
DRIVING INNOVATION AND BREAKTHROUGHS IN MARKETING

Dattatreya G. Tapas

Associate Professor

Department of Commerce, Government First Grade College, Dharwad

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Driving innovation and making big changes in marketing isn't just about using new digital tools anymore; it's about making a real shift toward putting customers first, being flexible, and using technology smartly to create new value. In today's fast-paced, highly connected, and crowded marketplace, marketing innovation is essential for growth and standing out.

Objective of study: The main goal is to identify new customer groups, new situations where products can be used, or new needs that haven't been addressed by competitors.

Research methodology: Research methodology for driving marketing innovation involves using a mix of methods that combine deep understanding of consumers with quick testing. Key techniques include using social media to spot trends, applying design thinking for creating prototypes, using predictive analytics to forecast consumer behavior, and collaborating with other organizations.

Data analysis and interpretation: Data analysis and interpretation in marketing have changed from being a secondary task to becoming the main force behind innovation and gaining a competitive edge. By turning raw data about consumers into useful information, companies can move from making decisions based on guesswork to making choices backed by evidence.

Finding: In 2025–2026, generative AI is going beyond just creating content to act like agents of change that can automate briefing, testing, and optimization, leading to significant improvements in speed and efficiency.

Recommendation: Implement AI tools that can predict what customers might want, use chatbots to interact with customers around the clock, and use generative AI to create custom content tailored to each person.

Conclusion: Driving innovation and making big strides in marketing means moving away from old, product-focused methods to something more customer-focused, data-backed, and flexible.

Keyword: Driving, Innovation, Breakthroughs, Marketing

1. INTRODUCTION:

Driving innovation and making big changes in marketing isn't just about using new digital tools anymore; it's about making a real shift toward putting customers first, being flexible, and using technology smartly to create new value. In today's fast-paced, highly connected, and crowded marketplace, marketing innovation is essential for growth and standing out. Companies that focus on innovation see up to 2.4 times more revenue growth and 3.1 times greater profit.

Key Aspects of Marketing Innovation:

Marketing innovation means using new ways to better meet customer needs, enter new markets, or reposition products to boost sales.

These innovations can cover different areas:

- **Promotion Innovation:** Using viral marketing, interactive online ads, and personalized content powered by AI.
- **Place (Distribution) Innovation:** Adopting direct-to-consumer models or new retail formats.
- **Pricing Innovation:** Using dynamic pricing that changes in real time.
- **Marketing Process Innovation:** Improving market research, customer relationship management, and planning by using data-driven insights.

Making Big Leaps vs. Small Improvements:

While small changes offer gradual benefits, big breakthroughs involve major shifts that change industry standards or create new markets.

- **Market-Driven (Incremental):** Focuses on meeting known customer needs in existing markets.
- **Market-Driving (Breakthrough):** Focuses on finding hidden customer needs and changing how people behave and how industries are structured, like when Apple introduced the iPhone or Spotify changed music consumption with its streaming model.

Main Factors behind Marketing Breakthroughs:

To achieve and keep up with breakthroughs, organizations should focus on several key areas:

- **A "Test and Learn" Culture:** Letting teams try new ideas and viewing failure as a way to learn.
- **Customer-Centered Design:** Using frameworks like "Jobs to Be Done" to understand customers' deeper needs, not just what they say they want.
- **Cross-Functional Collaboration:** Breaking down walls between marketing, research and development, and sales to ensure ideas are both technically possible and aligned with market needs.
- **Technological Integration:** Using AI, big data, and automation to provide personalized, real-time engagement.

Challenges and How to Overcome Them:

Making big breakthroughs can be blocked by resistance to change, fear of failure, and difficulty in measuring the return on investment of new ideas.

To get past these, leaders must create an environment that supports taking risks and providing the necessary resources, especially a clear, shared vision.

2. OBJECTIVE OF STUDY:

The main goal of a study about driving innovation and making breakthroughs in marketing is to find, understand, and put into action new strategies, technologies, and processes that help brands keep up with changing consumer needs, stand out in crowded markets, and gain a lasting edge over competitors. These studies aim to move from old, traditional methods to more modern, data-based approaches that improve how well brands connect with customers and support long-term business growth.

The main goals of such studies are:

1. Finding Opportunities and Understanding Customer Needs:

- Using AI, machine learning, and data analysis to figure out how consumer tastes and buying habits are changing.
- Spotting new groups of customers, new situations where products can be used, or new needs that haven't been addressed by competitors yet.
- Keeping an eye on upcoming trends and tech advances to stay ahead and avoid being left behind.

2. Creating Strategic Breakthroughs:

- Going beyond just following trends to create special, memorable experiences (like using AI, AR/VR, or other immersive digital tools) that make a brand unique.
- Looking into new revenue streams, such as moving from selling products to offering services.
- Improving product design, pricing, how products are promoted, and how they are sold to make things run more smoothly.

3. Boosting Performance and Staying Competitive:

- Using automation and data to cut down on marketing costs and boost the number of people who take action.
- Creating personalized content and using interactive platforms to build stronger, more genuine relationships with customers.
- Building quicker, more flexible processes for launching products or campaigns so the brand can keep up with the fast-paced market.

4. Helping the Company Grow and Change:

- Encouraging teams to try new ideas and learn from mistakes without being afraid of failing, to discover powerful, innovative solutions.
- Making sure marketing efforts work together with research and development, product creation, and customer support to drive big changes across the whole business.
- Giving teams the right knowledge and tools (like AI, CRM systems, and predictive analytics) to carry out advanced strategies effectively.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Research methodology for driving marketing innovation involves using a mix of methods that combine deep understanding of consumers with quick testing. Key techniques include using social media to spot trends, applying design thinking for creating prototypes, using predictive analytics to forecast consumer behavior, and collaborating with other organizations. This approach helps both in adapting to the market and in creating new opportunities within it.

Core Research Components for Innovation:

Qualitative Exploration (Understanding "Why"):

Focus Groups & Interviews: These are used to gather in-depth insights about what consumers think and what motivates them.

Observation/Ethnography: This involves carefully watching how consumers behave in their everyday environments to discover needs that haven't been met.

Design Thinking: This is a teamwork-based, step-by-step process that includes making prototypes and testing them to improve solutions.

Quantitative Validation (Measuring "What"):

Surveys & Questionnaires: These tools are used to collect opinions and preferences from a large group of people.

Experimental Research (A/B Testing): This method involves changing certain elements to see how they affect marketing outcomes.

Data Mining & Predictive Analytics: These techniques use artificial intelligence and machine learning to analyze big data sets and find patterns and predict trends.

Strategic Analysis:

Competitive Analysis: This looks at what competitors are doing well and not so well to find gaps in the market.

Social Media Listening: This involves tracking real-time opinions and conversations on social media platforms.

Methodological Approaches to Breakthrough:

Market-Driven (Customer-Centric): This approach focuses on collecting information to address existing needs that customers have not yet met.

Market-Driving (Proactive): This involves taking the initiative to create new markets through innovations in technology, business models, or unique offerings.

Data-Driven Innovation: This uses big data and AI to find patterns that can't be found using traditional methods.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM): This is used in research to test how innovations, such as internet marketing or brand identity, affect business performance.

Structured Process:

Define the Problem/Goal: Clearly outline what the innovation will focus on, such as a product, service, or brand.

Data Collection & Analysis: Combine insights from qualitative research with data from quantitative methods.

Ideation & Prototyping: Use design thinking to develop and refine ideas based on the feedback received.

Implementation & Evaluation: Launch the innovation and measure its success using metrics like how many customers adopt it or the return on investment.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

Data analysis and interpretation in marketing have changed from being a secondary task to becoming the main force behind innovation and gaining a competitive edge. By turning raw data about consumers into useful information, companies can move from making decisions based on guesswork to making choices backed by evidence. This result in better returns on investment, more personalized experiences, and the discovery of new market opportunities.

Key Drivers of Innovation in Marketing:

Data-driven marketing leads to major breakthroughs through several important factors:

Deeper Customer Insights: By looking at online activities such as website visits, social media interactions, and past purchases, marketers can understand customer needs before they even ask for them.

Hyper-Personalization: With the help of data, marketing moves from general categories to individual targeting. This means providing customized content such as product suggestions or personalized messages, which increases customer engagement and loyalty.

Predictive Analytics for Proactive Strategy: Using machine learning, companies can predict trends, sales results, and the likelihood of customers leaving, helping them adjust their strategies before changes in the market happen.

Agile Campaign Optimization: Real-time data allows marketers to quickly change their campaigns, adjusting spending in real-time to focus on the most effective channels.

Data Interpretation Techniques for Breakthroughs:

To gain a competitive edge, having data is not enough. It needs to be analyzed using advanced methods:

Marketing Mix Modeling (MMM): This uses regression analysis to find out how different marketing activities, such as TV ads or online ads, affect sales. This helps in making better decisions about how to allocate the budget.

Customer Lifetime Value (CLV) Analysis: This identifies the top 20% of customers who bring in 80% of the company's value, allowing businesses to make more effective investments in keeping these valuable customers.

Sentiment Analysis: This uses natural language processing (NLP) to understand the feelings of customers from social media and feedback, giving insights into how the brand is perceived and where improvements are needed.

A/B Testing (Split Testing): This involves testing different versions of headlines, images, and calls to action to refine marketing content and improve the chances of converting customers.

Driving Innovation in Product & Strategy:

Data analysis helps in creating new ideas by finding gaps in the market and improving products to better meet customer needs:

Iterative Product Development: By continuously looking at customer feedback and how products are used, companies can improve existing items or create new ones that better meet the needs of their audience.

Identifying New Markets: Using big data, hidden patterns in customer behavior can be found, revealing new segments or niches that were not previously known.

Case Studies in Action:

Netflix: Uses data on what people watch to provide personalized recommendations and to decide which shows to produce.

Tesla: Uses data from its vehicles to improve its Autopilot features and predict when maintenance is needed.

Challenges and Future Trends

While data-driven marketing is very important, there are several challenges that must be addressed:

Data Overload & Silos: Combining data from various sources such as CRM systems, social media, and websites requires powerful tools to avoid fragmented and unusable data.

Data Privacy & Ethics: Following regulations like GDPR and keeping consumer trust while using personal data is a major challenge.

Data Literacy: Many companies lack employees who understand both data science and marketing, so training in data interpretation is needed.

Future trends are leaning heavily on AI-powered analytics, where machine learning algorithms automatically find unusual patterns and generate insights, allowing for quick, automatic changes in strategy.

5. RESULT:

Driving innovation and achieving big breakthroughs in marketing means going beyond old methods and taking up AI, data-driven personalization, and new digital tools to keep up with what consumers want. Here are the main points and best practices for pushing this innovation forward:

Core Drivers of Marketing Innovation:

AI-Powered Personalization: Using artificial intelligence to understand customers better, create personalized content, and predict their behavior helps make marketing more relevant and engaging.

Immersive Technologies: Using Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) for 360-degree videos and virtual experiences, especially in areas like retail and real estate, can make customers more engaged and more likely to make purchases.

Social Media & Influencer Strategy: Using social media to get immediate feedback and working with influencers for genuine, trustworthy content can help build strong brand loyalty.

Data-Driven Decision Making: Using behavioral data and integrating it with CRM systems allows for delivering content that's tailored to each customer in real time.

Breakthrough Results & Strategic Approaches:

Market-Driven vs. Market-Driving:

Market-driven (meeting existing needs) improves efficiency and is very effective in highly competitive markets.

Market-driving (creating new needs or markets) leads to higher and more lasting value for the company.

AI-Driven ROI: AI-optimized PPC and SEO campaigns can increase return on investment by up to 30%, with a return of \$2 for every \$1 spent.

Enhanced Performance: When marketing is combined with R&D, it can improve company performance, for example, by speeding up the time it takes to bring new products to market.

Strategic Flexibility: In high-tech environments with a lot of change, market-driving strategies are better, while in highly competitive markets, market-driven approaches are more effective.

Best Practices for Implementation:

Cultivate Experimentation: Marketing teams should be encouraged to "test and learn" without being afraid of making mistakes.

Cross-Functional Collaboration: Marketing should work closely with R&D and product teams to ensure that new ideas are based on real customer insights.

Upskilling Teams: It's important to invest in training for new technologies such as AI and advanced analytics to stay ahead of the competition.

Agile Frameworks: Using 90-day planning cycles helps focus on the most impactful innovations and allows for quick changes based on performance data.

Key Challenges:

Scalability: Implementing new tech like blockchain or VR can be hard to scale across the whole organization.

High Initial Costs: There's a big upfront cost for AI and AR, which can be a challenge for smaller companies.

Compliance: Personalized campaigns must carefully follow data privacy laws like GDPR and CCPA.

6. FINDING:

Findings on driving innovation and breakthroughs in marketing for 2025–2026 show a move away from using AI just for simple automation to making it a central part of how work is done. Major advancements are happening through the use of AI-powered analytics, "answer-first" search engine optimization (GEO), and the evolving role of marketing operations as a "business value engineer," which balances fast results with maintaining brand authenticity.

Key Drivers and Trends for Marketing Innovation:

Generative AI "Systems of Work": In 2025–2026, generative AI is going beyond just creating content to act like agents of change that can automate briefing, testing, and optimization, leading to significant improvements in speed and efficiency.

Generative Engine Optimization (GEO): As search engines like Google move toward "answer-first" models, marketing teams are moving from traditional SEO to GEO to make sure their content shows up in AI summaries. This brings in higher-quality, but less volume, traffic.

Hyper-Personalization and First-Party Data: With third-party cookies being phased out, success now depends on making use of zero-party data (data voluntarily shared by users) and first-party data to create personalized, real-time marketing experiences.

From "Vibes" to "Influence-Based" Marketing: Performance marketing is shifting from focusing on last-click attribution to influence-based measurement, which looks at the impact of AI-driven recommendations and multi-step customer journeys.

Authenticity as a Counter-Reaction: To fight "AI-slop" (generic, AI-generated content), brands are focusing on authentic, human-centered content, including "employee advocacy" and "faceless" content that highlights the product rather than polished influencers.

Retail Media 2.0 (Commerce Media): Retail media networks are becoming a major part of marketing budgets, offering 1.8 times better results than traditional digital ads by combining high-intent shopper data with opportunities to buy in-store or online.

"Treatonomics" and Micro-Communities: Consumer fatigue is causing a growing interest in small, tangible rewards ("Treatonomics" or "inchstones") rather than long-term, vague goals.

Meanwhile, niche, brand-owned communities on platforms like Discord or Slack are driving a 25% increase in engagement.

Strategies for Achieving Breakthroughs:

Adopting the "Laboratory and Factory" Model: Top-performing companies use a "Laboratory" to experiment with AI while the "Factory" scales proven and reliable methods, allowing for both innovation and operational efficiency.

Cross-Functional "Growth Engines": Marketing is no longer a separate department but a cross-functional hub that works with data scientists, engineers, and legal teams to drive product strategy.

Embracing "Cringe Marketing": To stand out in a crowded attention economy, brands are using raw, awkward, or "cringe" humor rather than overly polished content to build real connections.

Rethinking "Nostalgic Remixing": Instead of just re-releasing old content, brands are combining classic elements (like logos or jingles) with new intellectual property to connect with multiple generations.

Key Challenges to Overcome:

AI "Trough of Disillusionment": Marketers are realizing that generic AI-generated content doesn't engage well, leading to a greater need for human involvement in managing AI.

Regulatory Pressure: The EU AI Act and similar laws are pushing for mandatory AI governance by 2026, with strict rules around disclosing, auditing, and managing AI-generated output.

Skill Gaps: There is a growing need for "AI fluency" and the ability to interpret data, shifting marketing hiring from traditional roles to roles focused on "data translators" and "systems thinkers."

7. DISCUSSION:

Driving innovation and making big advances in marketing means moving away from old, straight-forward, and cautious methods to a culture that values constant testing and learning. It also means using advanced technology and putting the customer at the heart of everything. Marketing innovation isn't just about creating new products; it also includes finding fresh ways to promote, price, distribute, and structure a business.

Key Drivers and Strategies for Innovation:

Using new technologies like AI, machine learning, and automation is changing how marketing works. These tools help create highly personalized content, keep customers engaged in real time, and predict what consumers might need before they even know it.

A "test-and-learn" approach is important: Companies that succeed let their marketing teams try out new, low-cost ideas—like running social media experiments—and quickly refine those ideas based on what they learn.

There's a difference between market-driven and market-driving innovation: Market-driven innovation responds to known customer needs and makes a business more efficient. Market-driving innovation, however, creates new markets—like how Airbnb or Apple did with the iPhone. This type of innovation can bring much greater value to a company, sometimes up to six times more, by addressing needs that people didn't even realize they had.

Working across departments is essential: Marketing needs to work closely with research and development and sales teams to create solutions that focus on the user, not just promote what already exists.

Making decisions based on data is powerful: By using big data and analytics, companies can uncover subtle and meaningful insights about how customers behave, which helps create unique and memorable experiences tailored just for them.

Key Areas of Breakthrough Marketing:

Interactive and immersive content is growing: Brands are using tools like AR, VR, and 360-degree videos to let customers experience products before buying them.

Strategic partnerships are also a big part of innovation: Working with influencers, startups, or even customers—like LEGO Ideas—helps make content and products feel more genuine and engaging.

New pricing and business models are changing the game too: Companies are moving toward subscription services, like Dollar Shave Club, or using dynamic pricing that changes in real time based on demand.

Challenges to Innovation:

- One major hurdle is the fear of failure and being too risk-averse.
- Leaders need to build a culture where failure is seen as part of the learning process.
- Limited budgets and talent can hold innovation back, especially for smaller companies.
- Measuring the return on investment for new and experimental marketing efforts is also difficult.
- To keep creating breakthroughs, marketing needs to go from being just a support function to being a key part of the company's overall strategy.

This requires staying committed to understanding customers, adopting new technology, and building an organizational culture that supports taking smart risks.

8. RECOMMENDATION:

Driving innovation and making big advances in marketing means moving away from old, straightforward methods to a modern, flexible, and customer-focused way of working. Marketers who succeed often use AI, improve personalization, and build a culture that encourages trying new things and learning from mistakes.

Here are the main suggestions based on what's working best in the industry today:

1. Embrace Marketing Innovation Through Technology:

Use AI and Machine Learning: Implement AI tools that can predict what customers might want, use chatbots to interact with customers around the clock, and use generative AI to create custom content tailored to each person.

Use Programmatic Advertising: Employ AI to bid on ads in real time and target specific groups, which can boost the return on ad spend by up to 31%.

Use Immersive Technologies like AR and VR: Create fun and interactive brand experiences such as trying products virtually or taking virtual tours of stores, which especially appeals to younger audiences.

2. Focus on What Customers Really Need:

Discover Hidden Needs: Look beyond what customers say they want and find what they really need by using research and data.

Deliver Hyper-Personalized Experiences: Use customer behavior data and connect it with your CRM system to provide personal content in real time, as 80% of customers prefer brands that offer tailored experiences.

Build a Community: Engage with customers through social media groups and content they create themselves to strengthen their connection with your brand and make it feel more real.

3. Create a Culture That Encourages Innovation:

Promote a "Test and Learn" Attitude: Let marketing teams try out new ideas and technologies, and treat mistakes as chances to learn and improve.

Encourage Teamwork Across Departments: Break down barriers between marketing, product development, and sales to make sure your marketing is informed by deep product knowledge and customer insights.

Bring in Diverse Ideas: Include people with different viewpoints, such as those who focus on improving existing processes and those who come up with completely new ideas.

4. Make Strategic and Organizational Changes:

Use Data-Driven Insights: Use tools like Google Analytics, Tableau, or Mixpanel to track important performance metrics and change your strategies quickly based on what the data shows.

Build an Innovation Pipeline: Set up a clear process for identifying, testing, and putting new ideas into action instead of relying on chance for breakthroughs.

Adopt Agile Methods: Use 90-day planning cycles to allow for quick changes and improvements as market conditions shift.

5. Key Focus Areas for 2025–2026:

Focus on Short-Form Video: Concentrate on platforms like TikTok and Instagram Reels, which have seen huge growth and high levels of engagement.

Optimize for Voice Search: Make sure your content is ready for the kinds of questions people ask using voice assistants.

Build Transparency and Trust: Use blockchain to protect data and stop ad fraud, which helps build consumer trust and confidence in your brand.

CONCLUSION

Driving innovation and making big strides in marketing means moving away from old, product-focused methods to something more customer-focused, data-backed, and flexible. In today's fast-paced and tough competition, marketing needs to be the engine that pushes

business forward by encouraging a culture of testing, using AI and tech for tailored experiences, and working closely with research and development to offer better value.

Key points on driving marketing innovation:

Customer-Centered Approach: Real innovation solves actual, sometimes hidden, customer problems rather than just adding more features to a product. Tools like the "Jobs to Be Done" framework can help uncover these hidden needs.

Balancing "Market-Driven" and "Market-Driving": Meeting current customer needs gives stability, but actively shaping future trends is vital for long-term success and growth.

Data and Technology Integration: Using AI, machine learning, and automation is key for delivering highly personalized experiences, improving search visibility, and making smart, timely decisions based on data.

Agile and Iterative Execution: Major breakthroughs don't happen overnight. They require "spiral development" — continuously testing ideas with customers and using feedback to improve.

Culture of Experimentation: Creating a workplace where people feel safe to take chances and learn from mistakes is essential for ongoing innovation.

Holistic Experience Ecosystem: Innovation should go beyond the product to include the whole customer journey, like support and content. The success of the Kindle over the Sony Reader shows how important this is.

In today's digital world, "innovate or die" isn't just a saying — it's a fact. Marketing must connect new technology with real user value, turning creative ideas into solutions that are not only scalable and profitable but also give a lasting edge over competitors.

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