



IDC Report

8 Trends shaping tech marketing & sales strategies for 2026



Table of contents

Introduction	2
1. AI-Powered Insights Drive Strategic Advantage	3
2. Optimizing for AI-Driven Search and Discovery	4
3. First-Party Data: The New Gold Standard	5
4. Personalization at Scale with Data Intelligence	6
5. Autonomous Agents and Digital Workforces: Data-Driven Optimization	7
6. Emerging Channels: Analytics for New Frontiers	8
7. Sales Intelligence: From Data to Action	9
8. Trust, Governance, and Ethical Data Use	10

Introduction

As tech marketers and sales leaders plan for 2026, one thing is clear: success depends on the ability to harness trusted data intelligence. In a landscape defined by rapid change, the right data is the foundation for smarter decisions, deeper customer insights, and agile execution. This strategic guide explores the 8 trends shaping 2026—and how data & analytics can help you align faster, adapt smarter, and drive growth with confidence.



1. AI-powered insights drive strategic advantage

Generative and agentic AI are transforming how organizations analyze customer behavior, market shifts, and campaign performance. Data and analytics platforms enable you to move from reactive reporting to predictive, actionable insights—giving you a competitive edge.

58% of organizations are implementing AI in branding/content, and **65% in campaign** and engagement automation, with **less than 1%** reporting no implementation. AI is now embedded in nearly every martech solution, fundamentally reshaping workflows and possibilities.



How IDC's Data & Analytics Solutions Empower You:

- **Tracker** provides real-time market and competitive intelligence, helping you benchmark your AI adoption and identify best practices.
- **Black Book** offers deep vendor evaluations, so you can select the right AI-powered martech solutions for your needs.



2. Optimizing for AI-driven search and discovery

With generative engines and AI assistants reshaping how buyers find solutions, having the right data helps you understand new search patterns, optimize content, and measure visibility across emerging channels.

More than **40% of organizations** rank content optimization for search engines as their top initiative.



How IDC's Data & Analytics Solutions Empower You:

- **Tracker** analyzes search and content trends, revealing where your brand stands in AI-driven discovery.
- **Spending Guide** helps you allocate budget to the most effective content and SEO strategies.



3. First-party data: the new gold standard

As privacy regulations tighten, first-party data becomes essential. Advanced analytics unlock the value of your customer data, enabling precise segmentation, targeting, and personalization—while maintaining trust and compliance.

80% of organizations expect to increase investment in identity resolution and data unification technologies in the next 12 months, as third-party cookies disappear and privacy rules tighten.



How IDC's Data & Analytics Solutions Empower You:

- **Wallet** maps out customer data sources and spending, helping you prioritize investments in first-party data solutions.
- **Channel Partner Ecosystem** identifies partners with strong data capabilities to accelerate your first-party data strategy.



4. Personalization at scale with data intelligence

Hyper-personalized experiences are powered by unified data. Analytics platforms help you orchestrate individualized journeys, dynamic offers, and relevant content—driving engagement and conversion.

45% of companies say high levels of personalization outperform low/no personalization by **50% to 100%**. Yet, **less than 50% of interactions** are highly personalized, making personalization at scale the top ROI opportunity for AI.



How IDC's Data & Analytics Solutions Empower You:

- **Tracker** segments audiences and measures personalization effectiveness across channels.
- **Spending Guide** shows which personalization technologies deliver the highest ROI.



5. Autonomous agents and digital workforces: data-driven optimization

AI agents are automating workflows and customer interactions. Analytics ensures these agents are aligned with business goals, continuously learning, and delivering measurable results.

IDC expects agentic technology to support \$500 billion in commerce faster than previous tech waves.



How IDC's Data & Analytics Solutions Empower You:

- **Tracker** benchmarks agentic technology adoption and performance in your sector.
- **Spending Guide** helps you plan investments in automation and agentic solutions.



6. Emerging channels: analytics for new frontiers

AR/VR, wearables, and connected TV offer new engagement opportunities. Data analytics helps you test, measure, and optimize these channels—ensuring resources are focused where they deliver ROI.

Connected TV (CTV) and retail media networks are growth engines, with CTV reaching **80 million households** and enabling closed-loop attribution. Experimentation with AR/VR, wearables, and gaming is rising.



How IDC's Data & Analytics Solutions Empower You:

- **Tracker** provides adoption and performance data for emerging channels.
- **Spending Guide** helps you allocate resources to the most promising new platforms.



7. Sales intelligence: from data to action

Sales teams need more than dashboards—they need actionable intelligence. Analytics platforms automate forecasting, identify high-value prospects, and surface opportunities for cross-sell and upsell.

32% of sales executives identify customer experience as the primary goal for sales tech investments, with **46% ranking self-service tools** as most important for improving CX.



How IDC's Data & Analytics Solutions Empower You:

- **Tracker** delivers insights on sales tech adoption and customer experience trends.
- **Channel Partner Ecosystem** identifies partners with advanced sales intelligence capabilities.



8. Trust, governance, and ethical data use

Building customer trust starts with responsible data practices. Analytics solutions provide transparency, governance, and ethical AI—helping you comply with regulations and strengthen brand reputation.

54% of organizations rank customer satisfaction (CSAT) as the top metric for Voice of the Customer programs, emphasizing the need for trusted, transparent analytics.



How IDC's Data & Analytics Solutions Empower You:

- **Wallet** helps you track investments in data governance and compliance.
- **Black Book** evaluates vendors for ethical AI and data privacy practices.



Don't wait for 2026 to happen to you.

Talk to an IDC expert now and see how our [Data & Analytics](#) solutions—from Wallet to Tracker to Spending Guides—are helping top-performing teams plan with precision, target smarter, and move faster.

Connect With an IDC Expert →

