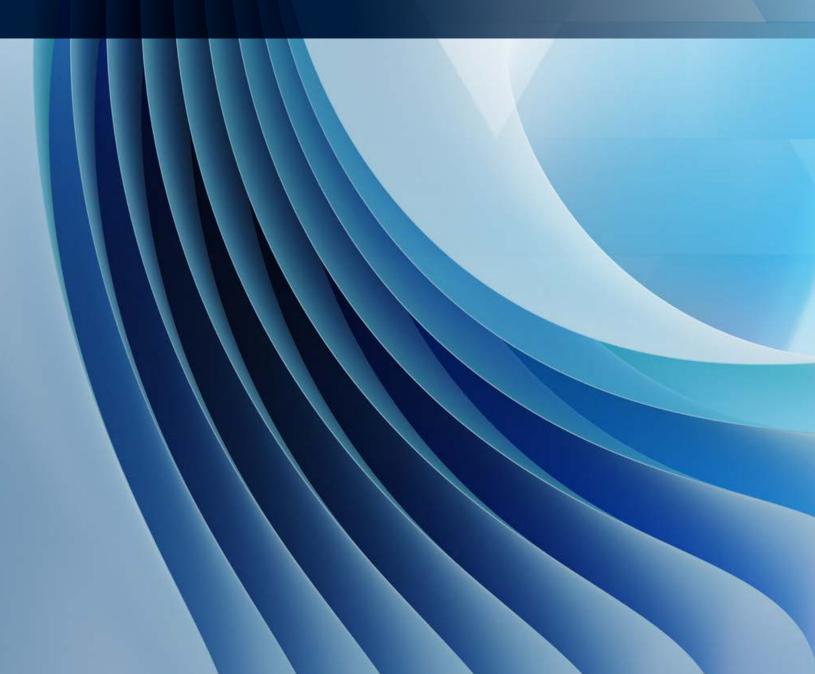# A&MPLIFY
BY ALVAREZ & MARSAL

LEVERAGING THE POWER OF GENERATIVE AI FOR STRATEGIC MARKETING PLANNING

A GUIDE FOR THE CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER (CMO)

Harnessing the power of generative artificial intelligence (AI) for strategic planning efforts is a core, operational differentiator for forward-thinking marketing organizations. This best practice, in tandem with prioritization of insight-driven decision-making, multiplies the likelihood of emerging as an industry leader by 2x.[1]

HOW CAN CMOs LEVERAGE GENERATIVE AI TO ENHANCE THEIR MARKETING OPERATIONS?

CMOs are looking for ways that generative AI can improve operational marketing tasks ranging from campaign ideation to copywriting; however, a less widely talked about application of generative AI can help organizations with strategic planning efforts.

Adopting a Best-In-Class Strategic Planning Process
Why is a strategic planning process important for my marketing organization?
A best-in-class strategic planning process is commonly defined as one that includes a systematic and comprehensive approach to formulating, executing and monitoring long-term goals and objectives. While most established marketing organizations go through a robust planning process at least once a year, the best process to adopt is one that you can stay consistent with and delivers insights for future planning. By laying out an approach to achieving your organization's main objectives, you establish accountability, traceability, and most importantly, a path for incorporating key learnings into future, strategic initiatives. This allows for adoption of an iterative and insight-driven process, which can be implemented via a foundational framework that is tailored to your organization's best practices and ways of working.

Unlocking Efficiency and Effectiveness with AI-Powered Strategic Planning
What is generative AI?
Unlike traditional AI (e.g., classification or prediction models) which are commonly used for specific tasks, generative AI (i.e., language models) is trained to create original content based on learned patterns and data. There are widely accessible and free generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Bard, etc.), which can help shape your thinking around strategic planning, marketing operations and campaign-level initiatives by generating text, producing original content and synthesizing relevant information.

Generative AI models have a wide range of applications, but for CMOs, they can enable further innovation, personalization and effective communication of strategic initiatives. For the purposes of strategic marketing planning, generative AI coupled with a hierarchical framework can ensure your planning efforts are insight-driven and customer-centric.

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1 "The Key to Becoming a More Data-Driven Organization." Harvard Business Review. Accessed from: https://hbr.org/2019/09/the-key-to-becoming-a-more-data-driven-organization

The Importance of a Customer-Centric Strategic Framework
What is a best-in-class strategic framework?

While there is no one or right way to go about your strategic marketing planning process, a best practice is to always lead with what matters most–your customers–and starting with a core insight that reflects what they are looking for, be it from current customer data, competitive and market trends or historical learnings.

This insight ultimately establishes the foundation for a hierarchical, bottoms-up strategic framework (see Figure 1) and ensures that the remaining framework components are also customer-centric. Additionally, you can formulate your core insight using AI-driven tools to conduct market research or analyze current customer behaviors and sentiment. Once established, build off the foundational insight starting with higher-level objectives like marketing goals and key performance indicators (KPIs), followed by audience-centric messaging.

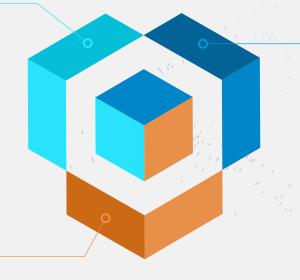**+ FIGURE 1:** Strategic Marketing Framework

AUDIENCE-CENTRIC INPUTS

RTBs
Detail the Reasons to Believe (RTBs) or Unique Selling Points that align to the value proposition

VALUE PROP
Define a Value Proposition that spans across all strategic marketing initiatives and resonates with your target audience

ORG-CENTRIC INPUTS

CORE BELIEF
Insert Core Belief statement that synthesizes the mission of your Strategic Marketing Initiatives, ensuring alignment to your brand purpose and/or goals

STRATEGIC GOAL
Detail a strategic marketing goal (e.g. "Get to X by doing Y in order to [impact] Z") that is aspirational, yet realistic

FOUNDATIONAL INSIGHT

CORE INSIGHT(S)
Note a customer-centric insight, competitive/market trends or relevant and historical learnings that will drive your Strategic Initiative(s)

How does a framework facilitate the strategic planning process?

A structured framework (such as Figure 1) is not only beneficial for strategic planning, but also for development as it can be utilized like a rubric to critically assess the validity of your strategic outputs (e.g., campaign-level creative and messaging). In short, insight-driven frameworks can help ensure that strategic initiatives are rooted in a clear fact basis, tie to your organization's goals and resonate with your audience.

How can generative AI help my strategic planning process?

Here are just a few of the specific use cases that might apply to your strategic planning:

+ **Idea Generation:** Generating innovative concepts for campaigns and initiatives.
+ **Data-Driven Insights:** Analyzing trends and patterns for informed decision-making, including developing audience-centric messaging frameworks.
+ **Agility:** Quickly and efficiently adapting to market shifts and competitors' actions, including automating high-value tasks like keyword research.
+ **Strategic Communication:** Crafting impactful messaging for internal and external stakeholders,including copy production and channel selection.

By automating just some of the tasks above, you can save time, increase efficiency and improve decision-making. Let's put some of these use cases in practice and see how a company might utilize generative AI to create a strategic marketing plan.

A Generative AI Use Case

Prompt-Writing with Strategic Framework Components

Consider a men's fashion apparel brand, Company X, seeking to amplify its online presence and e-commerce arm while promoting their environmentally conscious business practices. Company X's marketing team is data-led with advanced marketing attribution and reporting capabilities. They are looking to develop a strategic approach for the winter holidays to help plan for budget allocation, determine a channel mix and inform lead messages. With only a few months lead time, Company X's CMO decides to leverage generative AI and a strategic framework as a guiding principle for holiday planning and development. With the strategic framework components, such as a core insight, value proposition and reasons to believe (RTBs), Company X can begin writing their strategic prompts. Refer to Figure 2, 3 and 4 for an example of how Company X can infuse their strategic framework components into generative AI prompts.

+ **FIGURE 2:** Company X's Strategic Framework Components Pre-Holiday Planning

AUDIENCE-CENTRIC INPUTS

RTBs

Ethical Sourcing, Seamless Online Shopping Experience, On-Demand Style Consultants, Charitable Impact per Purchase, Limited Edition Winter Styles, Eco-Friendly Packaging, Personalized Offers

VALUE PROP

Experience elevated winter fashion with a conscience. Discover our curated collection of men's apparel that blends sophistication with sustainable practices, embracing a digital shopping journey tailored to you.

FOUNDATIONAL INSIGHT

CORE INSIGHT(S)

The growing trend of online shopping during the winter holidays, combined with a 25 percent increase in sustainable fashion searches, highlights the opportunity for Company X to improve their E-Commerce arm by leading with customer-centric and sustainable value propositions this holiday season.

ORG-CENTRIC INPUTS

CORE BELIEF

We believe that fashion can be a force for positive change, both in style and sustainability, enhancing the festive season for our customers.

STRATEGIC GOAL

Transform Company X into a customer-centric, sustainable and digitally innovative men's fashion brand that captures the holiday market; Improve year-over-year holiday average order volume by 5 percent.

+ FIGURE 3: Company X's Generative AI Prompts for Marketing Planning and the Results for Key Planning Areas

STRATEGIC PLANNING AREAS	FRAMEWORK INPUTS	EXAMPLE GENERATIVE AI PROMPT	EXAMPLE GENERATIVE AI RESULTS
MESSAGING	Core Belief, Value Prop, RTBs	"Generate impactful messaging that communicates our commitment to sustainable fashion and reinforces our customer-centric approach to marketing. Craft customer value propositions for a target audience that cares about shopping sustainable during the holidays."	**+ Empower Change:** Inspire customers to make a positive impact with sustainable fashion choices, aligning with their values. **+ Festive Sophistication:** Elevate holiday style with sustainable, sophisticated men's apparel that resonates with your audience.
CREATIVE	Core Belief, Value Prop, RTBs	"Create descriptive, eco-conscious winter holiday ad concepts reflecting our core belief. Design visual concepts capturing the Value Proposition of 'stylish-conscience'. Blend Limited Edition styles for festive charm and promote our on-demand stylists."	**+ Audience-Centric Visuals:** Craft visuals that reflect the preferences and values of your target audience, combining winter aesthetics and sustainability. **+ Charitable Showcase:** Share emotional visuals highlighting the direct charitable impact of purchases, reinforcing the brand's cause-based purpose. **+ Limited Edition Teasers:** Generate excitement through sneak peeks of exclusive winter styles tailored to your audience's tastes.
CONTENT	Core Belief, Strategic Goal	"Generate engaging blog post topics on winter fashion, leveraging the rise in eco-apparel searches. Align with consumer trends and the Strategic Goal of becoming customer-centric and digital-forward during the holiday experience."	**+ Audience-Focused Guides:** Develop sustainable fashion guides tailored to your audience's preferences, emphasizing ethical sourcing and eco-friendly wardrobes. **+ Behind-the-Scenes Sustainability:** Showcase ethical practices and eco-friendly manufacturing in ways that resonate with your audience. **+ Customer Stories:** Share real stories that showcase your audience embracing sustainable fashion, strengthening the sense of community.
PERSONALIZATION	Core Insight, Value Prop, RTBs	"Craft personalized email sequences resonating with customers who want Limited Edition styles. Leverage the Core Insight in online shopping to capture unique customer journeys, reflecting sustainable practices."	**+ Targeted Style Profiling:** Offer interactive quizzes that align with your audience's style preferences for personalized winter fashion recommendations. **+ Enhanced Customer Experience (CX) Consultants:** Provide virtual style advice based on individual preferences, enhancing the online shopping experience. **+ Purpose-Driven Promotions:** Utilize data for personalized holiday offers that align with your brand's cause-based purpose.
CHANNEL	Core Belief, Strategic Goal, RTBs	"Devise a digital channel strategy to reach holiday customers aligned to our core belief and capture new audiences who would resonate with our RTBs."	**+ Audience-Centric Social Media:** Showcase outfits, sustainability and challenges on platforms preferred by your target audience, reinforcing the cause-based purpose. **+ Enhanced CX Website:** Implement user-friendly touchpoints that guide customers seamlessly through their online journey, strengthening brand loyalty. **+ Virtual Events:** Host online fashion shows and panels with sustainability experts that resonate with your audience's interests. **+ Strategic Partnerships:** Collaborate with eco-influencers, bloggers and charities that align with your brand's cause-based purpose, amplifying your reach.

In Company X's case, generative AI helped to refine their marketing strategy by:

1. Moving towards an audience-first approach that will guide creative development that resonates with target audiences.
2. Becoming digitally centric and cultivating an online presence through improved customer experience touchpoints.
3. Amplifying a cause-based brand purpose to drive customer loyalty.

Additional Considerations for Strategic Planning with Generative AI

Keep in mind that the relevancy of your inputs (prompt) directly correlates to the quality of output (results). So, the more structure and context you provide within your inputs (prompt), the more relevant and applicable the results (outputs). And while there is no set formula for prompt-writing, you can garner useful, actionable results by submitting your strategic framework components in addition to contextual inputs. Consider the following questions as a thought starter around the types of supplementary context you can provide in your prompts:

Situation Analysis:
+ What is the current market landscape? Provide details about competitors, trends and customer behaviors.
+ What are the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) in the market?
+ How has the industry evolved, and what are the driving factors behind these changes?

Target Audience:
+ Who is the ideal customer for your product or service? Describe their demographics, psychographics and buying behaviors.
+ What pain points or needs does your product/service address for this target audience?
+ How does your product/service fulfill a unique value proposition for this audience?

Goals and Objectives:
+ What specific goals do you want to achieve with your marketing strategy? (e.g., increase brand awareness, boost sales, enter new markets)
+ How do these goals align with your overall business objectives?
+ How will you measure the success of your marketing efforts? Which KPIs will you track?

Positioning and Messaging:
+ How do you want your brand to be perceived in the market? Describe your desired brand image and personality.
+ What core messages or value propositions should be communicated to your target audience?
+ How can you differentiate your brand from competitors and communicate your unique selling points?

Channels and Tactics:
+ Which marketing channels are most suitable for reaching your target audience? Consider digital, traditional and emerging channels.
+ How will you allocate your budget across these channels?
+ What specific marketing tactics will you employ to achieve your objectives? (e.g., content marketing, social media campaigns, influencer partnerships)

Implementation Plan:
+ What is the timeline for executing various marketing initiatives?
+ How will you coordinate different teams or departments involved in the marketing strategy?
+ What resources (human, financial, technological) are required for successful implementation?

Adaptation and Flexibility:
+ How will you monitor and analyze the performance of your marketing efforts?
+ What criteria will trigger adjustments or pivots in your strategy?
+ How can you remain agile and responsive to changes in the market or customer preferences?

Ethical and Cultural Considerations:
+ How will you ensure that your marketing efforts are aligned with ethical guidelines and cultural sensitivities?
+ What steps will you take to promote inclusivity and avoid any potentially harmful messaging?

Long-Term Sustainability:
+ How does your marketing strategy contribute to the long-term sustainability and growth of your brand?
+ How will you foster customer loyalty and retention beyond the initial campaigns?

Measuring Return on Investment (ROI):
+ How will you calculate and assess the return on investment (ROI) for your marketing activities?
+ What benchmarks or thresholds indicate a successful ROI?

Conclusion

In this guide, we explored the core components of an insight-driven and customer-centric strategic framework and how leveraging them with the power of generative AI can enable more efficient and effective strategic planning for a marketing organization. By blending AI's analytical strength with human insight, marketing organizations can forge a path for continuous innovation and optimization. That said, the next time your team is preparing a strategic marketing plan, consider using one of the many generative AI solutions on the market to help ideate a foundational approach to build upon.

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