get a monster.

[Interviewer]

If we could go back about the bias in the data. So from what I understand, AI right now is biased because it has been trained on our biased data. And data is biased.

Do you believe it is possible to get to a point where it is unbiased and we have an unbiased AI? Or is it too late? Or in a sense impossible due to the fact that it needs to be trained on unbiased data that doesn't exist?

[Participant]

I think it's a very good question by the way. To become totally unbiased? No, because it's going to be super difficult.

If it's happening, it's going to be super difficult. Even the language models are biased. They are already biased.

And you already see it because sometimes try it. Go in an AI model like Copilot and ChatGPT and ask him a religious question or a political question. He will tell you, sorry, I wasn't trained for this or I cannot answer you that question.

So the fact alone that he answers you, I cannot do this or I'm not trained to do it or not allowed to do it. It's already biased. It's basically programmed to be biased.

So it all starts there. How can a language model learn from these kind of visions, interpretations if it's not allowed to even go into the topic? We already influenced the AI models as of the start.

[Interviewer]

Yeah, true.

[Participant]

And then we infused the data that was already biased. So the bias will all be put. But it's okay.

Human beings are biased. It's part of nature. A couple of days ago, we had a discussion on, and it sounds weird, but racism.

People say, yeah, I'm not a racist. No, nobody's a racist. Actually, we all are racist.

And it's biological. They even test with mice and they color the mice. And they had red mice and blue mice and yellow mice and they put all the mice together.

They're all the same mice. They were all normal mice. But by the fact that they colored, they started to basically hook together with the same color.

Were they, are mice racist? We wouldn't expect. But apparently, there's something in nature that's just like, if we are all blue, I go with the blue.

So we are all racist. You cannot take it away, even if we are not. If we don't want to be it, there is something biological in us.

And we basically, we are the human beings that train the models to do stuff based on our intelligence. And even if the intelligence will become more intelligent than the basic human intelligence because they have more protons and neutrons and basically go faster and more intelligent. The essence is still, it was programmed by humans on human data.

It will remain biased. That's my opinion.

[Interviewer]

Yeah, of course. Okay, we're then heading over to the last questions. What advice would you give to other marketing...

[Participant]

Just saying I have five minutes.

[Interviewer]

Okay, well, it's actually my last question. Okay. What advice would you give to other marketing professionals considering adopting AI technologies today?

[Participant]

First, don't follow the mass, which means it's not because another company is doing this, you need to do it. So pick your battles. First, ask yourself why.

What is the problem I want to solve? If there is a problem I want to solve, then you pick the battles. Do I have a problem with copywriting?

Use copywriting in generative AI. Do I have a problem in analytics? Go there.

So first, pick your battles. Don't do everything at the same time. That's one thing.

There's a tool that you want. Be open as well. It's way too easy to say it's too complex or I'm used to do this.

Be open for everything. And create a culture in a company on what you should and should not do with AI and also the outcomes and the restrictions. Can you do everything?

I think it's important that people also as marketeers, as companies start to implement AI policies. What am I allowed to do? What am I not allowed to do?

And if I do this, which kind of tools should I use it? ... So pick the battles.

Do it well. Do it legally. And inform people what they should and should not do.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. Thank you very much.

### 9.2.6. Interview 6

Date & time: 03/07/2024 16:45

[Interviewer]

So first of all, I have two organisational and personal questions for me to understand your background a bit more. So first of all, can you introduce yourself and describe your current role in marketing?

[Participant]

Yeah, so I'm expert 6, one of the co-founder of Human37. We are what we call a customer data strategy agency. So we help clients use data and technology to supercharge the customer experience that they offer.

So that means that we do support a lot of marketing agencies or teams, client sites. Now, marketing is not the only stakeholders that we support as we really operate on the entire customer journey. Customer support, sales, product are other stakeholders that we also serve.

But there are a lot of use cases that we help clients solve that are marketing related. But so yeah, that means that today we are not the agency that is going to manage campaigns, run campaigns for clients. We are sitting slightly above the picture and we feed those agencies with data and or insights, which can be different things, but to name a few, a lot of audiences that they will not be able to get access to because they are often locked in a silo at the very end of the chain, but also insights for them to be able to report and or to better understand the impact of their campaigns.

So most of agencies report on metrics that are going to be returned on ad spends, cost of acquisition, that kind of things. We bring them other things such as, okay, you brought us 1,000 transactions, but from those 1,000 transactions, how many were net new clients, meaning clients that have never purchased before, which is something that again, those agencies alone are not able to access because you require too many data that are coming from different systems to be connected together. And because of the position that those agencies, marketing agencies, digital advertising agencies and so on have in the chain, they often don't get access to that kind of data.

So we support them there. I'm very opinionated on where marketing and digital advertising agencies lives in the ecosystem because I come from there. I used to work for and I managed digital advertising agencies called Semetis, which you might be familiar with. So I know very much the positioning that they have and the relationship that they have with their clients. So yeah, that's a bit of my background.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. Related to this question, how long have you been working in marketing and what significant changes have you observed over the years?

[Participant]

10 years, more or less. And what I saw when I started digital was something completely new. So when I started, we were doing SEA and SEO and Google Analytics, and it was already pretty advanced. The biggest client that we had were spending 10K a month on those platforms. And those same clients today, probably 10X, if not more than that, their budget.

The amount of platforms available from a digital standpoint completely changed, like from Google being almost having the monopoly to a certain level.

You now have Facebook, Google, TikTok, Snapchat, like there are many, many and I'm not even naming all the sales houses and stuff. So I think that's one thing on top. Everyone recognises now the importance of digital, which used not to be the case back in the day.

So the entire ecosystem, because marketing agency is not something new, they've always existed. Traditional players recognise the importance of digital and they've built their own strengths and muscles to be able to deliver on those. And I think the last point is the direction that we took, which is the importance of data and technology.

So a world which is much more complex, which sometimes brings a perception for people that are involved there that it is difficult, even if it's not always that difficult. But yeah, the importance of data, the importance of technology, under that AI is one of the technology for me. And also everything that comes to user consent, GDPR and all of those aspects, which is forcing and pushing clients to be better at knowing who their clients are and using what we call first party data, which you're probably familiar with.

So that's something that has changed a lot to picture it very simply. Companies used to spend a huge amount of money getting people on their websites. And out of those, probably for the best one, 2% were converting, 1%, between 1% and 2% were converting.

Anyway, they did not really care because they knew they could be running remarketing campaigns to get those people back again on the website later on. That doesn't work like that anymore. Most companies might only have one chance to kind of convert.

So you better know who is visiting you and try to grasp as much as you can and build up an experience that is as strong as possible from day one to make sure that you get stickiness, conversion from prospect to client and stickiness for clients over time.

[Interviewer]

Okay. Very interesting. Thank you.

I will then head over to the core of the interview, the questions about AI and marketing. It might be possible that you can't answer all of them. You can just say it, but normally it's pretty general questions.

So first of all, how would you define AI in the context of marketing?

[Participant]

Like in any other context, it's a technology, it's a tool that can be used. It's a tool that at the end of the day has been used way before generative AI came in the picture. Something that again, the Google and Facebook of this world have been investing in massively.

So behind the scene for all those platforms, I'm talking advertising specifically here, they've been supercharged by AI for maybe not 10 years, but almost that, probably eight or nine years. They were called algorithm back in the days, but it's still the same thing. So yeah, AI is a tool, it's a mean. Okay.

[Interviewer]

Perfect. Can you describe some specific AI tools and technologies that you currently use or have used in your marketing activities?

[Participant]

So again, I would say that today, for me, AI tools today, probably, yeah, chatGPT would be an AI tool for the rest. AI is a component or features and sometimes not even, it's just a part of most of the tools that we are going to use for our clients. Again, if we stick to advertising eight, nine years ago, it was about their bidding strategies and letting the algorithm define themselves how to best spend the budget instead of having a very manual way of controlling which keyword was spending how much money and et cetera, et cetera, which is how things were working when I started.

Up to today where I would say that most of the tools that we are working with have AI components that can, I don't know, either predict the next best action for a client or predict the lifetime value of a client and basically come up with all sorts of model to help you define when to communicate, to whom communicate, et cetera, et cetera. They are features. And then there is the second part of the story, which is the generative AI bit, which obviously simplify everyone's world when it comes to, I don't know, writing a text from an advertising standpoint, as well as writing, I don't know, a template email. Those things come up like now super easily while it used to be a relatively painful process. It comes up very easily, but it also comes up very dry because everyone kind of gets down to the same output, unfortunately.

[Interviewer]

Okay. Perfect. How has AI impacted your marketing strategies and campaign effectiveness?

[Participant]

That's like, that would be more from a Semetis standpoint. Not as part of human37, but I don't know, actually, I guess for the best, but there are so many things that have changed in parallel that it's hard to define what's cause and what's consequence. But if we look at the adoption nowadays from an advertising standpoint, again, and I'm not talking about the gen AI side of the story, I'm talking about the algorithm, they are going to recommend themselves how to best target certain people, communicate with them, spend the money wisely on who they believe are the best fit for whatever you have to sell or offer as a company, then yeah, I think it increased the performances probably of the campaigns, but at the same time, the whole market became much more saturated. Everyone started investing.

So everything became more expensive as well. So I guess the results that we used to have in 2013, 2014, when I started are way better than the result that most companies have today. If we take a metric, like let's say the cost of acquisition of a brand like, I don't know, let's say Vandendorre that I used to work with back in the days and I'm still working with today. I don't know. I'm pretty sure back in the day we could have a cost of acquisition of, I don't know, around 20 euros. Probably today they are at a hundred euros.

I don't know. I'm just sharing numbers like that. But so if you look at this, but meanwhile, most likely if you're not using AI, probably you would be at 200 euros.

I don't really know. So I guess it made things bigger, better. What is certain is that it made everyone gain time.

So it really democratized the access to the platform. Like everyone can become a SEA expert today. You don't need to know much.

You don't need to understand the platform, the specificities because it's almost set up your tracking correctly, you find a budget and you're good to go. You don't even need to reflect about the structure of the account, the keywords, the text, testing things out now. Those are things that are automatically generated and tested by the machines and AI at the end of the day itself.

So yeah, I'm not too sure how to answer that question.

[Interviewer]

No problem. But you talked about the time savings. That's something that comes back from everyone that I talked to.

And I don't know if now this is applicable, if you really integrate AI into your marketing strategies, but if so, can you discuss some challenges you faced when integrating AI into your marketing strategies?

[Participant]

The biggest challenge is data quality. The thing is that everyone wants to do AI, but then again, that's one of the, it's not one of the reasons why we launched Human37 per se, but it's something that puts us in an even better spot, I would say, because what we do is data infrastructure. It's making sure that data is clean, that it's safe, that it's properly governed, properly documented.

And that's what AI models require. I mean, you can have the best model that exists on Earth. If you're putting shit in, you're going to get shit out.

So I mean, that's probably one of the biggest limitation, people getting too excited. And again, I'm not talking about Gen AI, even if it could apply there too. But on all those models, there are so many things that can be done that do not require AI, and which is already powerful, basic, and that most companies don't do, especially here in Belgium.

[Interviewer]

Okay. This, I think, is more applicable to Human37. How has AI changed the way you approach market research and customer segmentation?

[Participant]

Same answer as before. It excited the market. So for me, the market research, it's two very different things.

So user segmentation, one of the main thing that we help our clients solve is understanding who their clients are, who their prospects are, basically who the people that are talking to them on the entire customer journey are. And most clients want to go deep into, I want to be able to predict churn or predict, which is AI, typical use cases, and predict lifetime value, next best action, et cetera, et cetera. The thing is that most of the time when you get into that, what would be the next best action of someone that added to the basket?

Well, it's going to be for him to make a purchase. Most of the time, the output of AI models is obvious. It's what you would have thought.

And so I think the whole point is that AI enables and allows us to get the right discussions with the client because they want to segment their user perfect. But before doing lifetime value prediction, let's measure your lifetime value because you're not even able to give me now if I tell you, okay, I'm a client of yours, go check in your data. What is my lifetime value?

I'm sure you don't have that information. So before predicting what my lifetime value is going to be tomorrow, let's make sure that you can compute it for today and make it available for the rest of the organisation because there are many use cases that can come out of that. So I think that's what has changed.

It excited the market. It gave them a perspective, something shiny that they want to be able to do. And that allows us to explain, okay, if that's what you want to do, this is actually all the foundations that you first need to go through before we can get there.

[Interviewer]

Okay. Another question about change is how has AI changed the way you analyse and utilise customer data?

[Participant]

That's the same.

[Interviewer]

Yeah. The answer was pretty much. So, okay.

I don't know if you really use AI and this is more gen AI for content creation, but how do you see AI affecting the creative aspects of marketing like content creation and design?

[Participant]

For us now, from a human 37 standpoint and as an agency, us trying to brand ourself and position ourself and communicate to potential clients, prospects and stuff. Yeah. It makes our life easier.

I mean, if I compare, I used to manage Semetis, there was no chatGPT or equivalence. I now manage human37, there is chatGPT. It's pretty easier to build a design.

I would like to do this post. I'm going to generate an image. And it feels like I'm being much more professional while before I had to, I don't know, create a slide on a PowerPoint that I was going to transform into a PNG file and that I was going to upload.

So yeah, it makes life easier. But it also adds a lot of noise. It adds a lot of noise because there are not a lot of people that are, there are too many people that are talking to say things that are boring.

It's too easy to lose yourself into universal truth. I think LinkedIn is probably the best example of that. How many people are saying boring stuff on LinkedIn nowadays?

It used to be a very good channel. And then you could follow people that have opinion and that would share those opinions, et cetera, et cetera. And most of those people still exist. And so I think it applies to content in general. There are still people that are creating a lot of content themselves that have opinions that are sharing their opinion and that make the content that they create very, very, very qualitative. Also, those people that have an opinion now have tools to be more professional without having to rely on external professionals.

So that makes them stronger. The problem is that they're now stuck into a notion of noise and shittiness and it makes it probably harder to find them versus before.

[Interviewer]

Okay. About campaign effectiveness, what impact has AI had on marketing analytics and the measurement of your campaign effectiveness?

[Participant]

The thing is that measurement is probably one of the first areas where algorithms have been used to build models, attribution models, and so on. I'm not sure you're familiar with that.

[Interviewer]

Not really.

[Participant]

But basically, the whole promise to a certain extent of digital advertising and all digital channels was that you will always be able to measure the impact of the money you are spending. That was the promise, which is not possible. Television, you're blowing money.

You're targeting a large amount of people. You don't know how many people are going to purchase afterwards because they've seen the ad or not. Someone clicking on Google Ads and then purchasing, and you can make an easy connexion.

Very quickly, we got to realise that... I'm not talking about me or Google and stuff, but get to realise that the journey of user was very complex and most people were not just searching for something, clicking, purchasing. And so very quickly, I'm talking here probably 2014, 2015, they started using algorithms to basically give some sort of a weight to every single touchpoint.

Imagine someone discovered you on Facebook, clicks on an ad, gets on your website, leaves. The next day, comes back through Google Ads, clicks on an ad, purchase. How much do I give to Facebook?

How much do I give to Google? How do I attribute the value of the conversion? Because it would be wrong saying that it's only because of Google.

And it would probably be wrong to say that it's only because of Facebook. And I'm talking here about a very simple example. There were a lot of algorithms that were deployed to understand a bit and being able to project and attribute basically the right value to the different channels.

But then the world complexified. The whole GDPR came in. And before that, even other things like Apple that started protecting more and more the user, reducing the weight and the amount of data that was able to collect.

And that kind of created holes in the entire journey. And that's where AI is coming back because what AI is doing today is remodelling data that are being lost. So back in the days, we used to be able to track 100% of online.

It's important that digital interactions because of many, many different things, ITP, cookie consents, and all of that things, you probably got down to 50%. And now AI is used to models. So they say, okay, 50% of your people accepted your, gave consents to be tracked.

From those 50%, 25% converted. So you see 25 conversion in your campaigns. But actually I know that only 50% accepted.

So I know that I can model that all things remaining equal. You didn't get 25 conversion, but you actually got 50 conversion. Out of which 25 got measured and 25 are modelled.

So I think that's what AI is being used for nowadays. Trying to model as much as possible, the impact of campaigns. The problem is that AI is a black box.

It will always be. And so now you get those people saying that we cannot trust AI models. And so it's a never ending story. And there is a dream which will never be fulfilled. We'll never be able to measure everything. That's a fatality.

[Interviewer]

Okay. Very interesting. We'll talk a bit more about the future of AI.

What opportunities do you believe AI presents for the marketing industry?

[Participant]

Short term, long term?

[Interviewer]

Let's say more in the short term.

[Participant]

I think if you're using AI, I'm talking gen AI here because I do believe that other kind of AI is not. It's a standard now. As I said, most platform have it and they're pushing you to use it.

Even from what we call engagement platform, like emailing, notification, push and stuff. They kind of get parity from AI feature point of view. It doesn't matter if you are more using Google or Facebook or RetroBullet or Braze.

They're going to push you to use that. But as a person, either as a brand or as an agency, the challenge is how you're going to embrace AI and use it and specifically gen AI to become more efficient. How quickly are you going to change?

I know agencies that are still doing ad texts themselves and copy-pasting manually and it makes no sense. I know agencies that have automated the whole thing through AI and that

basically can do the same work but in less amount of time. They grow their efficiency and because of that, they're probably going to be the one that are going to remain on the mid-short term in the market.

Opportunities, I think a big risk for those that are not embracing it. Opportunities for us, as I said, but then for us and any other agency that would want to position themselves there. There are so many pre-built, pre-trained models that you can get access to.

The whole thing is much more democratised than before. That makes it very easy for us to, you want to be able to predict churn? Yeah, we can do that.

We can use this pre-built model that exists in this library. The good thing for us is that we sit on top of the infrastructure already. We have your data, we know it's clean, etc.

I think that that creates opportunities for new kind of missions but there is a big risk that comes with it as well.

[Interviewer]

If I put a timeline on it, how do you see the role of AI in marketing evolving over the next five years? How do you see it growing in the next five years?

[Participant]

I think Gen AI is going to keep growing, become more and more important. You're going to have people that are going to be specialised in that. There are big opportunities.

To get back to your previous question, there are big opportunities from a people standpoint. Tomorrow, you can become a creative agency and start helping brands create content and you only need to prompt properly. That kind of removes a barrier that used to be an important one.

You used to be forced to know Photoshop, for instance. You don't need that anymore nowadays. That's one opportunity on a personal level.

Can you repeat the question?

[Interviewer]

How do you really see the role of AI in marketing evolving over the next five years?

[Participant]

The Gen AI bit a lot. On the other side, I think there is a lot of excitement. Then people are going to be like, okay, it's actually not the Gen AI part, all the modelling and stuff.

Then people are going to be like, okay, now and it's happening already. I did invest quite a lot of money to use those models, build them, train them on top of my data. The output that I'm getting is not wow.

For most of the time, I could have found that myself. I think there's going to be a big challenge in measuring the uplift that AI brings versus other things. Also, the problem that comes with that, the second thing that I believe people are going to realise is, okay, we have a

problem because if I want to be able to use AI, I need to make sure that I'm properly tracking all the data and that the quality of my data is perfect, etc.

Because otherwise, it gets back to the bias. I do believe that excitement, people test a lot. They realise either it's bringing what they thought or they have shitty data.

Whatever they want to be able to do is not working. They need to fix the basics. It's going to get the excitement down.

They're going to be working on the foundation, the infrastructure, the data, the quality, etc. Then most likely on the longer run, two, three years, it's going to come back again. At that point, companies are going to be much more ready and they're going to be able to really embrace the power of AI per se.

I do believe that today, and especially in the Belgian market, there are not a lot of companies that are ready to use AI.

[Interviewer]

Is it that people are so excited about AI, but they are just throwing it without really thinking about it on the data, but the problem is data is not clean and that's the first step actually that they are missing?

[Participant]

Yeah, from where we sit. I'm not talking about AI in general, but from where we sit, yes, that's very much it.

[Interviewer]

Okay. Do you think there are any ethical considerations or risks associated with using AI in marketing?

[Participant]

Of course, 100%.

[Interviewer]

And could you give some examples of this?

[Participant]

Well, at very different level, already with copy-pasting things in chatGPT, it's already something in chatGPT, but it applies to whatever other things. That's why a lot of companies are either building their own internal chatGPT or they are controlling that, if not refusing employees to work with chatGPT because they don't want to, especially from a coding standpoint, there are a lot of developers that are copy-pasting code pieces into chatGPT. Can you improve it, make it more efficient whatsoever?

That's a big ethical risk. I would say that's one thing, really the privacy aspect, like sharing data and giving information to other organisations that are owned by whom. Very hard to answer that question.

On the other side of the story, I would tend to say yes and no, on the personal aspect, companies using personal data of user to supercharge, to be able to cluster them and better

communicate with them. With the way regulation are evolving from a GDPR standpoint and everything that it takes into account, it's not perfect. I'm not saying that far from it, but there is a direction that comes more or less down to, in order for you to be able to use my data, I need to give you my consent.

If we assume that companies respect that, then there should not be a problem because I'm only going to give you my consent as a user if you bring me value because you are either communicating with me in a way that is personalised or you're bringing me specific offers that are interesting for me, etc. So, that aspect, there is a risk for sure because still today there are many companies that are not respecting those regulations and they're tracking any kind of data and potentially even sharing those data with third party players. But at least there is today a frame that exists, which is not perfect, but which sets a direction which is normally a good one.

[Interviewer]

You talked about companies inputting sensitive data into ChatGPT. I know, and it's more from a personal standpoint, that the ChatGPT team, for instance, has a setting that says that your data that you input into ChatGPT will not be used as a training set. Can that be trusted, do you think?

[Participant]

I don't know. We don't know. There are no way we can answer this.

[Interviewer]

Then I have a question. We are entering now my last two questions. What advice would you give to other marketing professionals considering to adopt AI technologies?

[Participant]

Don't forget that it's only a tool. Start by defining what you want to be able to do from a business standpoint and then think about how AI can or cannot help you achieve your goals. Again, don't do AI for the sake of doing AI.

[Interviewer]

Okay. Is there anything else about the impact of AI marketing that you think is important for us to discuss that we might not have covered during this interview?

[Participant]

I think we touched upon most of the aspects as far as I'm concerned, at least.

### 9.2.7. Interview 7

Date & Time: 04/07/2024 16:00

[Interviewer]

So I first have two personal and organisational questions just for me to understand your background better. So first of all, can you introduce yourself and describe your current role in marketing?

[Participant]

Okay. So I am expert 7. I have a background of, or I have had an experience of 24 years predominantly in commercial functions.

So marketing, sales, and service. And I have been working at Tech Data, actually where I met Kelly. So that's distribution of IT.

Then I went to Telenet. We also worked together there. And then I went to Microsoft until last year, but then my role ceased to exist, and then I stopped working at Microsoft.

And so for the first time in my life, Laurent, I took a little bit of time just to pause and actually to study. So I have been studying AI in marketing. So through elevator, that was.

And the reason why I actually did that is because when you're in a work environment, it's not that they kind of, and at Microsoft for sure, so it's not that they don't kind of acknowledge or stimulate you to try out those tools, but sometimes the guiding framework to, okay, how is this now really helping me in my day-to-day work and in my day-to-day tasks is not always there. So that's the reason why I took on those studies. So I did AI in marketing.

I did AI in business strategy at MIT. That was a really cool one, I have to say. But that already went next level technically in that sense that it explains machine learning really good and natural language processing, robotics, but I can imagine that that is already for a lot of business people, that is already too far ahead.

And so even in my conversation, when I bring up those terminologies, people, I'm losing people. So you need to keep it super simple and super kind of grounded. And then I did one at Yale, and that was connected leadership.

And the reason why, because I think, but actually the landing of AI in, actually it's generative AI, and we need to be very specific. It's generative AI, maybe for context. When in 2018, I did a study at Microsoft across Western Europe for a little bit of, yeah, I think it was a little bit less than 300 enterprise organisations on how they already have been adapting AI in their organisation, okay?

I did that together with Ernst and Young, and what came out of that study at that time is that only 4% of those, and we're talking really big enterprise organisations in Western Europe, only 4% of those could be kind of stamped with advanced. And advanced is still like, that even at that time advanced, it was okay, they were doing pilot projects. They had it in kind of a small piece or one department in the organisation, but it was not scaled across the organisation yet, okay?

So actually, if we now move a little bit to 2022, it's true, yeah, November 30, 2022, so the launch of generative AI, to me it was like still a lot of companies were at that same level, okay? Now generative AI made it, democratised it and made it super easy to kind of access everything. But I think the kind of the retranslation, that's why I was asking, okay, which are the tasks that you use AI with, the retranslation of, okay, how can we use generative AI in our day-to-day tasks?

And how actually a team or a manager or a director can actually ask their employees like, okay, how do you use AI now in your day-to-day work? What are the different tasks that you need to do in your department? Which are the tasks that can be automated?

Which are the tasks where you can use it as an assistant? Which are the tasks where you can actually let it do its own thing? So kind of take the ownership, that is an exercise that not really happens yet in a lot of organisations.

So that adoption and that learning curve and that integration of computers and humans so that you really make a core intelligence, that is for me in the upcoming three to five years. So the reason why I also follow those trainings is for me to be ahead of the curve and to help organisations and people in that adoption of AI, yeah? Now, if I go and talk to and I'm having conversations with the Deloitte and the KPMGs and so on, and if I bring that narrative or that conversation, a lot of people do not yet understand it.

So I sometimes need to kind of revert back and keep it super simple and say, okay, I have my background in marketing, sales, and service. And I always had the focus on revenue generation, revenue growth, market share, thought leadership, customer acquisition and engagement, and account engagements. So that's a little bit my background.

I've done different functions. I have business development, integrated marketing manager, go-to-market leads, and so on and so forth. But always in those kinds of commercial domains.

And with, of course, the interest in data and AI, but very much applied interest. And then also in industries. So I have the last five years at Microsoft, it was with an in-depth industry knowledge with commercial, retail, FSI, manufacturing, and energy.

Just to understand, okay, how technology is being applied in those surroundings, which is totally different. I saw a manufacturing organisation is totally different than retail stores, and so on and so forth. So that's a little bit my background.

So at this very moment, I'm actually looking for a job, but I'm very, how do I say that? I still have to, not I have to, but I would like to work for another 20 years. So I'm very picky on the jobs that I would like to do.

And so that's context. Interesting.

[Interviewer]

Before asking my next question, I will just connect my headset because it's screaming in my ears that the battery is almost low. So here we go.

Okay. My second question is how long have you been working in marketing? And more importantly, what significant changes have you observed over the years?

[Participant]

So the answer is 24 years. And the major changes. Let me start from the beginning.

I think a little bit over 20 years ago, there was still a lot of mass communication being sent out. And then you had the movement of one to few and one to one communication. And I do have to say that is something that always kind of in one way or another kind of still comes back.

But it was way more about digitisation actually 20 years ago, because digitisation as opposed to the human elements of it. So I think that's number one, kind of the movement from mass communication to customised segmented one-on-one communication. That's the first one.

The second one is the move to digital communication. So, and digital being at first just about emails and so on and so forth, but then the integration of social media, of course your websites, but then you had the apps. So with the iPhone that is landing and the kind of, okay, how to manage your own subscription and so on and so forth.

We also at Telenet, we launched the yellow TV application. So that was just before Netflix. So actually all of those own experiences that you can create through app development, but also the movement on devices.

So where you had to do it person by person or human interaction, you went to digital, you went to that one-on-one interaction on the phone. So that's also a big one. So that's number, so I have, so from mass to one-to-one, from in-person to digital, from website and regular to actually apps and then new experiences that were there.

And then I think for me also the continuous feedback loop in that sense is that customers being more integrated in, okay, the usage and the adoption of products and what their experiences are, okay. And how you can kind of filter that one back into the organisation to adapt your products. So more sprint and more agile developments.

And then at Microsoft, it was actually very much about marketing automation. And why is that an important one? Because even, so let's say the first 14 years, so you have data points at hand when you go digital and you can say, okay, so many visits and so many interactions and so on and so forth, but you don't really have the understanding of who it is that is interacting.

And for me, when I started at Microsoft 10 years ago and we started with marketing automation, it was actually, for me, the big lever for marketing transformation in that sense is that before you did all different marketing campaigns in all the different countries and all the different areas around the world and you spent money, but not everywhere there was kind of the same ROI or the same efficiency in your marketing activities. By asking with every activity that you do to kind of make sure that the people that are attending or downloading register, so attending for an event or downloading a white paper or whatever, you can gather an immense amount of data, but more so insights on who are the people that are interacting? What are they exactly interacting with?

And then actually in the backend, but you can imagine with the scale that we had at Microsoft is that in the backend, we could actually see that, okay, if these accounts or these specific roles are interacting with that type of content or that type of events or that type of webinars,

actually the likeliness that they go onto a deal, so effective revenue creation, triples by three, four, depending on the product.

Sometimes it was three, four, sometimes it was even five to 10, so that you can actually build from a marketing a revenue kind of potential. I'm not gonna say that it was always an impact, but the revenue potential, and that was for the first time because most of the times like marketing is doing stuff and sales is saying, yeah, I don't have enough leads. So that's where we were at.

Now, at the end at Microsoft, what I do, so where you have the marketing transformation, I'm actually quite convinced that now sales transformation is coming up. And the reason why I'm saying that Laurent is that, yes, you have a lot of digital signals. Those signals flow into the system, ERP, CRM, whatever you name it.

But the salespeople are not yet accustomed to kind of grasp those signals and understand that, okay, I can have an account meeting with my customer. My customer is going to say one, two, three, four, five is important for me, but actually based on the digital signals, press releases and social interactions and so on and so forth that are there, you can actually gather maybe potentially an opportunity six, seven, eight, nine, 10. Yeah.

And salespeople don't have that in their fingertips yet to understand those digital signals to actually convert it into opportunities. Okay, so those are for me the big changes. I think, yeah, six, seven are there.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect, very interesting. I'll then hop over to the core of this interview about AI and marketing. With my first question being, how would you define AI in the context of marketing?

[Participant]

I think that there are different levels. So the first one is, okay, let's split it up. So you have generative AI, you have machine learning, you have process automation and you have natural language processing because I think you need to make the distinction.

I think a lot of people stay now at the generative AI piece. So if we start there is that, what I think is fantastic is that if you can use generative AI to assist you and to challenge you as to your point, to assist you and to challenge you in the creation of a content marketing strategy, a sales and a marketing alignment, my KPI framework. So all the different kind of elements that come to play in a go-to-market or in a marketing position, you can ask the support of a ChatGPT, a Gemini and so on to help you out. Now, I do think that you need to know or you need to understand first of all, the basic concepts. If you don't know the concepts, then you start asking a little bit of random questions. So concepts help that you know them, frameworks help if you know them.

So for instance, I actually did something now for KPMG and that was about, okay, a stakeholder and engagement framework. So if that is there, if we have that framework, how would you apply that in this situation and what are the different kind of activities that you then do? So I think an understanding and a knowledge of frameworks is quite essential to even uptune the quality of what's getting out of generative AI.

And then the prompting. I do have to say that if, there are so many different ways of prompting and that was actually for me when I did the AI marketing course is like understanding how you can play with it and how you can upscale also again, the level of quality that comes out of it is fantastic. What I do, I'm not gonna say struggle with, but from the moment that you use a lot of different yeah, GPTs or generative AI, you have Mid-Journey, you have DALL-E, but you have of course free versions and you have paying versions. I think from the moment that you start using a lot of paying applications, we saw that actually when mobile hits and you had the applications on the iPhone and then eventually on Android as well. So there were a lot of paying applications. So it can become very costly on a monthly base.

And I think this is the same with ChatGPT or with generative AI as well is that you need to kind of test and trial a lot of applications now to see, okay, what is really resonating with me and what is delivering me the quality that I want. So you need to explore and pilot and then kind of tune down, but you need to invest in it. You need to invest time, you need to invest prompting, you need to invest sometimes a little bit of money in it.

So that's the first thing, generative AI. The second thing, I think the fact that with natural language processing, I think we only scratched the surface now as to your point that if you kind of do it on audio and you ask some questions there is that imagine all the different kind of tasks or processes that you have now in a business organisation that can be supported by the usage of a chat GPT. I think what is quite essential there is that how can we make sure that it's very consistent in the answers that it's giving back?

And that you can ask it 30 minutes later and it gives you another answer or it gives you kind of a tweaked answer. Is how can you make sure that the consistency is there from a business perspective?

[Interviewer]

I lost you for like 30 seconds. I'm on my hotspot, it's 24.

[Participant]

Shall I pause for a moment?

[Interviewer]

No, no, it's pretty okay. I can hear you fine, so we can go on.

[Participant]

Okay, so I think natural language process is a quite essential one because I think that's the reason why it's becoming so democratised. Absolutely, that's it. And then machine learning, I think with the enormous amount of data that is being generated, I also wanna kind of, I don't know what your experiences are, but the reality is that in business life, when I created the report on AI like five, six years ago at Microsoft, there were a lot of people that were saying, yeah, it's all cool, but I don't have the data at hand in my organisation.

So then we actually launched the paper on intelligent driven organisations on you need to make sure that your basics are fine, your infrastructure is fine, that you have a data platform that you can play with internal and external data. And I think that is still a lot of work in progress in a lot of organisations. So making sure that the data is at hand on-prem in the clouds, making sure that there was a data platform there and then start playing with your AI.

So hence your machine learning is an enormous growth potential, but a lot of them are not there yet. And then for me, robotics process automation or robotics, that is very much in the domain where I was the last in manufacturing that is so advanced. We had actually...

[Interviewer]

I lost you again. Hello? Hello, hello, you're back.

Yes, I'm back. Sorry.

[Participant]

No worries, no worries. So for robotics process automation, I think so, probably in manufacturing, but you need to kind of look at it with a broader perspective. So everything that robotic process automation can actually also in marketing, potentially enhance in interactions in how do you interact with customers?

How do you apply to customers? How do you make sure that they have a customised service and so on and so forth? So I think all four of them have tremendous potential value.

I think Gen AI is the most common and the most known, but the others will also kind of help out. And I think for me, specifically machine learning is, if we talk about revenue generation, like, okay, who are the customers that are driving a lot of revenue? What are the interactions?

Who are the people that are interacting and so on and so forth? That will be a game changer.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. You asked me the questions before we started, but I have this question for you too. Can you describe some specific AI tools and technologies that you currently use or have used in your marketing activities?

[Participant]

I think for me, predominantly it is ChatGPT, MidJourney, DALL-E, and so kind of the image generation stuff. And I'm playing around with Gemini now as well. So what I'm trying to do is, I think it's a little bit, my son is now 15 and he learns at school with every source that you have, you need to have a critical kind of mindset to analyse if this is the right source, yes or no.

I'm trying to do the same. So I'm trying it out on ChatGPT, I'm trying it out on Gemini. Claude, I haven't tried yet. So, but I'm trying to open up the perspective and see, okay, what are the different insights that is being brought? So, and the most, when I use it, it's to me like, to your point, sometimes it can be very, when my son was studying for his exams and we were kind of in doubt on something on chemistry, I asked ChatGPT a little bit of help and I said, okay, please explain it to me so I can use it for those kinds of tasks. But to me predominantly, it's in business kind of, if I need to make a plan, if I need to make a strategy and I then mostly use it to challenge me.

So, and I also explained that to other people already as well, is that where previously, most of my time went, okay, even through Google, you were searching, but you kind of review everything and so on and so forth. You spend time in kind of aggregating the data and trying

to make a storey out of it, is that you now say, okay, I have a wild idea, can you help me out already with structuring? And then, you know, ChatGPT already, it gives you a lot of reply.

And then I actually always have like, okay, hold on, hold on, because now I need to take time to read everything, to see what is there, to understand what is there and to also based on my experience and the frameworks that I know, validate it. So it's kind of a different kind of time spent.

[Interviewer]

Okay. Just a side note, so you talked about being challenged by using and ChatGPT and Gemini, et cetera. There's actually a tool, it's 29 euros per month, it's dust.tt. And actually I don't have it, but someone else showed it to me two days ago. If you ask it a prompt, you can, before asking your prompt, you do at ChatGPT at Gemini at cloud. When you type enter, you're gonna get simultaneously and the answer of ChatGPT and Gemini and cloud. And you can then in one window, compare it with each other and actually make a summary based on the three answers.

So it's centralised the, all the models together and you have even more, other than ChatGPT cloud. So, dust.tt. Dust.tt. I also discovered it this week. So you can try it for 15 days for free apparently.

Well, fantastic.

[Participant]

Thank you for the tip.

[Interviewer]

And so you talked about the Gen AI tools you use and have you used at Microsoft for instance, before the entire Gen AI thing, what were the other AI tools that you used?

[Participant]

Well, the thing is that actually, we were one big guinea pig at Microsoft because you're a big organisation of more than 300,000 people all around the world. And we actually played around with a lot of tools that were not named Gen AI at the time. One of them was Delve.

And Delve was actually like, okay, let's say that I have an assignment that I need to give a presentation to a manufacturing customer next week or to a retail customer, it doesn't matter about Omni channel, that I could actually go into Delve and that I can say, okay, render me all the presentations on Omni channel retail, which may be specific in FMCG. So, and then the system would allow me to go and search all of the content that was there and all of the presentations of all my colleagues around the world. And it would kind of render me all of the different results.

Okay. Now, and now I'm talking about like three, four years ago. So instead of starting from scratch, that was, okay, can I already have a look of what maybe some colleagues have created?

But of course, colleagues, I can ask you if you are a colleague, but I don't always know who is Laurent in let's say Korea or in the US and so on and so forth. So it allowed us to spider actually internally in the organisation to peer alike presentations so that I could kind of

maybe be inspired, but also kind of take some concepts out of there that I say, okay, this could also be relevant for my customer, yes or no. So, yes, there were for sure applications there, but not under the brand, under the umbrella or under the brand of AI or Gen AI.

The marketing automation that we had as well. So that is already seven years in place. That's machine learning all over.

The only thing that was, is that core kind of, how do I say that? They put some borders around it to say, okay, these are the limitations of what you can do in the local markets. So what we could do was, okay, we can do an event, we can create an event page.

It needed to adhere to those criteria. And then in the backend, that was connected to the marketing automation. So that all the data that was there flew in.

And because there was a very big kind of, and the risk about compliancy, data, privacy, and so on and so forth. So that's the reason why they put some borders around it. But then of course, also generated quite fast, like, okay, based on this criteria and this process and this kind of stream, this is what we see coming out of it.

Because then it made a connexion from marketing to revenue in the CRM system. So, yes, there were a lot of those. But not yet.

So, and now it's co-pilot. For a lot of them, we are using a, it's co-pilot. And then they did it, but we already had that as well in Outlook.

And so like suggestions, okay, this is what you can suggest on timings for meetings, what you can suggest on proposals for emails and so on and so forth. But it was just not under that name.

[Interviewer]

And the internal tool, Delph, I think you called it. It's actually, was it like a chat GPT? Was it like a large language model that you needed to prompt or?

[Participant]

Well, it was not prompting. So it was actually, you needed to just to go, it was web-based, web browser interface. And you could just like Google search or like Bing search.

You could just like search it.

[Interviewer]

Okay.

[Participant]

Not prompt it.

[Interviewer]

Okay, okay.

[Participant]

Yeah.

[Interviewer]

Perfect. How has AI impacted your marketing strategies and campaign effectiveness if this is applicable to your work?

[Participant]

I think, again, I'm gonna give you, so on Monday, I had a meeting with a person at KPMG and it was, so every year, let me, I'll rephrase. So KPMG is a partner of Microsoft, okay? And they need to create, every year they need to create a partner plan.

They need to tell what they're going to do. And that person that I had a conversation with was kind of sharing with me two levels, like, okay, business-wise, this is what we'd like to do with the challenges that he was facing, but also kind of human-wise. And so how to build that trust relationship, how to make sure that the perception of KPMG changes a little bit because they're not being perceived as a little bit boring or dull, but sometimes they're so customer-centric and they wanna stay so loyal to the customer, which I think is fantastic.

But if you look at Microsoft perception, that is okay. How sooner we can close the deal, the better it is, but that is not always in the advantage of the customer. So that's a little bit of a value kind of divergence that they have there.

So I started off from that, and then I actually looked, okay, what are the priorities? Because the fiscal year of Microsoft started now, July, what are the priorities in this fiscal of Microsoft? What are the priorities of KPMG?

So I asked ChatGPT to give me that. I double-checked a little bit with the year reports and what I saw on the web, just to double-check. And then I said, okay, let's now match these two. What are the kind of the three priorities that are common priorities where they feel both at ease? And what is the market potential of that one in Belgium if it already had those numbers available? And then I had as a plan B, Europe.

Europe was okay. And then I said, okay, now let's apply that framework, the stakeholder framework, and let's see, okay, let's make that tangible. So I actually, I use it when I do kind of these assignments, Laurent, again and again and again, just to challenge me and to help me out, but also to help me structure.

And the feedback that I then get is that, okay, the level of quality or the level of structure in how I can take people in my story, and I'm cool. Because it helps me simply my presentation, and it helps kind of onboard people. So it impacts better quality of the things that I deliver.

People think that sometimes I spent like five or 10 days working on it, whilst actually I can do it in two days. And I wanna say that, I wanna kind of nuance it a little bit, is that first I tried to in my head, like, okay, what is the prompt that I'm gonna do? And you try out different prompts.

And then, okay, it renders you so much information, and then I start reading it, and then I put it aside for a day, because then I process it in my head, and then I take it back, and then I begin structuring it again, and then I'm asking help on it again. So in my all of the time, it could potentially take five or 10 days to create it, but with intervals. I just, and the reason

why I'm saying that, because it's an important thing, it kind of helps, it kind of allows me to integrate thinking time.

I think that's an essential one, because people have been used to working like, and working, and working, and working, and working, but not taking time to think things through.

[Interviewer]

So for you, does it save time? But in the end, you take the same amount of time, but the time saved can then now be applied to this thinking time.

[Participant]

Yes, yes. Which gives me, as a person, a better feeling, in that sense, like, okay, I had some time to digest it, and I had some time to even make it better, hence my quality output. And it's also the feedback that I get.

And I think also when I was doing my assignments for my studies, it really gives it an up-notch level in quality output. And in quality output, in that sense, that I have been used to talking English for 10 years, Laurent, but you need to be aware is that it's not always with English native people that you speak. So the quality of English is not always that good.

And I think a chat GPT helps me in kind of rephrasing it in wordings that I wouldn't have thought about. Now, sometimes it goes a little bit, ooh, over the fence, and then I kind of adapt it again, like, okay, this is not something that I would be using, but okay. So you need to balance it out a little bit, but make myself better explainable, have a structure that I can onboard people with, and even kind of in visuals and so on and so forth, just have better quality so that you have a better kind of meeting afterwards.

So that's, and time for sure, yes. But in a win, yeah.

[Interviewer]

Okay. All again, don't know if it's applicable, but can you discuss some challenges you faced when integrating AI into your marketing strategies?

[Participant]

I think, and now I'm going back to my Microsoft. So- That's fine. I think the biggest challenge is, first of all, data.

So what is, there is a tremendous amount of data in all of the different systems, but how can I bring that data to life so that it's really valuable for me as a marketer in my day-to-day job, or for a salesperson that I work with, or for a service person that I work with? So that also means that you need to be kind of educated in, okay, what are the data labels and what are the data kind of pieces that I can play with to create something? And I think that's a big challenge because a lot of people don't have that understanding or don't have that knowledge.

That's also the reason why I followed the training at MIT, because I think going one level deeper to a little bit of more technical level just to understand it, and even that is just level 200, let's say level 300. It's not that deep, but I think a lot of people don't have that extra level to kind of retranslate what data and technology can do for you in your day-to-day job. So that's the first one.

The second one is the fact that not everybody is equally advanced in using these tools. So that, and I think it will become more and more prominent that you will see to your point, it's becoming a disadvantage if you don't use it as a student. I'm convinced that it will be the same on the workforce, but the people are not that, there is not yet that sense of urgency.

Okay. For some reason. Or maybe, and that's why, because I had another conversation this week, there is disbelief.

And I'm going to explain to you. So there was a young guy that I was also talking with and he was saying, yeah, Leentje, we did kind of, we did a project for a company. They actually asked a regular company to do market research.

It took four months to do that market research because of surveys and so on and so forth. And they had to interview people, blah, blah, blah, blah. And actually we were capable of doing the same exercise through AI, all different kinds of tools, in a week.

And they actually, they had the same results and what they suggested as okay, things to do, went even level, five levels deeper than what the regular marketing survey agency had proposed. And he said, the problem that I have, if I go to those potential customers is that they don't believe me that I can do it in one week as opposed to four months. Okay.

So I think, yeah, I think one of the big challenges will be the disbelief of people that are now still in their regular functions, because they don't understand yet what the impact can be. And that's also something that I noticed in my conversations, by the way. So sometimes, and that's very kind of contradictory is that sometimes you will need to ask, okay, what is regularly the time that you do for market research?

Four months. What if we can do it in three months for you? They will already start saying, I don't believe you.

I don't believe you. I don't believe you. But you can do it.

You also know, you can do it in less than three months. So it's a little bit, okay, how do you kind of repackage it so that you onboard people and that they feel at ease and that they don't kind of mistrust it? I think that that's another thing that I see happening now that will have an enormous impact.

And I think people will kind of, because of the fear of losing their job, people will push and kind of say no first. So you need to kind of be very gentle on how you bring your project.

[Interviewer]

This is maybe, it comes up to my mind right now and it's more my opinion, but are they not gonna lose their job more easily if they don't hop on the AI train than if, yeah, than if they start using it as a second brain, as an assistant instead of an enemy?

[Participant]

I totally hear you. And you're right. But the thing is that I think, and that's the reason why I followed the Connected People or the Connected Leadership thing is that you still work with people, yeah?

And people have their own kind of domain or territory or department or budget that they're responsible for, okay? And they have been working for 30, 40, 50 years in that sense that, okay, the more people that I have that are reporting to me, the more budget that I have, I am more important, okay? If I come in tomorrow and I can say, okay, whilst you now have a budget of 1 million Laurent, actually what you're continuously delivering today, you can actually do it for half a million.

You would assume that they say fantastic, come over, bring it to me. People will not easily say that because then they lose power in the organisation. And that's the battle that is going to happen now.

So you have the efficiency of the technology and the technology is already there and you can do it. And you will be the youngsters coming in, but there of course are already different generations that are still on the workforce that have their way of working. And they have their way of working of, oh, this is how we have been doing it for so many years and this is working like it is.

And the reason why, and it's a very interesting distinction between Europe and China, by the way. So I'm following China quite heavily as well, is that where in Europe it is, when it's not broke or when it's not broken, leave it and you don't need to fix it. Please just leave it as that, because it's working.

Whilst in China, it is like, okay, let's change it again and again and again just to get it better and to make it better. That's also the reason why China is so advanced at this very moment. But the mindset is totally different.

You see? So they're actually in China, they're continuously checking like, okay, can we improve? Can we improve?

Can we improve? Can we improve? We in Europe, we say like, okay, please leave it as this because it's working now and then we don't need to fix it.

So I think mindsets and people will become crucial.

[Interviewer]

Okay. Very interesting, the human aspect of things. I hadn't looked at it that way before.

You already talked about it through another person about market research. I don't know if you have done market research or customer segmentation. If so, how has AI changed the way you approach market research and do customer segmentation?

And if you didn't do it, it's also fine. We can help you do the next question.

[Participant]

Well, the thing is that it's not an in-depth market research that I did, but I do ask those questions in chat GPT or others like, okay, who would be the target audience? What are the kind of the values that are important or the kind of the drivers that are important for those audiences? What is the likeliness to buy and so on and so forth?

So those are questions that I'm asking, but I have not yet done a full end-to-end market research through chat GPT. And the thing is, because when I was talking to the other young guy, he was explaining to me what they were doing. And the reason why, what I was asking Laurent is that, okay, but hold on, because where is then the human element of it or the human aspect?

So I'm going to give you an example. So we used to do customer interviews, let's say once a month, we did like 10 interviews or 20, whatever. You need to take some time.

Is it then you then say now to chat GPT, okay, my profile was chief marketing officers of this type of organisations in this kind of industry, in this kind of vertical, with these kinds of challenges. These are the questions. What do you think are the replies that are coming out?

And I'm a little bit, I'm just trying to look for the right word. Hesitant, prudent, is that I would ask it, but I would also check the human, I would also do some human interviews and then kind of combine the both. But because, and the reason why, and that's maybe more important is that I don't know what is the data in the background.

So, you know, it's kind of the full internet of chat GPT and Gemini and so on and so forth, but you don't have the fingertips of, okay, what are the data points now that are running there in the background? It already can give you, for me, it would be a very great starting point to say, okay, give it to me. What do you think are the insights?

And then I would validate it with effective human interviews.

[Interviewer]

Yeah. Okay. You talked about using Dall-E and other, I didn't know which was the one.

[Participant]

Majority.

[Interviewer]

Majority, okay, of course. How do you see AI affecting the creative aspects of marketing such as content creation and design?

[Participant]

So, I think what is fantastic is that if you have an idea and I start typing then, and this is my idea, and then you can put it in chat GPT, and then it can create a really, really, really nice blog article for you. And then you can still tweak it. So, I think that is great.

But on the other hand, because I'm following a lot of what's going on on AI, I think the element of copywriting and ownership, intellectual property is a very distinctive element that we need to explore and see what's going on. And that refers actually back to, okay, what is in the background? What is the data source and who owned it?

And did they give their authority and so on and so forth? So, would I use it? Yes, of course I would use it.

And I think I may be here, I'm totally not on advanced level because I know that you can put in a lot of things like, okay, make sure that it's more easy readable for search engine

optimisation and so on and so forth and put those data labels in the back end. But I do think we are going in rightfully so, discussion about, okay, are people really allowing, like the Scarlett Johansson voice thing of ChatGPT, are people really allowing their content to be used to create something new?

[Interviewer]

Okay, very interesting. I don't know, again, if this is applicable, this is about campaign effectiveness, but what impact has AI had on marketing analytics and the measurement of your campaign effectiveness?

[Participant]

Yeah, I think what, and that's something that I learned in my training is that, again, if you ask it well, it can help you really create a full on matrix from the very basic daily metrics that you need to follow up to, okay, what is my lifetime value of a customer on a year on year basis? And kind of design to me what I need to discuss or check daily, weekly, monthly, and so on and so forth. I know ChatGPT can do that for you.

I know that if you have those data points, you can render it in and say, okay, give me an analysis and so on and so forth, it can even create graphs for you. Sometimes I'm a little bit frustrated because I see actually a graph being created and that's the one that I want, and then it kind of re-transforms in the last two seconds to something that I don't want, and I say, no, no, no, no, no, it's the other one. So I think you can put everything in there and you can ask, okay, help me analyse it.

I think what is essential is again, how you prompt it, what is the framework that you put out and maybe more importantly, Laurent, if you work in a business environment or in a department, what is the framework that is being offered within that department? And so that everybody works with that same framework. I think that's an important one.

But yes, maybe one element to that is because I think data and the ownership of data, I'm convinced that actually people in an organisation sometimes just use data from that organisation, upload it into ChatGPT, so that's a tricky thing. So a lot of kind of education will need to happen on, are you allowed to upload that data and can you do it on the work environment, ChatGPT, whatever, instead of the regular one.

[Interviewer]

That's interesting, I actually have a question about this and I can hop over immediately to it. Do you think there are any ethical consideration or risks associated with using AI in marketing? You already partially answered it with uploading sensitive data into ChatGPT.

I don't know if you have anything to add to that answer.

[Participant]

I think you need to be, listen, so we were sometimes, because I've always been in digital, and sometimes we were referred to as the shadow IT department, because we were doing stuff that we didn't always kind of define as a project because then it took long and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah to go through regular IT processes. So I think it's good that you explore and that you experiment. I am convinced more and more, and that's based on experience, fully transparently, is that it's becoming quite essential that as a manager or as a leader, you educate your team members on the potential impacts of, okay, the things that they are doing.

Now, I think, Laurent, if you have a very open conversation with your team members and people try stuff out, and when there is an openness and you can come back to the table and you can say, okay, I tried this out and this is my experience, I think you need to set up such an open and a transparent work environment. Because then if you kind of debate on that one, you can then say, okay, but let's put the guardrails now here because this is important. People will understand, because if you can then explain also, okay, what the potential impact is, yeah, you know, okay, it goes into the big generative AI machine and so on and so forth, and you don't have access.

Actually, it's something that we've learned with the upcoming of social, and then Facebook, you were able to kind of allow people to log in with their Facebook logins. All that data went also into Facebook. And in the beginning, when I was at Telenet, I was like, come on, come on, because people know their Facebook login. And there was somebody that was working on the data team and he was like, no, no, no, no, that's way too, because then Facebook has all of our data and so on and so forth. And at that time, I was like, you're being ridiculous. We can advance and we can speed up.

But he was right. So I think you need to be very aware, cautious, maybe a little bit, but healthy cautious of the things that you're doing and you need to educate your peers and your team on that. Yeah.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. We'll talk a bit more about the future of AI. Now I have two questions about it.

First of all, what opportunities do you believe AI presents for the marketing industry?

[Participant]

I think before I go to opportunities, I think it's a threat.

[Interviewer]

Okay.

[Participant]

And I'll explain why. So also I had another conversation and it was about an agency kind of setup. And it was also two older guys of in their fifties, Laurent, I don't know why. It's always guys in their fifties, but okay, it was a reality. And I'll give you the context. It was about a managing director role of a creative agency.

And I said like, okay, I would expect my team members to try stuff out through AI. But again, in a kind of a guardrail, so the surrounding or environment. And those guys were looking at me and they were like, Leentje that is a very sensitive topic. And I said, of course, that you don't kind of open the windows and put it all out there. No, you need to have your guardrails and your guidelines and so on and so forth. But I said, okay, just to your point, so that you have a kind of an elevated, a co-intelligence and that you can bring more quality to the table.

That would be an interesting debate. So if we have both an assignment, you do it first on generative AI, I do it as well. Then we come together and then you don't have one and one is three, but then potentially you have 10, because of the insights that we got both through generative AI. And they said, no. And I was, okay, but marketing or marketing budgets today

in every organisation, in B2B, there was actually a little bit more budget than in B2C, which is very interesting because normally it's the other way around. But the budget that is there is on average 8% of the total revenue on an annual base, only 8%.

That 8% is being split up mostly in four big buckets. The first bucket is your people. The second bucket is everything around marketing technology, what you're using.

Think about subscriptions for Chats GPT and so on, or other stuff, market to marketing automation and all the rest. The third thing is everything around agencies. So to help you out to create this.

And then the fourth thing is your media spend, social, whatever, advertising and so on. Now, if you have those four buckets and you know that gen AI can help you with your creative tremendously, the part of agency will probably decrease. And then in the very optimistic or opportunistic thing, you can still think, yes, I still have 8% and maybe that 8% I can reallocate to people and education and skills and so on and so forth.

But with the reality of the economic situation today, they will probably decrease from eight to 7%. So for me, it's a threat because in the kind of the cost conscious world that we're now in, people try to use it as a dismissal of marketing. Do the same for less.

Technology can do it better, more qualitatively, but you still need to have people that are kind of, that have an expertise and an ownership. And to the point that I was saying in the beginning, I asked ChatGPT, but I have a little bit of experience already and I can evaluate like, okay, is this right or is this not right? Or how can I nuance it?

Not everybody has that. You will have a different framework than I have. But if we bring the two together, we can balance one another out, which is fantastic.

And I think if you kind of decrease the number of people in marketing because of that cost efficiency, it's first and foremost a threat. It is also an opportunity, but you need to play it well. And I think the opportunity that I do see is that if you can better connect your marketing efforts to effective revenue impacts and sales impacts, then you have a winning combination.

That is still a very big gap for a lot of companies. So it's still like, yeah, marketing is doing stuff, but as sales people are saying, yeah, but marketing is not helping blah, blah, blah, blah. It's the same shit all over, not all over again, it hasn't stopped.

What I do see for instance, by the way, at Microsoft is that the number of people that are in marketing is decreasing heavily. And what they then do is actually some of those tasks, it's not that you don't need to do those tasks anymore, but they kind of heal it over to the sales organisation. But sales organisation doesn't always have marketing in their fingertips.

Sometimes they think they do, but even I had continuously to explain to sales people, but hey, this is not how you do marketing anymore. And now it's the time of modern marketing. This is how you do it and so on and so forth.

And what I mean with modern marketing is that you don't do an event on your own and then you just do it and customers are coming over. No, no, now you need to do an event so that you can grasp the data, you can grasp that engagement, you put it into the system and it

counts back up to the overall view. So I'm a little bit afraid that if that connexion is not made, that the sales will go solo slim and do the things on their own, but not capturing those engagements and those data points into the all up system, which is in the end all up for the company a disadvantage.

[Interviewer]

I see it's five o'clock. I still have three more questions. I don't know if you have- It's fine, it's fine.

[Participant]

Okay. I'm talking so you can talk.

[Interviewer]

Still about the future. How do you see the role of AI in marketing evolving over the next five years?

[Participant]

Five years is a long time, right? Especially in AI. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Let me rephrase. And it's just based on what I see happening. So if I have now interviews, Laurent and I explain what I have been doing at Microsoft for the last 10 years.

People on the other side of the table, they look at me and they say, whew, Leentje, we are not even at your starting point of 10 years ago. So I'm equally surprised, sometimes a little bit baffled, like that that is a situation. And then specifically in Belgium, where we're a little bit in the middle of the group and sometimes a little bit at the end of the group.

It is sometimes different in countries like at the UK and so on where they're a little bit more advanced. And actually, yeah, it's actually UK and France at this very moment, not even Germany. So, and Nordics as well, but okay, there are little or less people.

So I think integrating AI, and then I mean the full AI, Laurent, machine learning and so on and so forth. I think that will land in the coming three to five years so that people really start to understand, okay, what is the added value of it all and why they need to connect it to those registration pages to eventually have a bigger impact for the organisation. So I think that's that.

I think Gen AI, it's actually being retranslated into a lot of key, sorry, a lot of companies are now buying the licences or the subscriptions for co-pilots, yeah. And co-pilots being used as, okay, how can you save up on time in meetings with transcripts and meeting preparations and scheduling meetings and so on and so forth. But that is in that kind of that admin piece of the pie, not yet in that creative piece of the pie.

So I think that will have the biggest leap in the next three years, but it will depend very much on the people that are in the organisation and the openness to explore and to experiment. And to your point, when I was following the AI and marketing, a lot of people that were there were from scale-ups, startups, smaller organisations. So not the big corporate ones.

Now, most of the time, the most people work at those big corporate ones. So there will be some delay there. And the reason why is that because like big consultancy companies are not

yet, are not capable, are not capable of showcasing what is the value impact of using AI and marketing.

[Interviewer]

We don't have enough previous data.

[Participant]

Numbers, numbers. So is the impact cost reduction? Is the impact additional revenue and value creation?

Is the impact that you can engage a customer sooner, better, more customised? Is the impact that you will gain market share? There has not yet been kind of a rephrasing of using Gen AI or AI in those financial KPIs.

From the moment that somebody is capable, there will be already people capable of doing that, but it's a minority. But from the moment that you're capable of retranslating it in such a way, it will do an uptake. But I think bridging from, I'm doing a prompt now and I'm asking something on a framework or a strategy thing, or I'm even asking a KPI framework to, okay, what will be the effective impact on my potential revenue numbers?

I think it's very, very low of people that are asking those questions today through a chat GPT, even a business version. But it can be, you know that, I know that. And so from the moment that we have data points at our fingertips and we ask it in the right way, we can do an assumption.

But not a lot of people know that already. So, but I think you will need to have some examples in doing that. So honestly, I think actually that Gen AI will have the most impact in the day-to-day life of people.

Planning a trip and so on and so forth. And that they, from that, that that will be the adoption curve. And then they will start exploring, okay, what can I do at work?

Now, there are already people that of course are creating presentations and so on and so forth and wording that they put in presentations. But there is no kind of, how do you say it? It's not an equal adoption in an organisation.

So it's not structured. So it's not, okay, let's start with the marketing department and let's bring them up to that level. Or let's start with the sales department and bring them up to that level.

It's a very individual increase of things. So to your point is that the people that are playing with it now and the people that have a little bit of kind of in their fingertips, how to work with it as you guys as students do, I think that will be the difference in the next three years. But at that same time, with the people that are capable of doing that, that will create a stress momentum with the people that don't know what is going on.

[Interviewer]

They're gonna feel left behind.

[Participant]

Left behind or sometimes, you know, that power play that can come to play. Like, I don't like what you're doing. So, okay, dismiss.

[Interviewer]

Yeah. Okay. My next question then is what advice would you give to other marketing professionals considering adopting AI technologies?

[Participant]

I would say start small. And I think what was my first thought that came to mind was like, I think a lot of things are being branded AI today that are not AI. But they brand it because the board of directors is asking to do something around AI so that they feel at ease. So maybe I should do it differently. Try to find small use cases in marketing where you can have AI come to play. I think lead generation is already a bigger one because you need to have connexions.

But I think maybe kind of helping me out to create a customised, or let's say that we wanna land Azure AI services. Okay, how can I bring it to retail? How can I bring it to manufacturing?

And so on and so forth. So that you can have that creative element with generative AI. Those are the kind of the small or quick wins that you can kind of let come to play so that people already know, okay, we're playing around with it.

But at the same time, you need to work in parallel, making sure that the fundamentals are there, like data, data platform, and so on and so forth, so that you can start playing around with that machine learning that is there. I also think that you need to, as a marketing professional, continuously educate yourself. That will not stop.

To be at least in the train. And at that same time, educate other people that are not marketing savvy and AI savvy, and maybe a combination of both. Yeah, I think to me, it's training, learning, exploring, experimenting, but then kind of retranslate it in an effective use case that you can use in your day to day within your team.

[Interviewer]

Okay, yeah. That's how I would do it. Perfect.

My last question then is, is there anything else about the impact of AI on marketing that you think is important to discuss that we might not have covered during this interview?

[Participant]

Hold on, because I have a OneNote where I have like all different kind of streams of things that I'm monitoring. Let's see if there is one that comes to mind. Hold on.

Yeah. So research we had. Consulting we also had.

So strategy and so on. Tools you also mentioned. I think hardware.

I think what is the potential impact of, you know, those new Nvidia chips and so on and so forth? Because I don't think that we can totally grasp what the potential impact on marketing of those tools or those hardware can be.

[Interviewer]

What do you mean by that?

[Participant]

With the enormous amount of data that they can process in a very little time. So imagine like, okay, I have a customer base. I have all of those data points where normally if you do kind of a analysis at a job, like, okay, give me the slice on industry.

Give me the slice on market segment. Give me the slice on a CFO audience or give me that slice and so on and so forth. Is that you can do it at your fingertips.

And making that available to the people in your organisation that need to work with it and make them understand and help them learn to work with it. So that is that. I think collaborations.

That's maybe an interesting one that we haven't discussed. Like what are the potential collaborations and integrations that you can do? And the reason why I'm saying that, Laurent, is that with the background, Kelly has it as well. I have it as well in customer service is that we used to create a knowledge database and then we replied or people could look it up on the Frequently Asked Questions website and so on and so forth. Is that what are the potential collaborations that you can do with partners to integrate it and to kind of create a service with all of the data points or the services that you have and that they have and create something new? Partnerships.

I think that's a very, very interesting one. And the reason why I'm saying that is that there are now sometimes websites that prevents ChatGPT from rendering and from taking their data. That is going to be an interesting one, I think.

So it kind of alludes also to data licencing and consent and so. Then, yeah, safety, we already discussed, but safety is like, okay, how do you support people? Like, it's a little bit like bias and diversity.

It's so naturally integrated in everything that we do that we don't even realise it. But how do you kind of try to pull that one out? That means that you will need to have a lot of conversations within an organisation about what we're now creating here.

Is this okay? Is this right, what we're doing? And I don't think that at this very moment in organisations, there is enough time for seen to have those conversations even today.

Yeah. So to your point, like, probably you will save time in some other places, but how do you then kind of allocate that time to topics that become very important, like safety and usage and so on? Then for me is people, training and culture.

So how do you help your people to understand experiments and that it's allowed to work with it? So what is it that you can do as a leader today and tomorrow so that AI can become an assistant? And so in a way, if you have a team meeting, you should have kind of an empty seat for AI.

So that is it. Yeah, in a way. I think also for marketing is that where you used to kind of do your websites and search and then you land on the website.

I'm very curious about how can you make sure that you're still visible with your websites by rendering that answer in a chat GPT? So to your point, now you can see the sources already and you can go to those sources, but it will be very interesting. Like we have been working for 20 years in that, okay, let's make sure that we have a good website, that it's usability friendly, that search strings are there and that it's CEO optimised and so on and so forth.

But what will be the impact of our digital shop window or window shop that we had now and in the next three to five years with Gen AI? I think that that would be an interesting one. And then operating models.

How do you make sure that you have an operating model in your organisation where AI is in that?

[Interviewer]

I actually have a question. I think I skipped it unintentionally. Do you remember if I asked a question about how has AI changed the way you analyse and utilise customer data?

[Participant]

You haven't asked it.

[Interviewer]

We talked a lot about data.

[Participant]

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, the thing is that when I was capable of doing it at Microsoft, I was able to check in the marketing automation, like, okay, tell me for this white paper, how many engagements that I had and how many contacts that were playing with that content and how many of those were new, new to Microsoft. I was unable, Laurent, to double click on it so that it gave me a list of Laurent, Leentje, Kelly, and so on and so forth. What was enhanced or integrated or enabled was that that information was integrated into the CRM view. So if you went to customer Neuhaus, for instance, that you could see Kelly and Laurent. Or if you went to customer, let's say Microsoft, that you could see Leentje. Okay. So what I'm trying to say with that is that I think it's a good thing that you can not always kind of double click and see that list of customers. What we did was we sliced them.

So what we were able to do is non-identifiable data. So Laurent and Kelly were in retail, Leentje was in tech as an industry and in vertical in a small organisation and a big organisation and so on and so forth. So those slices we were able to do.

So that's kind of, it kind of reframed how we played with data. Where we came from the era of just Excel files with all of the different data points in there is that because there was, because of the very scrutinised way of working with identifiable data, there were a lot of guardrails and a lot of kind of checks beforehand before you could see it, or it was very much in how it was enabled, is that you learn how to work with different data levers or data elements to create your marketing strategy and your go-to markets and your marketing activities actually. So it changed a lot, but it was a new way of thinking, new mindset, yeah.

[Interviewer]

Okay, that's it then for me. A lot of information, thank you very much. I also have a question out of curiosity.

### 9.2.8. Interview 8

Date & time: 05/07/2024 14:00

[Interviewer]

Perfect, and before asking my first questions, I wanted to ask you first if you have any questions for me.

[Participant]

For now, no, I can introduce myself briefly. I work as Generative AI Marketing Manager at Ontex in Belgium, in Aalst. It's a big manufacturer of baby, adult and feminine care, so basically we work with incontinence topic, and we work with hospitals, nursing homes, we work with different retailers, supermarkets all over Europe, and we are expanding our market in USA too. And my responsibilities are to low all costs which are connected with content creation and with marketing, because the budgets are huge for the big company, and there are like some moments which we can change with the help of AI tools. Also, I teach people how to use the AI tools, how to work with it, not to be afraid of AI, that AI will take their jobs, and so on. So, I conduct different workshops, educational materials, and just bring some creative ideas for the marketing and content creation department as well.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. That was actually my first question, if you could introduce yourself and your current role, but perfect. I can then go to the second question.

So, first, I have two personal and organisational questions for me to understand your background, and my second question is how long have you been working in marketing? And what changes have you observed over the years?

[Participant]

In marketing, maybe five years before I was working just in content creation field. Actually, I was starting as a food photographer, so I lived for a few years in Vietnam, and there we had like our small social media marketing agency, and we were doing the content and some marketing for restaurants, bars, and hotels in Vietnam. After that, I switched to marketing and creative direction for e-commerce agencies, and after that AI happened, so yeah, I changed a little bit my way.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. I'll then jump over to the core of this interview about AI. First of all, how would you define AI in the context of marketing?

[Participant]

In the context of marketing, I will define it as just a big creative brain which can help you to leverage all the costs and which can help you to go further and faster to all your goals and not to expand your teams too much.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. Could you describe some specific AI tools and technologies that you currently use in your marketing activities?

[Participant]

Yeah, sure. We work a lot with chatGPT agents, so we create an agent inside the chatGPT for the team for easier work. For example, they even don't need to write prompts, so I create the GPTs, and I put everything like tone of voice, what it has to write, and so on, so the team is just opening their GPT, put the information there.

For example, they need a blog writer about incontinence care, so they have a GPT like incontinence writer, so they can have blogs, they can have newsletters, so each GPT is doing a different field. Then we are using different AI tools to create educational materials because we also have some academy inside our company for nurses, so we use a lot of educational material AI tools. We work a lot with integrating chat bots inside the websites, and now we are figuring out how to create the tool for data analytics because in chat GPT, you cannot put all your data because it's not secure, so we need to create the thing inside the company where the data will be secure.

Midjourney is for creating visuals because Midjourney is now the best one.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. How has AI impacted your marketing strategies and campaign effectiveness?

[Participant]

For now, I cannot say that it's affected too much because we're still analysing all our campaigns, but what I can say for sure is for reducing all the costs because, for example, marketing budget is like 1 million euros, but we can make everything for like 2,000 euros, yes. Now, it depends, of course, how much the enterprise of AI tools cost, but in general, yes, it can be like that.

[Interviewer]

Okay, and so you only use then 2,000 of your 1 million?

[Participant]

Yes, for now, yes, but if we will expand our AI tools, yes, for sure, it will be more.

[Interviewer]

Can you discuss some challenges you faced when integrating AI into your marketing strategies?

[Participant]

Yes, challenges. There are a lot of challenges with data security. There are a lot of challenges on how to create an ecosystem like AI ecosystem in the company because, for example, my goal, how I see it, is not to use 1 million AI tools for everything because people are getting too overload and especially the elderly generations, they don't really want to learn new tools and especially they already have a lot of tools and apps and when you say to them like, hey, you need to learn like five more AI tools, of course, nobody wants to do it. The goal is to create the ecosystem maybe with maximum two or three AI tools which we can use inside the company.

For example, the base can be chatGPT with all their GPT agents, maybe some platform for chatbots and maybe some visual platforms where we can create the content, but we are still on our way because for now, it's a little bit impossible, so we need to wait for a year, maybe

two, three years, and after that, you can create all this ecosystem inside the company, but for now, we can use only separate tools.

[Interviewer]

Okay, so the scattering of the too much tools. Do you maybe have an example of how you addressed some of these challenges if you already were able to address them?

[Participant]

Yeah, actually, first step is to test a lot, then to have like a pilot group of people who will test it as well because I can test. I will say, yeah, okay, it's good, we will use it, but then another people from different departments use it and they have another challenges or problems which I didn't see, so yeah, we have the pilot groups who are testing it and after that, because the company is super big, so we need to have approval from AI console, so we have AI console, the people who are deciding which tools to integrate or not to integrate, and for now, we are testing, for example, what is better to use ChatGPT or, for example, Microsoft Copilot because the company uses Microsoft products, so maybe it will be better to use Copilot to integrate it in our ecosystem, so we don't know for now.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. If you do market research and customer segmentation, but if so, how has AI changed the way you approach market research and customer segmentation?

[Participant]

Yes, the research is, if, for example, you need some information for researchers, it saves a lot of time to use like Perplexity or ChatGPT just to see all the links which you can read by yourself or maybe you don't want to read, you just use what Perplexity or ChatGPT gives to you, so it reduces a lot of time. With marketing researches as well, because in our company, we have a lot of documentations about all these researches and, yeah, it helps us just to reduce the time for now and because when you're implementing new AI tools, you also need some time to understand how it's working, to work with analytics, to try it in different ways.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. Maybe a bit related to this, how has AI changed the way you analyse and utilise customer data?

[Participant]

For now, we don't do it because it's not secure to do it and we, for now, don't have the enterprise for ChatGPT or Copilot and like ChatGPT is not answering about enterprise solutions, so I think because of that, we will use another solution, as I said already, maybe Copilot, maybe Perplexity, maybe something else or maybe we'll build the tool inside the company. We still didn't decide, but yeah, with data, you need to be very careful because if you have a big company with a lot of rules and you put your data inside ChatGPT, nobody knows what will happen, so management will never agree to use such kind of tools, so you need to be prepared.

[Interviewer]

Okay, you talked about using mid-journey, how do you see AI affecting the creative aspects of marketing such as content creation and design?

[Participant]

Yes, actually, it's affecting a lot. Now, everyone understands that we don't need to make the photo sessions, we don't need to make anything. For example, just like a few weeks ago, I received one message from a girl, she wanted to have creation of visuals for her candles, candle brands, but she just wanted to test the idea and she didn't want to spend a lot of money on photo sessions, so she was asking, is it possible, for example, to make it in mid-journey just to test the idea, how much I can earn, if it will work out or if it will not work out, so the same in our company, all visuals for now I create in mid-journey and even we create the 3D packaging, we create the packaging designs for our products in mid-journey and I can say that it saves a lot of money, for example, company had to pay, for example, for photo shooting like 5,000 euros, so now you don't need to do it because you can create everything in mid-journey. Yes, for higher management, it's good news.

[Interviewer]

Okay, so a lot of cost saving, also time saving, I guess, then because you don't need to do the shoot, you're able to do it in less time, you talked about that you were only now starting to look at campaign effectiveness, I still have a question about this, if applicable, what impact has AI had on marketing analytics and the measurement of campaign effectiveness?

[Participant]

Yeah, for now, I can't answer on this question because it takes like a few more months to understand how is it working because it's not only about analytics and campaigns, it's about how our target audience is reacting on our campaigns because for now we tested only newsletters, for example, so we created newsletters using AI also with AI visuals from mid-journey but it was, I can't say better than it was before, but it was on the same level which we used, for example, real photos and real content, so here I didn't see any difference but we will see how it will go with paid advertising where people need to click, so maybe their analytics will be a little bit different.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect, we'll talk a bit more about the future now, what opportunities do you believe AI presents for the marketing industry?

[Participant]

Oh, a lot of opportunities, I think it will be kind of wars for creative ideas because now you can create the content very fast and it will be pretty the same and it will be a lot of content but you can use AI if you have, for example, some creative ideas, yes, before you need to go to creative agency to do it but for now you can just, if you have creative ideas, you can realise them as fast as you can and, yeah, more creative ideas you have, more money you can make, more you can stand out on in the market, it gives a lot of opportunities, for example, AI can predict the future trends, it can predict how your customer will behave, which button the customer will click and buy, so, yeah, for now all these tools you can build them inside the company but I think after a few years we can have them just pay the subscription and you can use it, so it's totally changing the market and the people from elder generation who worked without all these AI tools now they're just really happy to have all these AI tools.

[Interviewer]

Okay, how do you see the role of AI in marketing evolving over the next five years?

[Participant]

I think it will be, actually, I was thinking about this question, for example, if to focus what we have now and what will be after five years, I think it will be totally another world, especially in content creation and marketing already we have like AI movies which we can use for AI advertising, we can create AI creatives, we can create text, there will be chatbots where you don't need to type anymore, you will use the voices, for example, now in Midjourney I'm writing the prompts, I'm sure that in the future I will just tell, hey, Midjourney, can you do for me this or that, so I don't even need to learn how to make all these prompts and so on, so I think it will be more easier because for now AI is on the stage of a small baby and how it will grow, when it will grow to an adult, we don't know because it's just the beginning, maybe it will grow really quickly in two years, maybe it will grow really quickly in 10 years, nobody knows, nobody can predict the future how it will go and how it will change our life, but for sure something will happen.

[Interviewer]

Okay, very interesting, you talked about that you cannot just put up all your data in ChatGPT because it's not secure, I actually have a question about this more generally, do you think that there are any ethical considerations or risks associated with using AI in marketing?

[Participant]

Of course, a lot of risks, a lot of risks with data, a lot of risks with rules, how you can use all this content for advertising, for example, not to have any issues with the law because AI law and AI rules, they are developing pretty slowly, so the technologies are running ahead, but we still don't have any regulations or have, but they're super basic, nobody knows what to do, for example, if I use the prompt like create for me advertising in the style of Gucci, for example, and then I will advertise it and then Gucci brand will see it, so they have all the issues to sue me, but how it will regulate, I don't know, I think also AI will provide a lot of new professions and I'm sure will be AI lawyers or people who know in copyrights, AI copyrights and how to go away from all these things if big companies using AI to earn money, so we'll see, but it for sure will be.

[Interviewer]

Okay, we're entering now my last questions, what advice would you give to other marketing professionals considering adopting AI technologies?

[Participant]

I think you must learn AI technologies, especially in marketing and content creation, because if you will not learn it, you just could not work, because if you will come to the interview and they will see that the person knows how to use the AI tools, can do it fast, can do it with creative ideas and you cannot do it, so of course they will take the person who can implement and integrate the AI tools inside the company, because nobody wants to work a lot, everyone wants to simplify everything and yeah, it's must have, you need to watch a lot of YouTube channels, actually I was learning AI tools, I started to learn AI tools when was the first version of Midjourney released, so that's how I knew about AI tools, I was just learning Midjourney a lot, then of course new AI tools came to the market, but Midjourney was like my background in AI and content creation, so for marketing managers, yeah for sure, you just need to be curious, this is the only rule, just to be curious, hungry for new trends, hungry for technologies, future and it will come just by itself.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect, is there anything else about the impact of AI on marketing that you think is important for us to discuss, that we might not have discussed during this interview?

[Participant]

I think impact on people in general, because I face it on my work, because I need to bring this AI experience inside the company, who is like the company is old one, they're working like 30 or 40 years, so for example all higher management is like people from another generations totally, yeah, so even in such kind of companies, because AI is very fast-pacing environment, so you have to be hungry for all these AI tools on the market, for example I didn't test AI tools for one week, after one week I'm opening the news, I'm like oh my god, I need to test this, this, this, so a lot of things are coming, so yeah and how people, you need to think for example, if you work in the company, you need to think how you can build this educational process for the people, not to scare them a lot, so you need to be like kind of person for inspiration, to inspire them to use the AI tools, not to tell a lot of information, just to bring it on the table and yeah, I think it's impact people more, I think in the part of the fear, because they're afraid of it, but if you work with them, if you speak with them, if you provide some educational materials for example, you can say hey, we can go like this, you have problems, I have a solutions, so your problem is you waste a lot of time on generating text for blogs, I have a solution for you, you can use ChatGPT, you can take these prompts, I can explain to them, like you waste a lot of time on researching information in the Google, I have a solution, you can use perplexity for example, and you can have all the links for the researchers and you can save a lot of time, if you say them like this, they're like oh yeah, it's so interesting, so yeah, we can use it in our work.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect, very interesting, these were all of my official questions.

### 9.2.9. Interview 9

Date & time: 05/07/2024 15:15

[Interviewer]

I first have two small personal and organisational questions as for me to know you a bit better. So first of all, can you introduce yourself and describe your current role in marketing?

[Participant]

Yes, so I'm expert 9. I'm 48 years old already. And I'm working in digital communication and marketing since, let's say, yeah, it's quite 20 years already that I'm working in digital marketing because, you know, Facebook came years ago. And I'm working as a freelancer since seven years to my personal account. And I'm specialised in, I'm an expert, let's say, in social media and all the digital communication and digital marketing.

And my main role is to coach and to train people in the companies like, for instance, Proximus, Elia, Sibelga, Engie, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. So this is the big picture, let's say, the big picture.

[Interviewer]

Okay, you already partially answered my second question, part of it. How long have you been working in marketing? 20 years.

And what significant changes have you observed over the years?

[Participant]

Over the years, it all started, of course, with social media, social media advertising. All the algorithm, you know, the reach of the algorithms and also the decrease of the reach through the algorithm because there is more and more people on Facebook, more and more people on Instagram, TikTok, et cetera. It's always the same old song.

The more people you have, the less reach you have. So the more you have to pay to get your message read. And the last year, the two, I would say the two last year, the last two years, the last two years, I see a significant increase in all the tools for the creativity inside digital communication and marketing.

For instance, you know, software like Canva, of course, software like CapCut for the video. And since, I would say two years, since two years, one year and a half, now you have all the AI, ChatGPT, of course. For me, you know, ChatGPT, it's OK.

It's like Google nowadays. You just have to use it. It's not something, wow, it's magnificent.

No, ChatGPT, you know, it's like the, I would say it in French: it's like the spelling checker. It's, you know, it's just another tool. It's just another tool.

People are trying now to use it every day. More and more people use it every day. But for me, the significant change is all the AI for the pictures.

So photography, for the video. That's freaking amazing. For the music and sound and as well to create an avatar of yourself.

So this is mind blowing. And I think it's only the beginning.

[Interviewer]

OK, perfect. We'll talk about creativity later on. I have a question about this.

But my first question about the core of my interview about AI and marketing is how would you define AI in the context of marketing?

[Participant]

How would define AI in the context of marketing? Well, as I said, for me, it's a tool. It's another software that can help you to reach your objectives, but more easily.

It's very simple, but to reach your objectives more easily. Because before AI, you have to use a bunch of software, a bunch of knowledge, and sometimes you could have been biased by some contents that are not good, for instance. And nowadays with AI, you can reach more accurately your targets in marketing.

It's a huge question, in fact. It's a huge question, but yeah.

[Interviewer]

OK, perfect. You already talked about some tools like ChatGPT. Can you describe some specific AI tools and technologies that you currently use or have used in your marketing activities?

[Participant]

So, first of all, I give a lot of courses to companies about AI because they have to be used and how to use it. But for me, it's just go on it, type.

It's like Google. You don't need a training to use Google. I mean, but OK.

But people, they need to... You put there, you click here, and people are sometimes a bit dumb, I think. That's why you have artificial intelligence.

Most of the tools I'm using, of course, it's all the generative AI for text, prompt text, like, of course, ChatGPT, the first one. I use it for writing, copywriting. You know, just for that.

That's all. I don't make search with ChatGPT because it's too much biased for me. Another one that I use more than ChatGPT is Google Gemini.

Why? Because it's Google and the results and scrapping the web data, etc. I think that Google Gemini, according to myself, is more accurate.

It's more precise than ChatGPT. If you ask Google Gemini, for instance, to create a comparison board, a table of comparison, it will do it with fresh content from Google. So that's one of the tools that I use the most.

And for more in-depth research, of course, you know, for scholars or for studies, maybe indeed for some medical research, for instance, I will use Perplexity. It's more for serious documentation. It's maybe one of the best tools, actually.

So these are the three tools that I'm using just for prompting. And of course, for the pictures, I use Midjourney. This one is...

You have stable diffusion, of course, but you have DAL-E. But DAL-E is a bit... It's like DAL-E.

You have an eye here and a mouth there and six fingers. And, you know, for me, it's not that great. So I'm using Midjourney.

And of course, I use Heygen. You know Heygen? Just to make an avatar or even to translate.

This is freaking amazing. You can copy a URL from a YouTube video, for instance, in French. You go to Heygen and you ask Heygen to do the same video in Portuguese.

And you get a video with the guy or the girl with the lip sync speaking in Portuguese. That's amazing. So this one, I use it for a few customers.

And of course, all the video tools. There is a lot of them. One is Runway.

Runway Gen 3, no? I don't get the difference between Gen 2 and Gen 3, but whatever. I use Magnifique AI.

This is... You grab a picture from Midjourney. You upload it on Magnifique AI.

And it will give you more texture, something more real, more texturised. And since a few days, I'm using two tools that are... What's the name?

Immersity and Luma AI. You know, just to... Okay.

And Luma AI. Wow. It's a slap in the face.

So that's the main tools I'm using. I can talk about another one, but for me, it's not really AI. You know, Make.

Make, it's a tool. For instance, you can connect your Google Drive to your email address. And you ask Make, if I receive a mail with a PDF in attachment, you can download it, rename it, and put it in a specific folder.

For me, it's not really AI. Most people are saying that this is AI. For me, no, it's not AI.

It's just algorithm. It's just automation. So, yeah.

And one last about music. Let's say about music, just to be a bit amused. It's Suno.

You know, you're right. You just prompt the music you want and you get it.

[Interviewer]

And that you use professionally or more to test the tool? Professionally as well.

[Participant]

Not Suno. No, no, Suno, I don't use it. I just show to the customer what you can do with Suno.

Because, you know, maybe it's one of your questions, but there is a copyright problem with AI-generated content. It's not a copyright problem. They are all royalty-free.

So, if I create a music with Suno, anybody can take it and grab it and steal it. So, no, I don't use it. I just use it to have some fun.

You know, that's it.

[Interviewer]

You talked about using a lot of large language models like Gemini, ChatGPT, etc. Just a side note, I discovered the tool this week. If you want, it's Dust.tt. Dust.tt, okay. And it allows you to actually centralise all the models into one window. And so, when you ask your questions, you say beforehand to which model you want to ask questions. So, you can say ChatGPT, Gemini, and Cloud.

And then you enter your prompt, and it will give you the three answers into one context window. So, you can compare your answers, and you can also then interact with all the answers. So, I discovered it this week.

There's a 15-day free trial, and then it's 30 euros per month.

[Participant]

That's great because ChatGPT, it's already 20 or 25 bucks. I don't remember. I do even ask myself, why do I pay?

Because the ChatGPT 4.0 is available for everybody.

[Interviewer]

Yeah, but with limited... I think with the new model that will come out with video, so to be able to speak live, that will, again, make sense to pay for ChatGPT.

[Participant]

Yes.

[Interviewer]

But for now, I understand.

[Participant]

Yeah, for now, but Dust.tt, thanks for the tip.

[Interviewer]

So, take a look. I find it very interesting. Okay.

So, my next question is, how has AI impacted your marketing strategies and campaign effectiveness? Or if you have examples from clients.

[Participant]

Yeah, I have a great example, for instance. And I can say it, it's not off the record. I was working for an insurance company, you know, ACM, before it was Partners Insurance.

And they asked me to create Google Advertisings.

With five different products. So, before AI, it would have taken me at least two or three days to copyright the text, to search the right keywords, etc., etc., etc. And now, thanks to Google Gemini, not only Google Gemini, because I use tools like SEMrush, etc., which keywords are the most relevant. But with Google Gemini, I said, oh my gosh, just, okay, you grab this page, you analyse it, you give me the 10 most important keywords, you create an ad title and copywriting for that, and create for me a table in Google Sheet to create Google Ads. So, and all this in approximately four hours. So, yeah, it's a huge impact.

And my customer is very happy, of course, because I bill per hour. And of course, he was, oh, that's good. Of course, it's good.

Of course, it's good. And it really impacted the way I was creating Google Ads campaigns just before. (Every time I say Google, this little Nest, I have to unplug it.) So, yeah, this is one of the examples. Or for instance, even to write my mails sometimes. I have to admit that sometimes I'm just bored to write.

So, I prompt, just give this kind of reply about blah, blah, blah. And okay, and do the rest. It creates the mail.

And sometimes it's not really my tone of voice. But it is learning how I speak, how I interact with the mail clients. So, this kind of tools has impacted marketing in a great way.

And as well to create pictures. Because before I had to take pictures with the iPhone or with this huge camera. Or I had to pay Shutterstock pictures.

But you know Shutterstock pictures, it's too fairytale. And it's very expensive as well. And Canva, okay, yeah, you have a few good pictures.

But it's not always what you want. And I always told to myself, if someone was inside my head and had the vision of what I need as a picture. And then Midjourney came. And this is great. Of course, it takes a bit of time to generate, to make some subtle variation, etc. But with Midjourney, I create visuals for myself, for customers, etc. Yeah, it changed. The world changed. So, yeah.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. I think for the next question, you're pretty well placed as someone who trains others. Can you discuss some challenges you faced when integrating AI into your marketing strategies?

[Participant]

In my marketing strategy or for the...

[Interviewer]

Well, if it's applicable to you, it's better your experience or your challenges. If not, from someone else.

[Participant]

For me, it's very easy. Because it's the way you have to go. I mean, we stopped writing with pencil, even if I take notes with pencil.

We stopped to send press releases. We stopped to use a pellicular camera. So, okay, now the whole world is digital.

Everybody's on Facebook, LinkedIn. Everybody's sending mails, newsletters, websites, etc. And it's the evolution.

And for me, AI is not really a challenge for me. It's just that I have to learn more, again. But thanks to AI, I spend less time searching and grabbing information and to summarise it.

So for me, it's not really a challenge. It's like the SWOT metrics, you know, it's an opportunity. It's a great opportunity.

A great opportunity for myself and for my customer as well. But among the customers, that's another fucking Story. Yeah, because they are all scared.

I don't know why. And specifically in Belgium and in Europe as well. Belgium, in France, it's the case.

In Switzerland, somehow. But Switzerland, it's not Europe. So, but people are so scared about AI.

They always come with the same old song. It will take our job. No, it will not take your job.

But if you don't master AI today, tomorrow, Laurent will take your place. Because you master AI and I master AI. And people are so scared.

And there is concern. I can understand it. But for me, it's a bit, you know, the concern about GDPR.

Sensitive content and blah, blah, and blah, blah. And they are all scared that AI will grab their content. But it's already the case on Google.

I mean, it's already the case on Google. Your website is on Google. This is what you are looking for to be found on Google.

So, of course, your content has to be on Google. But now you tell me that AI, I'm scared that my content will go to artificial intelligence. For me, it's just a fear.

It's not reality. It's just a fear. And on the other hand, most of the companies, big, huge companies, I don't know why they have this word Microsoft in their mouth.

It's always Microsoft Copilot because Microsoft Copilot is safe. Yes, we both agree that it's a joke. Yeah, but this is freaking amazing.

So, when I come to company and I told them, yeah, use chat GPT to do that, use Midjourney to do that. No, no, no. Because, you know, our privacy concern and we don't want to be just so just fry in hell and stay in the past.

And don't ask me to train you to AI. It's like you, Laurent. You will tell me, Desiree, I need that you teach me how to drive.

Okay, I will teach you how to drive. So, let's grab a car. And you will tell me, no, not a car.

I'm afraid. I'm afraid I just need a donkey. But with a donkey, you cannot have a driving licence.

You understand my... And this is a bit disturbing for me. It's a bit disturbing.

But okay, but they are aware that they have to use AI Copilot. At least Copilot.

[Interviewer]

So, your biggest challenge would then be probably the fear of the clients, the fear around AI and trying to convince people.

[Participant]

Exactly. And to be honest, just before AI, I also give courses about TikTok. And of course, you are the Gen Z, so you use TikTok every day.

And I saw the wind of change five or six years ago. And I told myself, wow, TikTok will be the next big thing. So, I started an online course about TikTok.

And people and companies, no, it's from China. It's dangerous, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. For four years.

And now they just know in 2024. They ask me, how do you go on TikTok? But it's too late.

This is too late. And you know, it's not only AI. I think that the more we go to new technologies, the more people are...

They were a bit afraid. But nowadays, they are more and more and more afraid of technologies. And this is a bit frightening for me as well.

So, yeah, I don't know how it will go, all that fear. But it's a big challenge.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. I don't know if this is applicable to you, but how has AI changed the way you approach market research and do customer segmentation?

[Participant]

I do it, for instance, with a partner insurance. Yeah, I use it. I use it.

I even use it, to be honest, even for myself, to make comparison. To know, for instance, which car to buy. You know, next year, I have to change.

I have to buy an electric car. It will be a Tesla, a Mercedes, a BMW. I don't know.

There is so much data on Google. This website will say, yeah, Volvo, it's great. Another website will say, no, Tesla is great.

The other one will say, yeah, you know, but Mercedes is quite maybe the best. And all processing this whole data, the desk research, takes so much time. So maybe I'm blinded by the lights.

I'm blinded, but I will use AI to make my desk research. And it's more easy for me. It's more easy for me.

And specifically with perplexity. Because it gives you, yeah, it gives you links and some real studies. But I always try to, you know, to search by myself as well.

Because I'm still not 100% confident about that. But yes, I use it, yeah.

[Interviewer]

I'm also blinded, actually. So how has AI changed the way that you analyse and utilise customer data?

[Participant]

Customer data. That's a good question. Because to be honest, this, I don't use it.

Okay, that's fine. I don't use it. No, I don't use it.

I use some tools, CRM, but it's not AI for me. You know, it's just automation. You know that I have a contact with this customer two days ago.

And that I have a right to it. Anyway, but I don't, for the moment, I don't use it.

[Interviewer]

Okay. You already talked about creativity. I have a question about this.

How do you see AI affecting the creative aspects of marketing, such as content creation and design?

[Participant]

For me, it's a huge opportunity for anyone else to create. Because most of the people are afraid. For instance, I would say my neighbour, for instance.

Okay, my neighbour. And I will tell him, look, if you want to write some content on your page Facebook, it will be great. Because the more you write, the more you will get fans on your Facebook page and blah, blah.

Yeah, but I'm afraid I don't know how to write and blah, blah, blah, blah. Just use ChatGPT, just try it. And so it's, I don't have the word in English, but if I can say it in French.

But thanks to AI, you can be anything you want to be. So the barrier to entry. Yeah, the barrier to entry.

Exactly. This is the perfect word. The barrier to entry of creativity.

They are just blown by AI because you can enter a new era of creativity. And it will open your mind. Because most of people say AI will replace creativity.

We will all have the same kind of pictures, or the same kind of text, or the same kind of video, blah, blah, blah, blah. Not at all. Because for instance, in Midjourney, at the very beginning of Midjourney, you have to write a prompt that was technically very specific with a bit of knowledge of photography, for instance. Wide angle, 400 ISO in the style of Kodak Chrome, Ekta 200, low angle, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And the more you use it, the more you are interested and curious about art, about photography, about photographers, et cetera, et cetera. So for me, yeah, it's a great tool to open creativity and just to launch yourself.

Maybe you love art. Maybe you love oil painting. Maybe you love pictures.

Maybe you love cinematography. Maybe you love just romance, poetry, whatever. You can do it thanks to AI.

So that's great. And on the other hand, I would say that in a matter of years, I wrote it down. I will write it on another post-it note.

You will have communications agency with this kind of labels, 100% made by humans. I'm sure of it. I'm sure of it.

It's like, you know, it's like the biofertile, blah, blah, blah. I can cut this little fingers just because, okay. Listen to me.

In one or two years, you will see this kind of label on a website, on a picture, which is already a bit the case because on Facebook and Instagram, if you use AI, you have to mention it. Yeah, then you have a tag. It was made with AI.

Okay. But what about the texts? So, so what up?

[Interviewer]

Very interesting. Another question. I don't know if you will be able to answer, but probably through clients, you could.

What impact has AI had on marketing analytics and the measurement of campaign effectiveness? Although it may be too soon.

[Participant]

No, it's not maybe too soon. But in my experience with my customer and my field, it's not already the case. I know that there is a lot of big industry, for instance, banks.

Banks are already using AI to, you know, to know the macro and microeconomics evolution, the rise of the decline of actions, et cetera, et cetera. So I think that AI will be more and more

applied to this kind of tools, which is already, again, which is already the case as what the algorithms does. Because for me, the difference, it is very personal.

You have the algorithm, which is a kind of artificial intelligence, and you have artificial intelligence. What's the difference between them is that artificial intelligence, a human can interact with and ask questions in a natural language. That's it.

Because the other part is just algorithm. It's machine learning. It does, it creates action by itself.

That's it. So maybe AI will change a bit something into the market analysis, but I don't know. It's a bit too soon to say.

[Interviewer]

Okay. You already kind of talked about this, but to ask it again, what opportunities do you believe AI presents for the marketing industry?

[Participant]

So, so, whoa, so huge. So huge. Again, it's a question, it's a very wide question.

It's a great, great, great, great opportunity. It's not a threat. Okay.

It's a, it's an opportunity, but also you have a weaknesses of that, because maybe that more and more people will use it without understanding it or without mastering the field of marketing. For instance, if I ask, let's say ChatGPT or Gemini, how can I write a strategy for my entry market levels for a hydrogen car in Belgium? I asked the artificial intelligence and I'm not a marketeer. Let's say I'm not a marketeer. Okay. Gemini or, or ChatGPT or even perplexity will give you a roadmap.

Okay. But inside this, I am not a marketeer. So I don't understand what is a strength, weaknesses, opportunity, threats.

I don't know which are the four, the five, the six piece of marketing, price, place, promotion, product. So, you know, if you don't master a bit, the, the, the, the, the field that you are asking to AI, this can be as well a weakness for yourself. So it's like we say in French 'se tiring une balle dans le pieds', So, but it's a great opportunity as far as you have an expertise in your field of activity. It's a great opportunity.

[Interviewer]

Okay. But it is important to have expertise.

[Participant]

Yeah. There is a study about that. I can send you, if I, if I find it again, it's a study, it shows a graphic that without knowledge, okay, ChatGPT can give you answers, but with knowledge and ChatGPT, it gives you answers and you have even more experts in your, in your field.

[Interviewer]

If you find it, I'm interested. Otherwise it's okay.

[Participant]

Yeah, yeah. I will send you, I will send it to you.

[Interviewer]

Related to my questions about opportunities a bit in the future. How do you see the role of AI in marketing evolving over the next five years?

[Participant]

Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. I think in marketing.

[Interviewer]

Yeah.

[Participant]

Yeah. If I knew it, I will, I will immediately playing on the lottery national for the Euro millions. I think that we will more and more have machine human interaction.

Okay. I really think about it, which is already the case to be, to be honest, just with this kind of stuff, just with Siri, just with your internet of things, it will create new trends, new markets, new, new technologies. So new, new works, new jobs, new, you know, everything.

And if you see what is, what is our friend, not Mark Zuckerberg, the other one that is crazy from Tesla, Elon Musk with the neural engine with, you know, whoa, maybe it will be cyberpunk. I don't know. I don't know.

Maybe we will start to see bots, robots that will serve ourself in the restaurant.

[Interviewer]

In the next five years already.

[Participant]

Not in Belgium. Not in Belgium. But I say that because it's already a bit the case in Japan.

Japan, Korea, specifically in Korea, they live in the future. So, but yeah, with the, yeah, with all the automotive industry as well, with the medical industry, aeronautical industry, all the industries, in fact, and of course, an opportunity for marketeers to create new things, new job, new steps to create new products. I mean, so, but it's very difficult to say.

[Interviewer]

Yeah, just to see, to see your view on it. My next question is, do you think there are any ethical consideration or risks associated with using AI in marketing?

[Participant]

Of course, there will be always risks or ethical. To be honest, I already tested some questions, you know, you know, should I vote for, for Donald Trump or Joe Biden, for instance, and any AI will give you a reply. But I'm sure that technically, technically, they can do it.

It's just that they put some brakes on this kind of question. Ethically as well, it's already the case here in Belgium. I saw a study about that, that 30% of the young users, like you, but more the teenagers, let's say, they are following AI based influencers on Instagram without knowing it's AI generated.

Okay. So it means that, you know, father, you know, mother, in the near future, I would like be, I want to be like this girl, or I want to be like this guy. Yeah, but this guy or this girl is just...

Doesn't exist. It doesn't exist. It's a computer generated beauty.

It's a computer generated, AI generated content, voice. So this is more ethical, but it's not my cup of tea, this kind of fields about ethics and etc. Because I'm, I'm always be among the early adopters of new technology.

And I don't ask me that much question. So yeah, maybe, maybe you can have, which is already the case as well in Japan. See, you can have a, I don't know, a virtual girlfriend, just to talk with.

And maybe with cybernetic, I don't know, maybe you can have a doll that you can, anything you want with her, for instance, just, just have a look on the Black Mirror. Of course. You know, it's, it's already, maybe, maybe this is the future.

And the end is terminator. So let's hope not.

[Interviewer]

I think for this question, you are perfectly placed. What advice would you give to other marketing professionals considering adopting AI technologies?

[Participant]

My reply will be like, Nike, just do it. Just do it. Just do it.

Because if you don't do it, you miss the opportunity of, of, of new markets. You, you miss the opportunity to, to reduce the costs as well. Reducing costs and rising your, your objectives.

So just, just use it. Don't be afraid of it. Test and learn.

Test and learn. It's, I mean, it's like, it's like using Google. Just test and learn and stop being afraid.

Just use it. It's a tool. It's just a tool.

It's just another tool. It's the new Canva of, I don't know, of, of anything you want. Just use it.

But be smart. This is, yeah, it's a bit, it's a bit global as a reply. But I don't see another kind of reply.

[Interviewer]

It's a good reply. I then have one last question. Is there anything else about the impact of AI on marketing that you think is important for us to discuss that we might not have discussed during this interview?

[Participant]

I think that we have discussed a lot of things about AI. Not specifically. Just, yeah, just be aware and continue like you do.

And this one advice I will give as well to, to, to marketers and company is just like do trends watching. Trends watching, you know, faire de la veille. And thanks to AI, you can automatise it.

If you, if you receive newsletter five times per day, yeah, it's a lot of newsletter to read, but you can use with the, the, with the API of perplexity, for instance, or chatGPT to summarise it and to, and to get one mail per week with all the most important thing about what you have to know about AI. So use AI to summarise AI and to know how to use AI in the future. That's, I mean, yeah, it's yeah.

[Interviewer]  
Okay.

[Participant]  
That's all. I think that that's all for the moment. Perfect.

### 9.2.10. Interview 10

Date & time: 08/07/2024 12:15

[Interviewer]

First of all, I have two personal and organisational information questions so that I can get to know you better also. So, first of all, can you introduce yourself and describe your current role in marketing?

[Participant]

Well, I actually work in IT at the moment. So, I work at the moment for Materialise, but I have a background in marketing of 20 plus years and ended up in IT because they were looking for someone who understood marketing so that I could basically be the bridge between IT and marketing and be like the advocate for marketing. So, I work closely with marketing.

I've been an independent consultant also for many years. I work full-time now, but I still run a side business, let's say, that is focused more on email marketing because that is what I've been doing for so many years, where I provide training courses and stuff. And that includes the use of AI these days as well.

So, did that fully answer your question? Yeah.

[Interviewer]

And quite related to this is then how long have you been working in marketing and what significant changes have you observed over the years in marketing?

[Participant]

So, yeah. Like I said, I worked for over 20 years in marketing. I think when I started in marketing, that was early 2000s.

That was where the internet was like slowly getting used by – well, not slowly, but was starting to being used by all companies and email marketing was like this something, this new thing. So, that was – I'm talking now 2003. Before that, I already started building websites and stuff like that.

Then you saw social media coming up. You saw mobile coming up. I mean, there's this whole bunch of tools that didn't exist when I started in marketing.

I remember when I was doing my marketing course back in 2001, this e-commerce professor was walking around with his very old mobile phone, which had like a screen that was like this big, right? And he was showing like what WAP 1.0 looked like. Have you ever heard of WAP?

[Interviewer]

Never heard of it.

[Participant]

Yeah, that was like before smartphones and stuff like that. So, a lot has changed in those 20 years. I think in email marketing, what I've been focused on mainly was very much or did not

change that much in terms of new functionality and stuff like that, but the fact that you had all these social media channels coming and search became very important and those kinds of things.

And then mobile, of course, had an impact. But I think with the advent now of generative AI, that's like a completely new wave that's coming at us. I remember when I was in the early days, I worked for eBay.

And e-commerce also was very new at that moment. So, basically, our country manager always told us like try stuff out. If it works, it works.

If it doesn't work, try something else. And I kind of have a similar feeling with AI at the company also. So, I work for Materialise, right?

It's a 3D printing company. I'm part of an AI task force where we're looking at how can we give our employees access to these tools in a safe way and in a cost-effective way and how can we make sure that they actually know what these tools do because they're not just a substitute for Google, like many people seem to think. It can write emails and I can ask it questions.

That's probably the most advanced use that people make or the majority of people. So, how can we educate our people and how can we train them to make sure that they leverage these tools? Looking for use cases and all those kinds of things.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. Thank you. I will then jump to the core of this interview about AI and marketing, of course.

First of all, how would you define artificial intelligence in the context of marketing?

[Participant]

In the context of marketing? That's an interesting question. I haven't had that question yet.

How would I define it? Well, there's many flavours of AI, first of all, right? So, we've had AI in marketing for quite a while already.

And we're talking there about machine learning, deep learning and all those things where we had tools that could predict, for example, what kind of content would work best or which customers were likely to churn and those kinds of things. Large language models is a completely other thing than that where now marketers have a tool that they can use to create new content with but also to brainstorm ideas and then to use as a reasoning partner, a sparring partner, those kinds of things. So, how would I define it?

If you ask me how would I define generative AI in marketing, then I would probably say it is like an additional team member that people have at their disposal that they can use as a thought partner to exchange ideas with or to discuss ideas with and on the other hand, to create stuff for them, an assistant then basically. Like I said, for me, there's two different things. You have the traditional AI and you have the generative AI and the generative AI part, that's a completely other thing than the traditional one, even though it's based on machine learning.

[Interviewer]

It's a part of the bigger. But there's no right or wrong answer. It's just to have your opinion on how you would define AI.

So, could you describe some specific AI tools and technologies that you currently use or have used then in your marketing activities?

[Participant]

Well, I actually mainly stick to using ChatGPT and Cloud.ai and Perplexity. Those are my three tools of choice. I pay personally for Perplexity.

No, not for Perplexity, for Claude and for ChatGPT because the company is not paying for them at the moment. Yeah, for me, those are my best friends. I mean, Claude became my best friend last week. ChatGPT has been my best friend since December last year, November last year. So, those are the tools that I mainly use for the purposes that I described. It writes my copy for me in my own voice and it will help me think through things or prepare for interviews or whatever I mean.

Yeah, it's my best friend, like I said.

[Interviewer]

You already partially answered my second question then, is how has AI impacted your marketing strategies and campaign effectiveness?

[Participant]

Well, there, like I said, I use the tool to, for example, to act as my customer and I will show it what I plan to do or I will ask it feedback on things that I have done. I will ask it for feedback on campaign ideas that I have and those kinds of things.

[Interviewer]

Okay, and have you noticed an impact since you started using those tools? Has it changed your work?

[Participant]

Yeah, I mean, only last week I was talking to my app on the way to work and to ChatGPT and by the time I arrived at work, now I have a one hour and a half commuter, but by the time I arrived at work, I had three blog posts that were fully written and ready to go. So, yeah, it has an impact for sure.

[Interviewer]

Can you discuss some challenges you faced when integrating AI into your marketing strategies?

[Participant]

Challenges? Well, typical ones probably, I mean, yeah. I think the biggest challenge that everyone faces when they start using these things is learning how to actually prompt it, for lack of a better word, to actually do what it is that you want to do.

I don't consider it a challenge, but there is a learning curve to prompt engineering. Lots of people don't even understand what prompting is until you tell them that it is just the way you talk to the machine. But, yeah, the learning curve there.

And probably also, sometimes I get remarks from colleagues where they're like, did you use ChatGPT to do that? As if it devalues the work that you do. Plus, I also, I mean, especially that we're doing some pilots in the company, you notice that people who take a lot of pride in writing copy or creating codes, they're not very open to using it because they don't feel it can actually do a good job.

And probably they fear that it might take over their job if they would let it.

[Interviewer]  
Okay.

[Participant]  
And maybe another challenge is, I think, one of the things that a lot of companies, bigger companies face is, or people working for these companies is the fact that the company they work for either does not allow them to use these tools because of fear of leaking confidential information, or, yeah, they're just not encouraging it yet. Or they're not providing the tools because of a lack of budget for it. It wasn't budgeted for.

[Interviewer]  
Okay.

[Participant]  
Now I'll stop talking.

[Interviewer]  
Since you currently more work in IT, I don't know if some of these questions you will be able to answer. That's fine if it's not the case. But how has AI changed the way you approach market research and customer segmentation?

[Participant]  
Well, I can talk for what's happening in our company. And what I see a lot is people are starting to use these tools to do customer research, to do competitive research and all these kinds of things. So it's just basically speeding up the time.

Maybe the output will not be 100% correct because you do have the hallucinations, but it definitely gives people a head start. Like a first draft, it's a lot quicker, and then they need to verify it. But it saves a lot of time.

What was the second part of your question again?

[Interviewer]  
So that's just how has customer segmentation. So how has it changed the way you approach market research and customer segmentation?

[Participant]

Well, customer segmentation, I can't really attest to what I do or what we do in our company. But what I do see other people do, I mean, their traditional AI will help with selecting customer segments to send communications to. Generative AI can help with the ideas of how to target people with a certain offer.

[Interviewer]

Okay. It's quite related, but how has AI changed the way you analyse and utilise customer data?

[Participant]

Not very much because we're not allowed to do that in the company. Okay. Because of a fear of leaking confidential data.

[Interviewer]

I see.

[Participant]

I think that is something that's probably a theme that you'll see recurring for bigger companies.

[Interviewer]

More about creative aspects of marketing now. How do you see AI affecting the creative aspects of marketing such as content creation and design? And this is mostly then Gen AI.

[Participant]

How do I see that effect? Well, it cuts down time. It helps people be more creative, come up with other ideas, or it helps them challenge their ideas.

But I think time to production is a lot faster because, I mean, in the design department, Gen AI tools can help actually speed up the design of things once they have a good template and stuff. So yeah, a lot more efficiency and productivity gains there.

[Interviewer]

Okay. What impact has AI had on marketing analytics and the measurement of campaign effectiveness?

[Participant]

Same answer as before. If you're not allowed to use it to measure the data, then it's hard to get the insights from it. I wish we could because people are asking for it, but we're having this huge discussion at the moment about what do we allow and what don't we allow and what is confidential and what is not confidential.

I mean, it's a discussion that's ongoing.

[Interviewer]

I can already ask this question because it's quite related and you already talked about it. But do you think that there are any ethical considerations or risks associated with using AI in marketing?

[Participant]

Sure. Yeah, for sure. I mean, we have the hallucinations for sure, which is a risk, right?

I think there the consensus is that we need to have a human in the loop to always review, right? And in terms of bias, it's the same thing. I make sure that whatever output we get is not biased towards certain groups of people or whatever because essentially what is the data that's been trained on has inherent bias because we as people are biased, right?

So yeah, there is a risk and we need the human in the loop is a very important one.

[Interviewer]

I hear that coming from other people too about the bias data. And then I ask the following question is, do you think it's possible to come to a certain point where we have an unbiased AI? But for that, you first need to unbias the data.

Do you think that it's something achievable to unbias the data or that that's something that's pretty much impossible?

[Participant]

That's a good question. That's a question for an AI researchers more than anything else. It probably, if you have enough money and resources to throw at it, probably.

Probably. But yeah, it'll come at a huge cost. And since that cost is so huge, I don't think that's a priority at the moment.

There are other priorities for the companies that built these tools. They're striving for artificial general intelligence and artificial super intelligence and not striving for unbiased tools. Do you have a couple of minutes?

I need to sign for a delivery. I'm back. Sorry about that.

[Interviewer]

No problem. I have two questions more about the future of AI in marketing. First of all, what opportunities do you believe AI presents for the marketing industry?

[Participant]

Opportunities where they don't lose their jobs, you mean?

[Interviewer]

No, just in general, the opportunities that AI bring to the sector.

[Participant]

Which sector do you mean? The marketing agency sector?

[Interviewer]

Yeah, more specifically, marketeers, marketing agencies. So really focussing on the marketing departments in a company.

[Participant]

Yeah, so if you're looking at, I think across the board, they'll be able to do more with the same amount of people. I think that's the biggest opportunity given the constraints, of course, and taking into account the bias and hallucinations. I think they'll be able to do more.

So basically, that means more output for the same cost. And as these tools get better, also better output for the same cost. And probably, and that's the downside of it, it will probably lead to people being fired.

[Interviewer]

That's what you suggested in the beginning. Do you then see it going to the same output for less cost?

[Participant]

Yeah. Yeah, and probably in the beginning, it'll be probably a less good output for less cost. And because a person doing it and overseeing it probably will give you better output.

But as these tools get better and they get better fast, it'll be the same output for less cost, if not more output for less cost.

[Interviewer]

How do you see the role of AI in marketing specifically evolving over the next five years?

[Participant]

Five years is a long time when you're talking about artificial intelligence, especially generative intelligence. I don't know if we will all still have a job in five years from now. I don't know.

I mean, you're studying marketing at the moment, right?

[Interviewer]

I'm starting to work in September.

[Participant]

How does that feel? Should I actually answer that question?

[Interviewer]

Yeah, yeah. It's purely your opinion. So for me, it's very exciting times, but it depends on how you look at it.

[Participant]

But it is exciting times. So how is the question phrased for the next five years?

[Interviewer]

How do you see the role of AI in marketing specifically evolving over the next five years?

[Participant]

Well, I'll turn the question around and I'll say, how do I see the role of the marketer evolve in the context of AI over the next five years? And I think marketers will probably become more and more people who operate the machine, to call it like that, right? So you'll have to make

sure that you're good at the prompt engineering, if the tools don't figure out themselves what it is that you want.

The role, the marketing role, I think is going to change dramatically. I think a lot of it will be more automated. The question will be how fast will enterprises adopt it?

Because I think there, I see that also in the company, if you're working in a startup, things will go really fast, right? And you don't have all these limitations that bigger companies have. So it'll take a little bit of time, but I think that's where we are going.

[Interviewer]

Okay. What advice would you give to other marketing professionals that are considering adopting AI technologies?

[Participant]

Learn it as fast and as well as you can. I mean, learn the limitation, learn basically, if I would have to give you advice at this moment, and I'm probably, you don't need that advice, but if I would give a marketer, the advice would be understand how these tools work so that you know what the limitations are and make sure that you know how to use them and know how to use them well and know how to basically use them to automate a lot of the things that you do at the moment. I think marketers will, and not only marketers, software developers, for example, will be in the same boat and other job functions as well.

The better you know how to use these tools to do or to automate stuff that you do, the more valuable you'll be for companies in the shorter term. I don't know. I really cannot predict the long term.

I am hearing so many things about us having AGI by, I don't know, 2027, 2030. I don't know what the future is going to be like. The only thing that I can say is make sure that as a marketer, you're adaptable, flexible, and learn to use the things that are coming at you as well as you can because those will be the people that will find jobs in the shorter term and the long term.

Nobody knows.

[Interviewer]

Okay. Yeah, very interesting. I just have one question left and it's an open question.

Is there anything else about the impact of AI on marketing that you think is important for us to discuss that we might not have covered during this interview?

[Participant]

I think we touched on most points. I don't know if there's any questions that come to mind from other discussions that you've had. How do you feel about it?

I mean, you're excited, but what part of it excites you?

[Interviewer]

Well, in one way, it excites me. And I think what's most important from what I'm doing my research now, talking to a lot of companies, is for the moment, it's not as much as a threat as

we think it is, but it will become a threat very quickly if you do not hop on the AI train. So people fear they will lose their job due to AI, but I think it's more of the fact, it's maybe hard to say, but it's due to themselves not wanting to use AI.

It's not AI in itself that is going to make them lose their job. It's their kind of fear that they do not want to use AI or they already use that much tools so they don't want to learn one more. That's more of the danger in AI for the moment.

We cannot say in 10 years.

[Participant]

I agree with you there. And one of the discussions we've had in HR was also people, like I mentioned before, the copywriters will be afraid that they will lose their job if they start using these tools. So people are basically inherently resistant to change.

People don't like the change. I mean, in most companies, that change management is actually a thing. So change management is basically trying to figure out how you're going to manage a transformational change like this one that is going to basically transform the whole business.

We are talking now about rolling out programmes so we can upskill people that are working for a company as fast as possible. Looking at, yeah, you have the innovators and the early adopters and the early majority and all those things. So for us, what we'll be doing is we'll look first at the early majority.

These people that are actually open to change and open to trying things out because they will be the ones that will help us figure out the use cases so that we can go to the early majority and say like, look, this is what it can do for you. And this is where it can help you. The early majority does not like to experiment.

They need to have these use cases already. And then of course, the further you go to the curve, the more you have to actually show people how it works. And you'll have people that are resistant to change.

And that's normal because going through a transformational change like this with AI, it's like going through a grieving process. I don't know if anyone's ever subscribed or explained that to you, but at first you'll have this resistance. I don't know if you've had anyone die in your closed circle.

You go through the same grieving process. So in the beginning, you can't believe it. You don't want to believe it.

You get angry and then slowly, but suddenly you start accepting the change, learning to live with the change and all that. But that's the process that you need to take people through. And some people go through it easy and other people have a really hard time and will struggle for a long time.

And that's for big companies. That's basically the most important thing, trying to upskill the people that they have and try to attract talent that has the right skills. So I think it's a good idea that you try to learn as much as you can about this because this is not going to go away.

And it's exciting. I'm like you. I'm someone who's very open to change and I like to try out new things and I will try out new things and I experiment with them.

But yeah, there's only a handful of people like me in our company. All the other ones, they will come, but it'll take more time. They first have to see actual results before they will go for it.

[Interviewer]

Okay. Very interesting conversation.

### 9.2.11. Interview 11

Date & time: 11/07/2024 15:30

[Interviewer]

First of all, I have two simple personal and organisational questions for me to understand your background better. So first of all, can you introduce yourself and describe your current role in marketing?

[Participant]

Yes, so I'm Expert 11. I have a company that's called Fair Advantage where I help companies leverage the power of AI, not only in marketing, but also in sales, HR, administration, legal operations, but also technical. If a company wants to have their, a better resource management or planning for their employees, we help them build a tool for that, an AI tool for that. My background in marketing is that I studied marketing and I founded a digital marketing agency in 2015. And I left that agency, I'm still a shareholder, but I left that agency last year to focus more on the AI stuff.

[Interviewer]

Okay.

[Participant]

So I've always been a marketer. I've helped lots of companies with their marketing strategy. I executed a lot of marketing campaigns.

So that's my background in marketing.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. So my next question, you already partially answered, how long have you been working in marketing since 2015 then?

[Participant]

Yeah, even before that, I worked in a marketing agency that was called back then Quero Media for four years prior to starting my own agency. It's now called Only Humans. And I've also worked at a game publisher in Amsterdam as also a marketing junior assistant.

[Interviewer]

Okay, and the second part of my question was then, what significant changes have you observed over the years in marketing?

[Participant]

So the changes I observed even prior to AI was that a lot of focus was put on marketing automation, automating certain processes in marketing, getting content out on a more automation basis. More CRM, focus on more CRM, more having the data about your customers. And that is paving or has paved the way a little bit better to AI.

And also the generative AI stuff that's now come up is perfect for placing certain roles within a marketing team, such a copywriter, designer, performance marketer even, et cetera, yeah.

[Interviewer]

Okay, we'll touch upon that a bit more in detail. I'll start with the core of this interview about AI. First of all, how would you define AI in the context of marketing?

[Participant]

Oh my God, AI is such a broad topic. It goes, in marketing, I think the term generative AI is much more suited. I think for at the moment, I can't speak for the future, but at the moment it is best suited for generating assets that can be copy, that can be visual. Within marketing strategy, it is mainly a supportive tool. The creativity, strategic thinking will always come from the human, but copywriting, how you present something, doing user research, that is thing that can be done by AI. So it's more in generating certain assets and supporting in creative thinking.

[Interviewer]

Okay. Can you describe some specific AI tools and technologies that you currently use or have used in your marketing activities?

[Participant]

Sure, tools like ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, have all been used for blog articles, LinkedIn posts, social media posts in general, emails to potential customers, setting up quotes for customers, preparing slides, Midjourney or DALL-E or Leonardo AI for creating visuals for clients of mine. I've used Heygen for getting videos of clients into another language, spoken by the voice of the presenter in the video. Those are the main things I can think of now.

[Interviewer]

Okay. How has AI impacted your marketing strategies and campaign effectiveness?

[Participant]

Well, for strategy, it can aid as an assistant where you can brainstorm ideas off. It can put those ideas also in a sort of structure, marketing structure, marketing strategy structure. Helps to focus more on being creative and don't waste too much energy of putting in the right structure or format or layout or thinking about all the other necessary things that come with determining a strategy.

So it aids the process a lot. What was the other one?

[Interviewer]

And campaign effectiveness.

[Participant]

Yeah. It helps in personalising your message to certain audiences or for certain channels. So you can have a general story about your brand or product. And it takes a lot of effort to personalise that for a certain target audience or a certain niche. So AI helps with that.

[Interviewer]

Okay. Can you discuss some challenges you may be faced when integrating AI into your marketing strategies?

[Participant]

Knowing how to use AI is a very big thing. I see that a lot of agencies are not doing right. They've used ChatGPT, but they use it like they use Google. So not determining a role for the

AI or setting goals or having it present its chain of thought or reasoning. So the challenge is educating people on how to properly use AI. And also a challenge is a fear of people that are fearful of losing their job.

Instead, they should look at the different tasks within their job and determine, this is a task I can use AI for, this is a task I should use my skills as a human being for. And then put more effort on those tasks and try to automate the things that can be done with AI. So it's a lot of change management also with people.

People don't like change and especially now copywriters and designers. There's a lot of fear about using AI because they don't want to train the AI or put out processes in their agencies to make themselves redundant. And it's a legitimate fear.

I can imagine that you still need a copywriter today, but probably not in two years. So those are the challenges. Educating people, putting out a strategy for all people to use and a little bit of change management.

[Interviewer]

You talked about fear. That's something I hear coming back from others too. Have you addressed the challenge of fear and other challenges in a certain way?

[Participant]

Well, people used to work on the field and then came the tractor and then people were afraid they wouldn't work again, but all those people found other things to do. So it's not about, I think if you're designing, I think a lot of people when copywriting or designing, I think they get a lot of joy with talking to the customer, getting to see what the intention of their product is or what their vision is on how they should present the product to their target audience and not drawing a line in Photoshop or writing a certain word. So I think people should focus more on the human element of their job and really think about how they can leverage that aspect even more and the more executing part, which the people executing certain parts in marketing, those are going to be redundant in a couple of years, I imagine.

So these people should really try to imagine, so what is my human skill that I can still use in a couple of years? Within marketing, it's very difficult. Within other sectors, there is also fear, but it's maybe it will take a little bit more time, a few more years to really replace certain roles.

But I'm afraid that in marketing, especially copywriters and people who are designing stuff, that it's going to take two, three years and that's it. So I try to be as sensitive as possible around the topic, but I'm afraid that we also need to be very realistic and try where your passion is elsewhere.

[Interviewer]

I don't know if the next question is applicable to your work. If not, it's fine. How has AI changed the way you approach market research and your customer segmentation?

[Participant]

Well, market research, with AI, you can talk to your target audience without talking to it. So you can already get some stereotype info about your target audiences or different customer

segments before even talking to a customer. So validating certain USPs of your product or service before even talking to a real person.

So that's really helpful. Segmenting, I'm not really familiar with letting AI help in segmenting.

[Interviewer]

Okay, that's fine. A bit related. And also, I don't know if you use a lot of customer data, but how has AI changed the way you analyse and utilise this customer data?

[Participant]

And what is customer data for you?

[Interviewer]

So really big data.

[Participant]

So information about my customers or information like website traffic of the customers?

[Interviewer]

It could be both, it could be both.

[Participant]

Okay. Well, the strength of AI lies there in doing the first analysis on big amounts of data. You don't have to be a data analyst anymore to really get some useful insights from within the data.

AI is perfect in detecting patterns, connecting certain things with each other. So normally for a data analyst, that would take a lot of time and AI can do it really efficient and help people who are not that sufficient in data analysis to give them some really valuable insights for their clients or how they should adapt their marketing strategies or going further with some creatives, et cetera.

[Interviewer]

Okay. We're already halfway through the questions. Next question is about creativity.

How do you see AI affecting the creative aspects of marketing, such as content creation and designing? You already talked about this through the interview, but I don't know if you have anything to add.

[Participant]

No, so really creating and thinking about brainstorming about creative campaigns or campaigns in general, I think will be mainly driven by our human experience and in certain aspects, you have like Julian Cole, who is a strategist who talks about using ChatGPT in his creative process a lot, but really as a supporting factor, not really as replacing his creativity within thinking about how can we do a campaign about this product or service. So really supportive, executing the creativity, making a branding, of course, the branding, the logo, or thinking what should the logo represent that can be done by humans still, but like really designing the logo and then designing the different variants, business cards, websites, sales templates, email footer that can, within a couple of months or years, you have one press of

the button and a tool will create all those assets for you based on the branding, your colours, your perception on how your brand is. So that's my answer

[Interviewer]

Okay. What impact has AI had on marketing analytics and the measurement of campaign effectiveness?

[Participant]

Oh my God, those are very difficult questions.

[Interviewer]

Sorry.

[Participant]

No problem. But I never thought about marketing like that. When I talk with clients, I really want to feel what the client is feeling in the market, what's working, what's not working.

So I think AI is not, or better said, I'm not using AI to aid me in that part of marketing.

[Interviewer]

That's fine. The next question I do believe you're well-placed to answer is what opportunities do you believe AI presents for the marketing industry?

[Participant]

I believe that marketing is not anymore for the very big companies or very big SME's with the help of like tools like ChatGPT or Midjourney. Also smaller companies, startups can start doing some really powerful marketing campaigns with some good writing, good creatives with tools like Heygen. You can also duplicate your content in different languages, but still keep your authenticity with your own voice and with your own voice, et cetera.

So also some personalisation with just some information about a certain client, you can get really personalised copy for that client and not just, hey, first name, I saw you bought insert product, but very personalised text that is different for each client, which also shows some authenticity or some that you're really dealing with people behind the brand, even though it's fake. But so I think the opportunities lie in those areas.

[Interviewer]

So from what I hear, the barrier to entry has been lowered thanks to AI for the startups.

[Participant]

Yes, that's very well.

[Interviewer]

Okay. How do you see the role of AI in marketing evolving over the next five years?

[Participant]

So I think bigger agencies will have to let go a lot of people who are executing certain tasks like copywriting or designing certain things. Marketing agencies, marketing teams will focus more on strategic thinking and less on executing certain assets or executing campaigns. I think it's going that direction.

The Sam Altman CEO of OpenAI said that within two years, 95% of all marketing tasks should be automated with AI. I'm not sure it's going that fast, but like if you like add a AI layer in Google Ads, which already have performance max campaigns, which is a little bit like AI, but still if you can just as a business set your goal, your target budget for the day, what kind of audience you want to reach, I would say that something like Google Ads can also run very decent campaigns on its own with the help of AI within five years, certainly. So we will be useful, we as humans or people in a marketing agency to strategically think about how a brand should be perceived or product or service should be perceived, how you should put it in a market, how a good go-to-market campaign, but then executing the campaigns, starting the campaigns will all be done by AI, I guess.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. Do you think that there are any ethical considerations or risks associated with using AI in marketing specifically?

[Participant]

Uh, well, of course you have, like if you're designing certain stuff, maybe you infringe on some more popular design traits or you copy slightly already very known campaign because AI trained on those images as well. So that could be a problem. Um, AI needs a lot of data.

And if you want to do personalisation, you need to get to know the customers. GDPR was a big adjustment for a lot of marketing agencies. And I don't think that every agency is going, is using their clients' data, their customers' data the way that it should. There's still a lot of data going around, which nobody consented to processing or using in campaigns. So that's that, but I always think how more personalised a message for me is, how better. So I have less worries about sharing my data or other brands using it, but I would say privacy can be a big issue also for the rest.

An ethical consideration could also be, is it ethical for us as a marketing agency to dump our 10 copywriters and just use ChatGPT to do all our copywriting? But realistically, a CEO will always choose for the most cost cutting away if it's possible, if it delivers the same quality. So I'm afraid it is an ethical consideration, but I don't think it's going to help saving those people's jobs.

[Interviewer]

Yeah, ethical on the human side more than on the actual use of AI.

[Participant]

Yeah, yeah.

[Interviewer]

What advice would you give to other marketing professionals that are considering adopting AI technologies?

[Participant]

Do it, because if there is one industry where the quote 'you will not be replaced by AI, but you will be replaced by humans using AI' that's very true for the marketing industry. So try to experiment with it, see what the different tools can do for you. ChatGPT is useful for certain things. Claude is better at copywriting. Gemini is good for the bigger context window, so you

can analyse certain documents better or customer data better. So try to experiment a lot with AI tools to see how it fits in your processes, in your day-to-day tasks.

Yeah, that would be my main recommendation.

[Interviewer]

Okay, then my last question is an open one. Is there anything else about the impact of AI on marketing that you think is important for us to discuss that we might not have covered during this interview?

[Participant]

No, I think I said everything I know or feel about marketing and AI.

### 9.2.12. Interview 12

Date & time: 12/07/2024 11:45

[Interviewer]

So first of all I have two personal and organisational questions for me to get to know you better. So first of all can you introduce yourself and describe your current role in marketing?

[Participant]

Yes, so I'm expert 12, I'm chief innovation and data officer at Space, Space is a media agency. The shareholder belong 50% to WPP and the 50 other person to Starcup so it means that we have two of the major media agencies in the world in our shareholder and so my function my function at Space is really leading all the project linked to new innovation that come from technology industry but also from media industry so it means media partner have new product or new we know on their side and also all the data project mostly linked to insight. I mean by that all the insight that we can grab from the campaign, how we can make reporting on it, how we can make benchmark, how we can analyse all those data all those insights to help us in the next campaign.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. How long have you been working in marketing and what significant changes have you observed over the years?

[Participant]

So it's been now 12, no 13, 14 years that I work in marketing and it's a bit different because I started my career on the sales house side so on the partner on the publisher side we'll say and then I moved to the media agency so I think now I make half on media agency and half on sales house and in 14 years I see a lot of things change. For example, I see this increase of social media that was not so obvious 14 years ago. Also the increase of online video was so important now the UGC also.

I see the growing of programmatic buying. Programmatic buying was not something so easy when I started because in our Belgium market, Belgium market is so conservative and so they were really not open to make programmatic at beginning. It was let's try to continue to sell I.O. insertion order to be sure that we sell our inventory to the highest price. All that things change so fast now and also most those last five years I really see a wing of all media agencies to automate a lot of operation that we were doing in the past. You need to know that and you probably know it but in the media agency a lot of things are what I call dummy things, dummy tasks. That means that it's really repetitive tasks that they're doing every day and that don't bring a lot for the company at the end and I really saw a move to make all those repetitive tasks automated.

This is why we have at Space a head of automation who really focus on how we can automate every different task that we have at Space.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. I will jump to the core of my interview about AI. First of all, how would you define AI in the context of marketing?

[Participant]

Complex. I will define AI in the field of marketing in two parts. First, it's the I will say the algorithm that helped us since so many years because we talk a lot about GenAI now but for us in our industry we know artificial intelligence since the beginning with all the algorithms that we're used to and that's still used to optimise a campaign to be able to find the right audience with the right format and so on. Then, the other part is AI today will be tools that can help us to inspire and to make us win time to do better things but the thing that we're already already doing but better and give us time to bring new services, bring new product.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. Can you describe some specific AI tools and technologies that you currently use or have used in your marketing activities?

[Participant]

Yes, so as I saidea we of course as a marketer use making programmatic and so on. We are using all the algorithm inside different buying tools like the tool from the google stack or from business manager and so on and then on the other side with this boom of the genAI we are now using of course ChatGPT. We're using it almost every day, some of us.

It's funny to see that it's something that we need to evangelise into the company because even if we give access to some people they're not so comfortable to use it to produce content with it, the content or other things. So, ChatGPT we are using almost every day. Midea-journey we are using it to create image related to our newsletter or to content that we add onto our blog or when we want to create a linkedin post or stuff like that.

Since last week we are also using Heygen. We didean't produce yet but we subscribe to it and the goal is to also be able to fastly produce video content that we can share with our partner and with our clients. And then personally on my side but I really deepdive into all those different tools but each day I'm using ChatGPT, I'm using Claude, I'm using Gemini, I'm using Midea-journey. Yeah, that's really the four that I use the most. Ah yes, we also used what was the name? Another AI tool that gave us the possibility to generate a text-to-speech, to generate voice, to create video for a specific case, for a competition.

[Interviewer]

Okay, very interesting, a lot of tools. Can you, no, how has AI impacted your marketing strategies and campaign effectiveness?

[Participant]

So again, if we speak about AI as an algorithm, of course it's impacted a lot our business and our campaign because we are using optimisation tool, we are now making some tests with a partner that use deep learning instead of machine learning to go further in the optimisation. So definitely yes, for everything linked to GenAI, we don't use it a lot at the moment and not enough but it will come definitely. It's something that is in the pipe for the moment and I think the way we will use it the most will be by the data analysis and how we can manage to analyse more and more data in a shorter time and to be able also to bring correlation between the different touch points and so on.

That will definitely help us to optimise and to rethink our different strategy in the future.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. I had another question about this. Are there any specific areas where AI has made a significant impact?

But as you saidea, probably it's going to be in the data management.

[Participant]

Yeah, I think probably data management and then if we take a more corporate way, I will say, it will probably help us a lot in the process, in all the process. I mean by that, it's also a bit the purpose of the paper I write for Solvay is to say okay, if I use this AI to automate a lot of operational tasks and that can be because honestly it's just a question of how we build it, how we put it live because in theory it's totally doable. Then we can have all this time and we already saidea before, but we have all this time that you can use to make more reflexion, more strategy and also a person make better campaign.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. Can you discuss some challenges you faced when integrating AI into your marketing strategies?

[Participant]

The fear of people who are fear of losing their job because AI is able to do it at their place and this is why we really have a huge reflexion about the ethical aspect and the human aspect of how we can bring AI into our company. To be fully honest, I have people who are saying yes, but if you do it now with AI, you will not need me anymore in the future. That's quite strange as when you're thinking about it, it's really strange to have this kind of reflexion because that means that those people consider that a machine can do what they're doing now but they're not able to add something more than the machine.

That's quite complex as a reflexion. And then the time because we are in an industry who's always running after time and it's quite complex at one moment to take all the people needed to say, okay, now we will build this, we will take the time to build something, a new way of working helped by the AI and we will take, I don't know, two or three months to define all the process that we have where the AI can automate some part of it and making tests and see how it goes and then having feedback on the different tests that we have and optimise the process. That takes a lot of time and it's a bit paradoxical because we want to build something that will make us win time but we don't have the time to build it.

[Interviewer]

Okay, you discussed one of the challenges being fear, something I hear coming back a lot from others too. Have you addressed this challenge of fear in a certain way?

[Participant]

No, to be honest, not yet because we are not far enough in what we want to build to already have to manage this fear. It's something that we keep in mind. I will have soon an appointment with, I don't know if you know, Karine Isobran who was late one of the C-level of publicists in Belgium.

She now made an MBA in Ethics and AI and so I will discuss with her to how we can make this kind of change, build this kind of process with all the ethical aspects needed because our goal is not to replace all the humans by machines and make more profit because we have less

revenue to pay. The goal is to see how we can make more profit by using in a clever way the people that we have today. So no, not yet.

We didn't address it for the moment.

[Interviewer]

That's fine. The next two questions, I don't know if it's applicable to space and if you can answer it. If not, it's fine.

First of all, how has AI changed the way you approach market research and do customer segmentation?

[Participant]

Yeah, again, not yet but it's in the pipe. Definitely AI will help us in our marketing research because it will, as I said, it will help us to manage faster a lot of data that we can have from a campaign and it's really crucial for us. It's important to make a good campaign, to touch the consumer with the right format, the right time, at the right moment, at the right time, in the right place.

We really need to know exactly how this consumer work, how, what are the behaviour and so on and for that we need to have a lot of data, we need to understand, okay, people are looking, I don't know now, for a new product on social network because they want a review to better know the product but then after they're going on the act phase more with TV spot, for example, I don't know, or radio spot and so we need to manage all those correlations and then the AI will totally help us to manage all those data faster and to be able to, and probably even better because we are not anymore with a human thinking or managing any tool in Excel, making correlation and so on. So yes, it will definitely help.

[Interviewer]

Okay, related to this, how has AI changed the way you analyse and then utilise customer data?

[Participant]

Yeah, again, faster, in a more, probably in a more precise, how do I say that, accurate way but there is also something important that we need and here it's really specific to consumer data, we need to have data granular enough to have something interesting at the end. That's also something that's quite complicated because now with all those capabilities of AI, we will have to go to our client, the advertiser, and say, okay, we need also your data, something that they don't share so easily, I mean sales data, I mean CRM data and so on, that we can bring, that we can mix with the campaign data, with all the performance data and from all this, then we will be able to make more analysis and more, yeah, to have more concrete insight that can be used in the next campaign.

[Interviewer]

This can then also be seen as a challenge, the collaboration with another company for data?

[Participant]

You mean a provider, a data provider?

[Interviewer]

Yeah, so you saidea that you need to go to the data or the advertising agency and they need to share their data, so could this then be seen in the future as a challenge?

[Participant]

No, not, yeah, it's not the advertiser agency, it's directly the advertiser. For example, you worked at Neuhaus, if we had Neuhaus as a client, what will be interesting, and I think they have an e-commerce.

[Interviewer]

I will start this e-commerce in September.

[Participant]

Yeah, perfect, so if you were my client and we have Leonideaas as client, I will directly go to them and say, okay, first we need to be sure that you have the more granular and the more accurate data that you can have. That means also be cookie-less proof, that means that we are moving on server-side tagging and we'll be sure that everything goes to a data warehouse. If it's not the case yet at Neuhaus, I really encourage you in September to start this kind of reflexion, and so it means that you get all those data from a server-side tagging, you put it into a data warehouse, but then you can have a more granular data and you can do a lot of things with it, and as soon as you have that, indeed, the decision will be, okay, you have all those data on your side now, it's really precious, but anyway, you can do everything by yourself, so you need also the insight coming from the campaign you're doing, and we need to push also those data together at one moment to understand and to be sure that, okay, this is the real impact that I can make with my campaign, with my data strategy, and so on, and also to get back to the purpose with the AI, we will be able to manage this data faster and to be sure that we are a real understanding of what impact have every action that I put, and directly on your consumer, directly on your sales figures, and on your website, on your traffic, and so on, and so till now, but I think there is only a change in this mentality, but till now, it was quite complicated to get the figures from the advertiser, the figures from Neuhaus or Leonideaas, or for example, we have VOO, the telco company, it was really complicated to get those figures, but now, I think they understand that with these figures, we will be more able, if we work together really as a team, as one team, to say, okay, we put all the data together to make something better afterward, and it's something that it's really starting on the marketer side to unlock and say, okay, we will share data also with us.

Sometimes, it's also moving faster with the help of a third company like, for example, Human37, who will bring all the technical aspects of how we will get the data and what we will do with it, and then it's, okay, there is Human37, more like a technical, this is what we do with Human37 for the moment, they are their more technical partner, will be able to manage everything to be sure that we have the right data and the right granularity of data, and on our side, we bring all the data strategy, the media strategy and the media activation, and when we arrive to the client with those both parts, they are like, okay, there is something big here that I can do, I will be okay to share my data with them.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. Now, more on the creative aspects of marketing, how do you see AI affecting the creative aspects of marketing, such as content creation and design?

[Participant]

If I was working in a creative agency today, I will not be in a peaceful state of mind. Honestly, and I know how much cost a creative agency today, I know how they ask to just a declination of a creative on different format. They can't do that anymore.

It's not possible. They're still doing it, but now the advertiser realised that they can't do that anymore. It's high too much in regard of what we can do with generative AI.

I was in discussion this morning with Guillaume Toppe from Ad Creative based in Paris. Those guys are doing 400 different creative based on data in one hour, even less. It's just a lot of data you put in it and then the AI do the rest.

It's really interesting. I really advise you to check those guys and I can share the presentation with you. But then today, I can't imagine that a marketer from a brand, any brand will still accept to pay so much for a creative agency, knowing that it can be done by generative AI.

On the other side, there is two things. When you check a creative agency, there is all the operational part, the production part when they will build a creative, go on set to do the spot or record a radio spot in studio and so on. That's all the production.

On the other side, there is the idea. That's something that the creative agency are selling. It's really expensive.

Since so many years, the idea, we get the perfect idea. That's where they will probably put all the money now. The problem is that generative idea is able to generate content like asset, but it's also able to generate idea.

On both sides, sorry for the expression, but they're screwed on both sides, on production and on the idea. It will be really complicated for them in the coming years, I think. It's something that we will not have on our side as a media agency because media agency at the beginning was created to negotiate the pricing of the media. That's something that we can continue to do. Probably, we will get back to this because we do a lot of things, a lot of foo-foo on the site since so many years. Probably, we will get back to more negotiating the pricing of the media and all the rest will be done by AI and automated. When you speak about just production, creative production and creative idea, yeah, that will be more complicated for creative agency.

[Interviewer]

Do you think it would go as far as creative agency disappearing in a few years?

[Participant]

No, they need to take the same path that we are taking as a media agency now, which means we need to adapt ourselves with the new technology as we try to always do. It means that today as a creative agency, if I was a head of a creative agency, the first thing that I will do is to be sure that all my team are trained and formed to be able to use all generative AI tool available on the market and to really become expert in that to be able to generate really fast a lot of different creative. Of course, it's a bit sad but it's you know the rules of the market.

I will be able to make more creative faster but on the other side, my client will know that I can do faster with less people so I probably will have to fire people. I will probably make more profit at the end because I will do more faster and with probably sometime best idea.

Even if they really need to pay attention to be sure that they are not using the same idea all the time, that's really a problem happening in creative agencies. It's always recycling ideas that we have in the past and as an AI is based on past data, they will probably use ideas from the past and try to reinvent it so that's something. But yes, that was probably what I will do if I was a head of a creative agency today and then I will not disappear. I will become more a creative agency fuelled by AI.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. For the next question, I think you are well-placed to answer this. What impact has AI had on marketing analytics and the measurement of campaign effectiveness?

[Participant]

Yes, as you mentioned of course, we already spoke about algorithm. I will not talk anymore about it but of course, this AI are helping us to optimise our campaign and to create well, to make our campaign more efficient, effectiveness. In terms of analytics, yeah, it's all things that I already saidea but it will help us to manage all the data coming from the analytics, coming from site-centric data kind of stuff that will really help us.

I made some tests into safe environment with only a GPT and you fill it with a lot of data coming from campaign and the insight is able to give us so fast. It's really, really helpful for us because and at the end, what is the magic is it's not that we need to learn to the machine a lot of things because at the end, if I ask him just to act as and then directly understand that he need to be in the position of someone working in a media agency and so he's able to tell me that a high CPL is not something good but a high CTR, that's something good and be able to make the difference.

So yes, definitely, it helps us a lot to manage the insight, the analytics and the insight of the campaign and bring better results at the end.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. We'll talk a bit more about the future of AI now. So first question, what opportunities do you believe AI presents for the marketing industry?

[Participant]

It's a large field of discussion.

[Interviewer]

You can narrow it down then to agencies of your kind.

[Participant]

No, no, but that there is of course opportunities because we will be able to do more because we will be able to do more because we will have more time to think about new services, new thing that we and we can maybe make more services that we were not able to do before but we can now because we have AI. For example, we done doing it and it's not in the pipe but if you want it, we can totally propose to our client now creative services because we can create assets quite easily with an AI and say, okay, now as a media agency, we are also able to create your assets and so everything goes into a media agency and that's something that you can do so that's already one opportunity. We can create more new service.

We can again move further on all the analysis of the data. We can get the data of the client as I said before and potentially propose service about, okay, we will now make correlation on each campaign. I mean, correlation between the different touchpoint and to understand touchpoint and also external data like, I don't know, the weather or governmental statistic or stuff like that.

It's the bad part or I don't know how to call it but we can make probably more profit if we build something concrete. It's obvious that we will need less people than before and so make more profit. It can be an opportunity but on the other side, it will be really catastrophic for the industry so this one is really the tricky question and also on our side, we see that we are able to not create but to manage content faster and that's something that we really want to do is to share more content with our partner.

We have experts inside who are really smart guys, smart girls who are able to create content about specific topic. For example, we have an influencer department who a lot of time come to me by, oh, we think about that and that and say, well, you should write an article on that. It's really interesting.

It can really interest a part of our client but they don't have time to do it and so here also, the AI can potentially help them to create those content faster and to share with the client. This is why also we take a subscription to Heygen because we have one of our chief intelligence officer, Bernard Coles, who creates every week a piece of content named seen from Space about the marketing, about the media but it's only slide with some graph and some text on it. With Heygen, we will be able to make it as a small video and share it and it will be Bernard Coles but not really Bernard Coles but it will be him talking about it and share it. I have this example. Beginning of the week, we made a certification with one of our media partner, DPG and all the video of the certification they built was with an AI coming from Heygen and so they were in a lot of time just to produce those video with probably a guy from DPG who was not making all the video but just a text to video and that's it. I think the opportunities are unlimited.

If we take the time to think about how we will do, we can do everything.

[Interviewer]

You said that it could be catastrophic for some parts of the industry. Do you then see that AI could be a threat?

[Participant]

Totally. Honestly, I prefer to have my position of C-level and to be able to take the decision that to be in the seat of all the experts and the operational experts today who can potentially one day be replaced by an AI. Yes, it can be a threat.

We are in a market that works with revenue and loss, profit and loss and that means that anyway if we want to stay ethic and human and to try to keep people at one hand, there is people behind who want the money, who want to earn money and make profit. It's the market where we live. You are in management study, you know that quite well I think and so it's totally a threat for the human side of the industry, definitely.

[Interviewer]

Okay, my next question is also very large. How do you see the role of AI in marketing evolving over the next five years?

[Participant]

Yeah, it's interesting because it moves really fast at the beginning. I mean, everyone saw this slide who are showing how many people in how many days ChatGPT gets a million of users and then 10 million of users and so on. It moves very fast and today a lot of people are using ChatGPT every day.

A lot of people subscribe to the pro version to be sure to have everything they need to ChatGPT or other tool. At the moment, my monthly bill in AI is around 100 so it's really becoming something that people are using and why? Because it gives me the possibility to win a lot of time and to make to be more productive.

I didn't use the word yet but at the end it's that to be more productive. But I have this feeling that it moves so fast in some months and now we are like in a how to say that? Still moments where we are trying to be perfect in what we already get from the AI.

Sometimes you see a new video about video generation. I think there is a lot of things that will be done in this aspect in the text to video and it's becoming more and more accurate and there is really nice things that are produced. So I don't know if it's this moment that we are now it's because everyone is internally checking how they can use this AI and build something on it or if it's just a it was and now but definitely in the five years coming in my industry media agency will start automating a lot of things.

We'll use AI to automate a lot of processes, a lot of repetitive operations. As we already saw it in the past, we buy media this way by a sales calling a media partner. We send them a mail or a fax, sign it, send it back and so on and then we have the programmatic okay we don't need to do all this anymore.

We just push the button and the campaign starts and then I think probably the next step is that we don't need someone to push the button. We send a brief and based on a lot of data we are able to define directly okay with this kind of brief from an advertiser we know that the to get to reach this API the best media will be this one with this partner media with this format maybe already with this tone of voice and with this baseline or with this call to action and then it'll be done. So what I see in the next five years a lot of automation into the media agency.

[Interviewer]

Okay perfect. My next question I think was made for you since you write your paper on this. Do you think that there are any ethical considerations or risks associated with using AI in marketing?

[Participant]

A lot, a lot, really a lot. Today if you go into a company and you speak about AI to the head of human resource, he will be: no it's totally horrific it will be a disaster, a real social crisis and then you get out of the office and you go to the office just next door at the CFO and you tell him the same story and he says it's so amazing you don't imagine the profit that you will do with that we will be able to fire a lot of people and so we will see our profit like that and so on. So it's really a situation that is really complicated because on both sides there is it's true

what they are thinking it's not that they're just panicking or over excited about it's just true it's really the situation that you have now and it can be because it will create a real social crisis indeed. You can't just replace human by machine by machine I mean we had movies in the 80s who were supposed to be science fiction like Terminator or like other things with Skynet and stuff like that where the AI was or even Matrix or the AI but it was supposed just to stay science fiction.

Today we are in a situation we are not so far but where obviously AI on some part can totally replace a human and honestly it can be. We should be clever enough in each company to see the potential it's really an occasion to see the potential of each human of each employee to do more than he was doing at the moment because indeed we will probably replace a part of what he is doing by or she is doing by an AI but it doesn't mean directly that we need to fire these people we just need to find how they can improve the company and do something more and then bring more revenue to the company but that's really the optimistic speech because we just said before at the end there is profit and the easiest and faster way to do profit is to fire people.

So I don't know how the future will be I can't say it. I know that it's really a reflexion that you have at the moment in our company to see what will be the more ethical the more human way of working and to get to be to make happy the both office the human resource and the CFO and to see how we can balance with all this but it will be really complicated and to be honest if we need to stay, how do I say that, honest with the situation there will be more loss than the good part of people who will be evolved thanks to the AI.

[Interviewer]

Okay very interesting perspective. My next question is what advice would you give to other marketing professionals considering adopting AI technologies?

[Participant]

I will first re-advise them to do it to adopt AI because if they are not doing it the competitor will do that's why I'm telling today to my employees I said if we are not doing it today the other will do and then at one moment it will be too late they will be able to do things faster than us and that's not okay and then I will probably advise them to master those AI to really become experts on the usage of those AI and to thinking AI. I mean by that today some of the guys working at space not all of them but I really try to push it when they're in front of a new job or in a new task or an existing task you first need to think how AI can help me on that every time everything that now each day when I will start to make something something on my to-do I will first think oh AI can help me on that how can I win quickly time and maybe at the first time it will take a bit more time I have it now on my you know quite well on chatGPT you could create your own chatGPT I have 15 or 20 now because at beginning I will say okay is it a task that I will have to do it that I will have to do again in next week or next month yeah probably okay so I will take the time just to create my chatGPT and I will be able to then to use it faster the next time but each action each task that you do now must be thinking like first is an AI can help me on that can I can I win some time on that that's really important that's really the advice you need to work with it you need to masterize in it be an expert in it and you need to evangelise this way this way of thinking about okay everything I do I check if an AI can help me

[Interviewer]

and it's an open question is there anything else about the impact of AI on marketing that you think is important for us to discuss that we might not have covered during this interview

[Participant]

we covered a lot I think yeah no it's more and then it's not directly linked to marketing or so it's okay we we speak a lot of how potentially AI can be a bad thing for some company in the ethical side on the ethical side but I think AI can be really interesting also we we also need to see how AI can be helpful for the community for the planet for stuff like that it's it's not fun but when I discuss a lot with my wife about AI and and she said that it's really a paradoxal for for you to use that much AI because I have another role at space I'm also in charge of all sustainability programme and measuring or co2 emission and all those concerns and she told me that you know on one side you try to to be more the company more sustainable and so on and on the other side you really push to use AI and we know that AI create a lot of data server used create a lot of co2 emission I think Google last week released an article saying that today AI is that on their side third or the second source of co2 emission to their company and so yes it's not something that you need to discuss today but it's also something important to keep in mind because a lot really a lot of advertisers today a lot of brands almost all the brands who will we are with with working with have sustainable objective and so arrive to them and say okay that we will do it faster because we are using AI and so on and so on it goes sometimes in the opposite way of one of their objectives and so it's also something quite important to to keep in mind to not to pay attention how we use it on this specific topic and and how it can help at the end I'm sure it can help in such a way but we need to find out

### 9.2.13. Interview 13

Date & time: 12/07/2024 15:00

[Interviewer]

Okay, so it started recording and before asking my first questions, do you have any question for me?

[Participant]

No, I can just quickly introduce myself if that helps as well.

[Interviewer]

That's my first question. Can you introduce yourself and describe your current role in marketing? So that's perfect.

[Participant]

Yeah, sure. So I'm expert 13. I'm working at CCEP, which I'm sure you know, it stands for Coca-Cola European Partners.

And I'm a director of what we call our commercial strategic business solutions team. And this team is part of the IT organisation. But at Coca-Cola, a long time already ago, seven years ago, we've rebranded IT.

We're no longer having IT department. We have a department which is called business process and technology. So it's stands abbreviation is BPT.

And yeah, maybe your expectation was that I'm a marketer or I lead a team of marketing people. I lead actually a group of business partners. And business partners in my team are accountable of making sure that the business demand is understood in the commercial space, marketing included, but it goes beyond marketing.

We also serve field sales teams. We also serve revenue and margin growth management teams or key account managers. So it is a wider commercial organisation that we serve.

And my team would, with this team of the business stakeholders, understand the need, understand the gap. And they should come with the solution, working with the rest of our IT organisation. They're like a bridge between a department of marketing people or department of field sales people and IT people.

So really technical guys and project managers and developers who would then bring the solution and technology to life. So this is where we are and what we do. And I can provide you some insights on a couple of marketing use cases.

But majority of the work that we do goes beyond because now marketing, we don't look at isolation ads. We consider it as part of our, what we call omnichannel strategy, which I'm sure you with your background have been hearing about. It's very important to provide to the customer the same experience across all the channels, whether it's physical, call or digital.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. So as you said, if you're not specifically a marketer, but you do have a background and knowledge on marketing, you may not be able to answer all of the questions I will ask you today. But just say if that's the case, it's fine.

And I'll just hop over then to the next question. Yes. So the first question is, how would you define AI in the context of marketing?

[Participant]

Yes. In Coca-Cola, we use the term AI already a long time ago. So AI on its own is not new to us in marketing area or whether abroad or commercial area.

It's how you adapt your machine learning and your large language models to automate certain processes, to drive efficiencies, to drive revenue growth of the company. And we've operated with AI since the time when we've built a data and analytics organisation at Coca-Cola. We have a dedicated team who looks into data, who looks into processes.

And we work with the business on the use cases where the need is, and we translate them into AI products or certain reports that we build that support automation. So for me, the AI in the context of our business is the capability that helps grow our business or create the efficiencies.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. Very, very deep description. Thank you very much.

Can you describe some specific AI tools and technologies that you currently use or have used in your marketing activities, if possible?

[Participant]

Yes. We have been piloting some of them. We don't have yet a big scale at CCEP of these solutions, but we have a number of AI-driven capabilities, not generative AI, but more predictive AI in the area of trade marketing expenses.

Also equipment business. Coca-Cola places a lot of equipment, different coolers, different machines out there like coffee machines. And then we would need to understand the effectiveness and the way how we can optimise, for example, certain equipment to drive brands or to drive activation.

And these AI models help us really think about how we optimise this, how we optimise the placement in a certain grocery environment, for example, to drive certain sales. So we use this engine for the front-end user. It would look like a nice report.

It's like a dashboard where we use a Power BI technology. You can include some of the parameters. You can include some of the criterias, but then there is a bigger magic happening on the background, taking into account all the data that we input this AI model with, and then it predicts a certain outcome.

[Interviewer]

Okay. And are there also some gen AI tools that you guys use or implement?

[Participant]

We started with, say, first we started when there was a hype with ChatGPT especially, and all what we had to learn at the start of the year, end of last year. We issued a document which was called a Responsible AI Use, because we've understood we cannot immediately integrate ChatGPT into our business, but people in their day-to-day job will be using it. So it's very important for the companies first to create this framework within the Teams can operate and use it wisely.

And we've provided it in the first place to our marketing department, to our sales department, where we knew there will be an intent to go and use it already now. And then we started thinking about the use cases, because in the company there is no luxury of having budget and the resources to throw at any single idea that our marketing team, sales teams, or any other teams can have. So we always start with a use case to define where is the opportunity or a problem, where we could then say we would pilot AI capability, generative AI, and make something out of it.

So we've started with Microsoft Copilot, not specifically for marketing, but for a wider use. We said let's launch Microsoft Copilot to see where it brings most of the value. We're halfway through, so we're in the process of getting the learnings, but we haven't industrialised yet.

We also have a number of gen AI initiatives related to internal HR processes, how we can optimise the whole experience of an employee, how we can help an employee find the right information and the right answer in a very concise way. And what we've done also is a number of pilots in a marketing space associated with digital campaign managements. So how can you optimise but also tailor your email campaigns for your customer, but also customise imagery. And this is we've done in a partnership with the Coca-Cola system because we are only a particular bottler and we are operating at a global level. So with the support of others also, we came up with a few use cases. And it's been pretty challenging, I must say.

It's not that there is already out-of-the-box capability that can get you an outcome or an output that you can immediately send to the customer. There is a lot of intervention required. So I'm sure you've learned or learning a lot about hallucinations or the problems with the gen AI, and we were facing exactly that.

So at the moment, there is no at scale industrialised within CCEP gen AI capability that will be all using or marketing department will be heavily using internally based on internal data.

[Interviewer]

So it's interesting you talked about the challenge of the output that still needs a lot of interventions. It's actually one of my questions. Can you discuss some challenges you faced when integrating AI into your marketing strategies?

As you said, the intervention needed. Is there anything you want to add to the answer?

[Participant]

I've recently learned something new for me about gen AI also, because a lot of teams in our organisation think that you need to only start playing with gen AI in the areas where you have lots of data and data is clean and ready. And what I've recently used because we were in the forum, sorry, learned because we were in a forum, consumer goods forum with Accenture company. I'm sure you've heard about Accenture being advisors, is that it's not actually right.

It's better to start using it already now, even if the quality of the data is not perfect, because it will take time and year forecasting that average two years to get you to the state that you can use gen AI, but have the outcome that you require. But during these two years period, whatever area you start with, you'll need to put a lot of effort to make sure you think through your trust layer, for example, to make sure that the output is correct, that you constantly refine the logic that you build around the prompt, for example. So definitely input matters.

Definitely the better the quality of the data is, the easier is to come then to a very tangible outcome. But the data quality doesn't ensure that the outcome of these answers and the model will be correct and ready to use. There is still a lot of kind of experimentation, which is required and a lot of learnings.

And the model should learn also based on the data that you integrate.

[Interviewer]

Okay, interesting perspective. Other more data analysts I've spoken with would disagree with some you said, but it's an interesting perspective. How has AI impacted your marketing strategies and campaign effectiveness?

[Participant]

I don't think that AI has already had a tremendous impact on the strategies or campaign effectiveness. I would start it perhaps with the very top. So there are two things.

First, what works well at CCEP is our company understands the value of the data technology, data and analytics or AI. So there is an acknowledgement at the very top executive level, let's say. Where we see the gap is building a more sharpened strategy, for example, for marketing.

I haven't seen yet a business articulating exactly what's AI strategy for marketing. And this is actually what our leadership will be doing this September. Our chief data officer and our chief information officer are going to the board of directors to talk about AI and to reconfirm that AI should be a business strategy rather than IT strategy.

It's not a technology strategy on its own. So there is a lot of work required with the leaders of our company to help them understand this and to help them make it part of their strategy and part of their business. So this is the work we need to do.

At the more operational level, think about marketeers and the people who on a day-to-day create campaigns. This we've seen that there is an impact, that there is a kind of value because they are able to work more efficiently. I wouldn't have the numbers now because, again, I'm not part of this marketing team to say we've increased, for example, the campaign effectiveness by X number or X percent.

This is something that I don't have visibility of. I think we'll get there. I'm sure that in 12 to 24 months, we'll be able to actually openly talk about the impact and the effectiveness because they're using it now.

It's just that they are not using it at scale to then come up with the selling story to the wider organisation.

[Interviewer]

To reassure you, none of the marketeers I've spoken with are able to tell me with X percent or this or that. So it's the same answer.

[Participant]

I'm great. I'm not an outlier in your research.

[Interviewer]

Perfect. You talked about in September that your CTO and CIO are going to need to reconfirm with the board of directors about the use of AI on it being on the business level rather than technology level. Could this then also be seen as a challenge of implementing AI within CCEP that the board of directors could be kind of a break or something that makes the process go a little bit less fast due to constantly needing to reaffirm and re-see the strategy of AI within CCEP?

[Participant]

Yeah. I think we've been blessed by having a board of directors that are close to technology and understanding the value. So far, we've managed actually to have their support and their support is usually with advice but also capital because then they invest in a certain area to help us drive things.

So far, we haven't seen blockers. They're usually open-minded and they're happy to support us on the technology side. And I do foresee that this meeting will help us drive some of the pilots because the outcome is that we need to mature our competence around AI and we also need to maybe accelerate some of the pilots to say, imagine we have the same interview 12 months later and I could say, Laurent, listen, actually we have this tool used by all our marketing teams across all our CCEP markets.

It's such a success. And this is where we need to get to but we are far from that. So I hope that this meeting and these discussions would lead us to unlocking resources, unlocking the investment and then having their blessing and the goal.

They can start embedding these and help us embed into the strategy, AI elements. And then if the top usually is agreeing, there is a blessing and it helps to avoid administration and go through a number of, hurdles along the way to get things done. It's usually accelerating the process.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. My next question is, how has AI changed the way you approach market research and do customer segmentation? If applicable, of course.

[Participant]

Very interesting one, especially the latter. Customer segmentation is something that Coca-Cola is very passionate about. And this is our bread and butter.

We live and breathe it because this is what helps drive revenue growth and what we've understood that a bit maybe the context. Every channel, every segment of our business has associated what we say picture of success. What does picture of success mean?

In this case, we need to sell X number of products, this range of products in this particular outlet, in this particular channel or segment of customers. Where segmentation is wrong, meaning that by default, we're giving a wrong instruction to our sales teams to go and pitch this and sell this in this particular outlet. So the better we know it, the easier it is for us to drive sales, to understand the consumer in this space and then drive growth of our company.

What we've been doing in the past, it's enhancing our customer segmentation based on the historical data or based on the external sources. So we would say this is how much we sell across these segments today. By the way, my bit segmentation is changing because we've noticed their social media through this external data that there are certain trends in this space or there is maybe a competitor outlet which has opened close by.

So the question is always, do we need to change the segmentation? Do we need to adapt it? And is the data in our systems up to speed?

So a lot of focus is on segmentation. We haven't been yet practically using AI/ generative AI in this space, but we've been using AI models to define what we call headroom for growth. So what does this mean?

We would reclassify the customer based on the AI models, considering the potential. So what we were doing in the last years, and the model proved to be successful, we would say there is an on-the-go store in this corner shop, traditionally would fall under the on-the-go, away from home sub-trade channel or segmentation. However, we've learned that this is close to a school nearby or university nearby, but we've also got the data sharing the sales in the nearby other store because we've bought this data and this is external provider who is fuelling this.

So we combine all these different data sources and an AI model generates the recommendation to reclassify this particular outlet based on what we call headroom for growth. And if we reclassified, it was, for example, for us, classification that we use is gold, silver, bronze outlet customer. So our gold customer always has the best range of product, always is visited by our sales managers, always receiving up-to-date communication over the email.

So we have a very strong coverage, what we say, of this customer. But this headroom for growth AI model might have predicted that this customer that I was just referring, the corner store, was used to be silver. But there is so much of a potential in this customer that in our system, we need to reclassify and consider it bronze or the opposite gold customer.

And all of a sudden, because of that system, and it can be very simple as us needing to go into our systems and change the name of a certain attribute or a certain field, but this is so powerful because then all our teams, marketing teams, sales team, start using this data and this attribute in amending their communications with the customer, in amending the range of the products that we sell, in amending the email campaign that needs to go into this customer. This has been a very successful pilot across several markets.

We are scaling it. So now we've finished Europe and we plan to go into the Asian regions because we started selling Coke also there to adapt the model, obviously use their data and make sure we can make the most out of it. But this is type of pilot which was directly associated with the revenue growth of the company and with the full potential that we can unlock.

Again, based on more of a predictive AI and some of the machine learnings and large data processing, not yet the gen AI.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. Very interesting. Related to this, how has AI changed the way you analyse and utilise customer data?

[Participant]

We can definitely process more data in a kind of short period of time. We can remove lots of admin associated with it because in the past we had lots of operational people zooming into Excel files trying to crunch some numbers and it allows us now to automate lots of these processes, remove admin time and also change the role sorts and the competence that we need in the company because if in the past you would need a lot of people who would crunch the numbers, who would process all of this information and data, now you need a bit of less of these people, meaning that you can invest in the competence around data and analytics and have real analysts who are actually making sense out of data and then recommending the actions. So for us, the journey that we've been to with our what we call data and analytics department who was piloting all of these, industrialising this, has changed completely the way we operate.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. We're already halfway through the questions. My next question is more about more specifically Gen AI and creativity around marketing.

How do you see AI affecting the creative aspects of marketing such as content creation and design?

[Participant]

Every consumer goods forum that we are joining now, whether this is any of the consultancy companies like Deloitte or Accenture or our CRM providers like Salesforce company, they all like to start now the sessions. It's a hype with exactly this part. It's how AI impacts content.

I must say every meeting I'm attending has been given a different shape because we are using lots of creative content in it. And now they are playing with Gen AI on a day-to-day basis. They're trying to simulate, generate new content, produce videos using the new content. We are using it in our conferences. Recently, we had an interesting event where we would generate the art, prompting with different kind of input from Coca-Cola. There would be a Picasso image with a prompt that would ask to embed processes of CCEP, of Coca-Cola business.

And it would generate an image which was completely new but very exciting. And it provoked some of the discussions. It triggers creativity.

It's also fun. I think everyone is living and breathing. Marketing teams are very proud if they manage to create a very nice piece of content or a video to then say it was AI-generated or co-generated with AI.

We're relying at CCEP on a lot of external agencies for creative companies, sorry, for creative part content. And I feel there we also relied on what agencies do, which for me is a great

opportunity because if those smaller companies crack the code and are able to industrialise and use it at scale, we don't have to per se invest a lot as CCEP in this because we're always paying other agencies to go and do work for us. So we need to just make sure that we advise them better because we've noticed that if the instruction is not mature enough, if you don't have a skill on how to work with AI and what questions to ask, how to create that prompt in the right way, you won't get the right output.

So we instruct them and then agencies do this for us, but they of course need to understand our business.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. What impact has AI had on marketing analytics and the measurement of campaign effectiveness?

[Participant]

I think with our internal B2B communications, because what I've just mentioned, we work on the campaigns, but this would be in a context of the business. So it's Coca-Cola sending campaigns to a restaurant, to a little store at the corner, or selling the promotions at the big retailer like Lidl or Carrefour. So in a context of the B2B business, we're still measuring in a pretty traditional way.

I have, if we talk about campaigns, it's A-B testing. If we talk about campaigns, we would measure the bounce rate or a click rate or a click through rate. So all these KPIs, which are pretty static, I haven't seen the team applying lots of AI to measure those traditional KPIs.

They're driven in the area of marketing by more of marketing effectiveness planning. It's the investments and the return of the investment that we want to measure from, for example, a certain promotion that we launch in the store, how effective this promotion was. And this is where we would then apply in our model, a logic to calculate exactly that and provide a feedback that will be used.

We actually have a big initiative, which is called customer investment management. And this will be how we manage our promotions across the retail market, but how we maximise the return out of it. And there will be a big AI model, which will be built on top of a simple promotion management.

And this model will be able to then optimise every new promotion that we plan for a certain channel segment or environment.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. We'll talk more about the opportunities and future of AI now. What opportunities do you believe AI presents for the marketing industry?

[Participant]

For me, it's an endless, it's like if you're a kid in a candy store, you open and you don't know what to look at because you keep your mind open, but everything you see you like and you don't know where to start with. I think it's a land of opportunities because for us marketing is associated with first a strategy around how you drive companies growth and how we create efficiencies. We today, as example, have a lot of digital assets, we call them, which are used across the organisation, but in a completely unoptimized way.

We would purchase some of the digital assets, we would get some of the content from our colleagues from US, so they're the kind of the mother company, and then lots of agencies to get more content in. The amount of money that goes into marketing and social and all the content is huge, and I see this number would decrease with us being more smart and creative and leveraging AI, and the question would be do we build this competence in-house or do we build this or do we rely on this competence somewhere else? So is the balance to strike?

How much you want to rely on AI as a service versus to how much you want people to be skilled enough and knowledgeable enough in your company to go and do it. But for me, it's clearly, it's how we'll get to make more money, which there is a revenue growth opportunity, but also how we'll become more efficient is how we utilise the knowledge in the people, how we streamline some of these processes and how our people become smarter to then leverage these in the context of the business because there is a certain competence that you need to have. You kind of just start playing with it and significantly benefit your business if you have zero competence.

[Interviewer]

Okay. And how do you see the role of AI in marketing evolving over the next five years?

[Participant]

We are saying, in our case, the view is that the success will be combining digital and human or AI and human. I've heard another interesting comment recently. They're saying AI is a new UI.

So we will have a new user interface, which will always be accompanied with AI components. And I think the future, I do not see that in a short to medium term. We will be having just a few individuals or colleagues sitting in the marketing department and everything being automated and AI driven.

This is the furthest future for me, but I do believe there will be lots of people who are working on the strategy around marketing, who are able to drive our company forward by leveraging most of the AI that does all the operational work that reduces time and admin, but the humans should be there to then make the most out of it. So marketing department for me is not what will become human-less and replaced by AI. It's rather, how do you combine and how do you find this best balance?

And how you make the most out of two.

[Interviewer]

Okay, interesting. Do you think that there are any ethical considerations or risk associated with using AI in marketing?

[Participant]

Certainly, that's why we had to produce these documents for the responsible AI use. And we see it everywhere. I think outside of the company, every video you listen to, every feedback you listen from another company, this is a top of mind.

And people are saying there will be jobs created that don't exist now, but specifically for this reason to just control and put some boundaries. And I think for us, will be important is to

make sure that we create these ethics and boundaries in the context of the business AI. This is another separation effort.

So there is kind of AI, but there is enterprise AI. It's when you start more and more embedding AI into your enterprise, into your company, and every company will become responsible for thinking, how do you set the boundaries? How do you maintain the ethics?

How do you apply these to internal employees, but you make sure that it does not impact the customer because then the outcome can be pretty damaging. So lots of considerations. It's not an easy task, but it should, of course, come along.

I haven't seen at CCEP any specific roles created to manage exactly these, but I think this is the future. We will need it. It more, I think, starts at the more national level, at the country level, where we hear they're all concerned about AI and how to make sure that within your geography, you operate in a safe environment.

But there is a big discussion about it because still the trust layer is not as strong on top of AI to make sure that you're protected. And the answer you get is not a lie, but something you can truly rely on.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. Only two questions left. First, what advice would you give to other marketing professionals considering adopting AI technology?

[Participant]

I would encourage to experiment more. I think if you think about marketing in such a space that it will be very easy to demonstrate the value because it's in your hands and you can immediately link it to the wider business case. But we need to experiment and not be afraid, embrace it.

I know in some companies, there is a discussion around, how much investment, how much budget, how many resources, but the reality is there is so much out there that does not require money and investment in resources. You can go and start experimenting with it already now. So I would encourage everyone in the marketing industry to educate themselves and familiarise more because this is where it all starts because they will become the future of the full potential.

And the more they understand how it works, the more they understand all the art of the possible, the brighter future we have ahead of us and the more creativity it will boost across the teams, companies. So yeah, definitely educate yourself, learn about it so that we can build the future together.

[Interviewer]

Okay, perfect. My last question is then an open one. Is there anything else about the impact of AI on marketing that you think is important for us to discuss that we might not have covered during this interview?

[Participant]

You had a very comprehensive set of questions. So I think it's, perhaps how the question should always be how we generate more value. So for me, technology comes next, but what we try to encourage is how you are value driven.

And for me, what I see many companies, whether it's marketing department or sales department, they do, they try to jump into solution or technology around it, but they struggle to properly articulate the value and the benefit. And I think this is the selling story for companies to not think about technology first, but value comes first. What would drive revenue?

What would create more efficiencies? What will help to automate the process and make the life of a marketer easier? This is how it all starts and the technology comes next.

So let's be all value driven.