IDC DIRECTIONS

How AI is Shifting Marketing's Paradigm

This excerpt is from a presentation at IDC Directions Boston on April 8, 2026.

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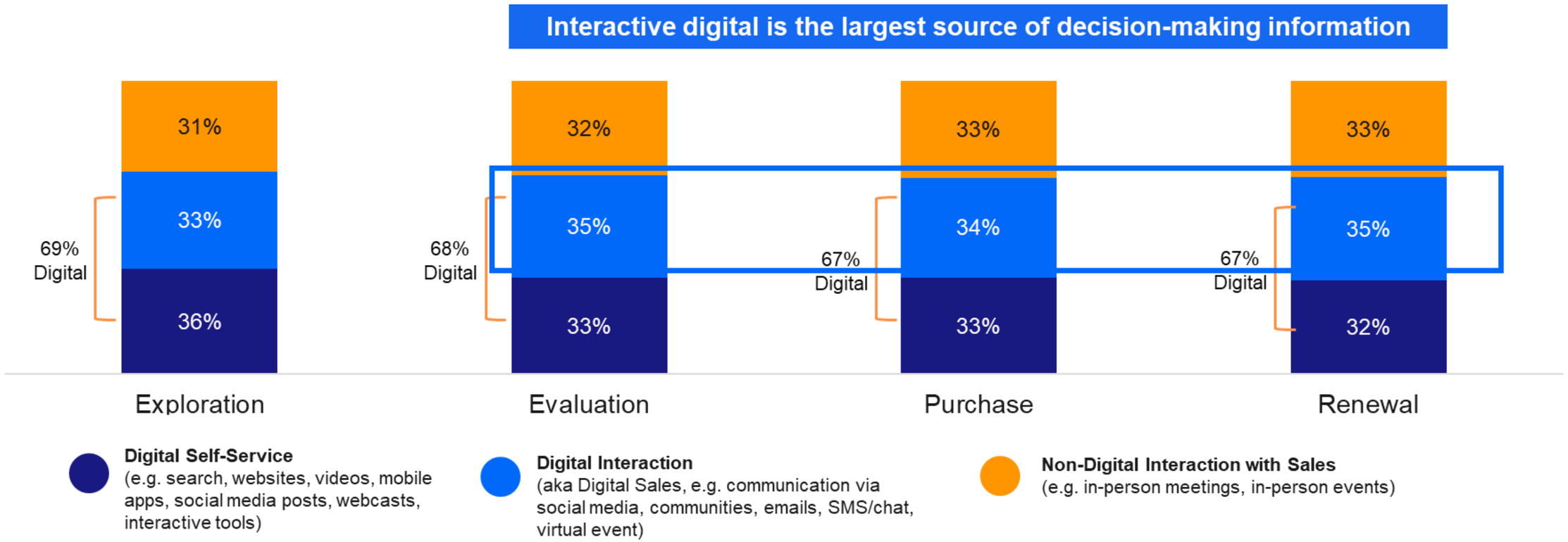
The post 2020 digital acceleration shifted buyer preference for interactive digital, forcing a new logic for "managing" the journey

For each stage of your purchase process, how much of your company's decision-making information in the next 12-18 months do you estimate will come from each of the following sources?



Source: IDC 2025 B2B Technology Buyer Survey, N=406

And now...your buyers are AI-first

74% will assign buying tasks to AI agents, using set parameters (e.g. price, availability, fit), to find exactly what we need, act and transact on our behalf.

80% will use AI guided selling assistants to act as an intermediary between our company and vendors (i.e. comparisons, configuration, RFI/RFP response, quote).

Marketers feel the impact of the AI tsunami

How have buyer journeys changed as buyers use more AI?

51% of marketers state buyers are putting more weight in peer reviews and industry experts than vendor content

44% of marketers state more of the buying activity is invisible to the them

Which shifts in buyer expectations are creating the most pressure on marketing strategy?

47% of marketers say buyers expect faster response times and always on availability

47% of marketers say buyers expect hyper-personalized outreach and content

Source: IDC 2025 B2B Technology Buyer Survey, N=406 ; IDC Barometer survey, March 2026

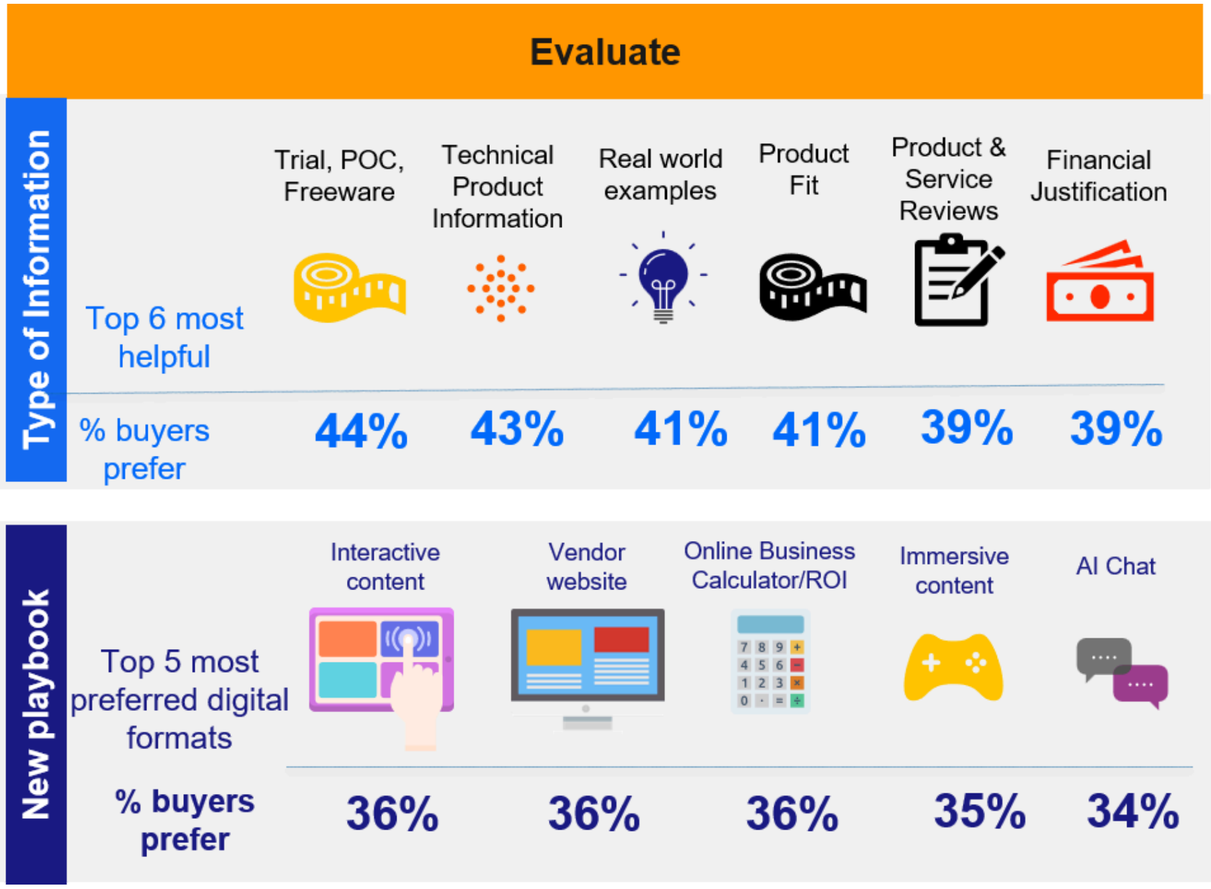
Buyers engage vendors later in the customer journey

49%

Buyers arrive to sellers more informed and with more astute questions

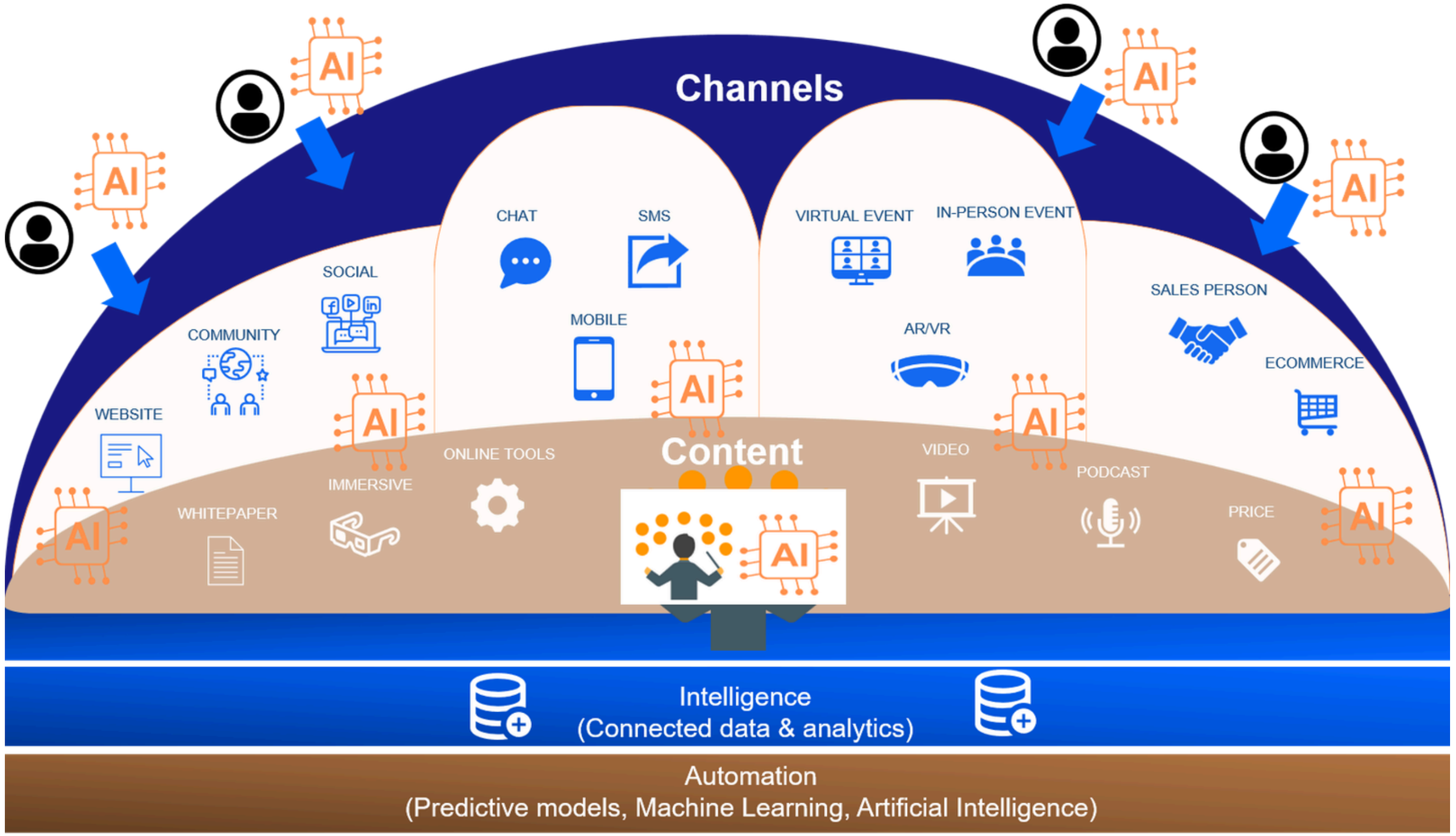
77%

Use AI agents to proactively engage, personalize and support the buying process and rely less on salespeople



Source: IDC 2025 B2B Technology Buyer Survey, N=406

Marketing is the conductor of a real-time, agent-mediated orchestrated intent journey

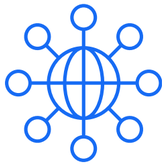


Marketing 2030: Autonomous, adaptive, agentic



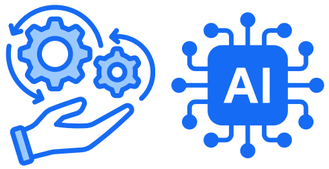
Autonomous Buyer Era

Buying is no longer human-led with AI assist.It is AI-led with human oversight.



From Channels to Systems

From buying attention, to engineering the systems that shape discovery, interpret intent, and influence buying decisions before a brand ever enters the conversation.



Adaptive Intent Orchestration

From generating interest, channel management & lead acquisition to relevance engineering, agent mediated, hybrid human + AI buyers, marketers & sellers



AI-Native Org

Adaptive organization, CMO orchestrates growth, AI native operations, automated workflows, human creativity mixed with speed of AI

"

The relationship between marketing and sales is shifting from a sequential handoff model to a shared, AI-orchestrated approach to revenue execution.

AI agents coordinate real-time actions across both functions, optimizing targeting, timing, and messaging based on buyer behavior and engagement signals…humans focus on strategy, judgment, and relationship management, while AI amplifies execution and measurement.

Global CMO
Large Enterprise
B2B Technology

Essential guidance - 5 actions to take today



Understand your buyer's intent

Design a journey experience with a deep sensing and understanding of the intent, jobs to be done of all personas and AI intermediaries involved along the journey.



Design Integrated Journey Orchestration

Rearchitect business processes and workflows to blend marketing & sales motions; identifying automation opportunities to enable orchestration.



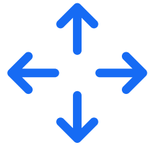
AI Optimize Your Content Supply Chain

Invest in revamping your content supply chain to deliver ungated information, structured knowledge, creative storytelling and real-time AI-driven engagement.



Hire/Upskill New Skills

Invest in upskilling and learning prompt engineering, AI augmented content creation, human oversight of AI plus soft skills of storytelling, critical thinking and collaboration.



Map Customer Data Across the Journey

Identify data needed and where it is located to enable actionable customer datasets that include behaviors, preferences, demographics and engagement signals.

Related Resources



Unlock the Power of Agentic AI: Building Data-Driven Intelligence that Creates Real Value

Turn data into a trusted, strategic asset while embedding transparency, ethics, and sovereignty into every AI initiative. Spearhead Asia's next wave of AI and Data transformation journey.

LEARN MORE



Dive into Executive Insights

Explore C-suite priorities for 2026. Access research-driven insights, peer benchmarks, and executive perspectives to navigate transformation, innovation, and drive enterprise performance through the resources available.

LEARN MORE



Navigating the AI-Driven Future

As AI advances from experimentation to enterprise execution, organizations are redesigning workflows and transitioning from implementation to continuous AI-driven operations. Learn how to scale adoption across the enterprise, and unlock new growth.

LEARN MORE

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