

The Typeface

The AI Speed Paradox

Signal Report

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The AI Speed Paradox

AI promised marketing speed. Enterprise complexity is slowing teams down. Report based on research findings in May 2026 with 200+ marketing leaders at the VP level and above.

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Executive summary

Speed was the promise. Complexity is the reality.

Ninety-three percent of marketing leaders say AI has increased pressure to move faster. Campaign timelines have gotten longer. Resources are tighter. And the majority of marketing teams still can't deploy AI agents at scale. The bottleneck was never content creation.

It's the operational complexity that surrounds it – the approvals, workflows, governance systems, and cross-functional coordination required to bring campaigns to market at scale. This Typeface Signal Report: The Speed Paradox examines what's actually slowing marketing organizations down in 2026 – and what it will take for teams to turn AI investment into operational speed. This research is part of an ongoing insights series tracking the signals reshaping marketing in the age of AI.

What we found

The speed illusion

93%

of leaders say AI increased pressure to move faster – yet campaign timelines have grown longer, not shorter.

The complexity surge

92%

say campaigns now require 10+ stakeholders to execute, up sharply from 2025. More than two in five now need 20+ people.

The orchestration gap

66%

of leaders cite compliance and around half cite governance, integration, workflow coordination as biggest barriers.

Organizations aren't ready

16%

say their organization is fully prepared to operate at AI speed. Only 20% have standardized, documented workflows.

Brand risk rises

37%

rank losing brand control and quality as #1 concern; key to ensure speed gains do not come at cost of relevance and trust.

ROI is real

61%

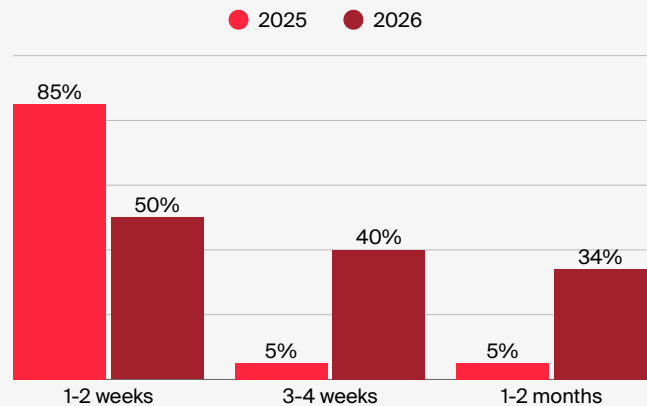
already report ROI from AI investments. But getting there requires solving the orchestration gap first.

The speed illusion

AI made content faster. It didn't make campaigns faster.

Marketing leaders are under more pressure to move than ever. Ninety-three percent say AI has increased expectations around speed. But when you look at what's actually happening to campaign timelines, the picture tells a different story.

- In 2025, 85% of leaders said **1-2 weeks** was the preferred timeline to ship a campaign. By 2026, that figure dropped to 50%.
- Now, 40% say **3-4 weeks** is acceptable, and more than one-third (34%) require **1-2 months** to launch, up from just 5% in 2025.



The culprit isn't content creation. AI has helped there. The culprit is everything that surrounds the content: the reviews, the approvals, the handoffs, the tools. Ninety-two percent of leaders say campaigns now require 10+ stakeholders. More than two in five (44%) require 20 or more people, compared to just 10% in 2025. More than half now need at least nine vendors or tools to execute a single campaign. In 2025, 93% of respondents managed with eight or fewer.

C-suite approval remains the most persistent bottleneck. Eighty-eight percent of leaders say their teams can generate content quickly – the problem is getting it signed off. Meanwhile, the resource gap has widened dramatically. Only 1% of leaders said they lacked sufficient resources in 2025. In 2026, that number is 39%.

34%

now require 1-2 months to launch a campaign, up from 5% in 2025

39%

say they lack sufficient resources – up from just 1% eight months ago

The readiness problem

Most organizations have AI tools. Almost none are built to use them at scale. 86% of marketing leaders say they're already using AI agents in campaign execution. The adoption number looks strong. The readiness number doesn't.

- Only **16%** say their organization is fully prepared to operate at AI speed.
- **67%** say they have the tools, but people and processes haven't caught up.
- **17%** describe their organization as having pockets of capability with no cohesive system behind them.



Workflows are the core constraint. Only 20% of marketing leaders say their organization has largely standardized, codified, and documented workflows – a prerequisite for scaling AI. At 18% of companies, workflows exist only in the heads of individual team members. At most organizations (62%), it's an inconsistent mix.

The collaboration burden has also shifted. More than two-thirds (67%) of marketing leaders now spend more time working with IT than before AI. Thirty-seven percent are partnering with IT to design and implement AI workflows. Another 29% design those workflows themselves. For highly regulated industries like financial services, IT would most likely be in the room: 50% of financial services marketers involve IT. Retail teams are more likely to lead themselves (41%).

20%

have standardized, documented workflows ready for AI

67%

now spend more time collaborating with IT than before AI

The brand risk reckoning

Speed without governance doesn't create competitive advantage.

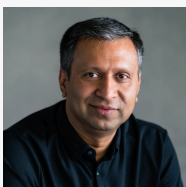
It amplifies risk. Most leaders (61%) report that AI investments are already delivering ROI, with another 32% expecting returns within six months. But the pressure to produce more, faster, is surfacing a new category of concern. The top worry for marketing leaders in 2026 is losing brand control and quality in the rush to keep up. Thirty-seven percent rank it as their #1 risk.

The personalization pressure is compounding that risk. Fifty-eight percent of organizations now personalize content for each audience segment, up from 53% in 2025. More content, more variations, more channels – all moving through governance structures that weren't designed for this volume.

Enterprise leaders are no longer just evaluating AI capability.

They're evaluating whether their organizations can scale AI without sacrificing trust, quality, and control.

“A few months ago, the imperative was to start using AI and use it as much as you can. Today, organizations are realizing they weren't built to operate at AI speed. The next phase of transformation is about orchestration –redesigning how workflows, systems, governance, and human judgment work together to deliver trusted customer experiences at scale.”



Abhay Parasnis

Founder and CEO
Typeface

Why scaling still stalls

The barriers preventing organizations from scaling AI look very different than they did a year ago. Technical limitations and cultural resistance are no longer the dominant problems. The challenge now is orchestration – aligning governance, workflows, systems, and cross-functional teams so AI can operate consistently across the enterprise.

The percentage of leaders who have deployed at least one AI agent at scale nearly doubled – from 18% in 2025 to 36% in 2026. **But 64% remain stuck in the pilot phase.** Retail is the exception: 53% of retail marketing leaders have scaled at least one AI agent, the highest of any industry. The blockers look different than they did eight months ago:

Blockers	8 months ago	Now	Change
Compliance, legal & privacy	56%	66%	▲ +10%
Brand governance	-	50	New
Integration with existing tools	-	46%	New
Skills gaps	18%	27%	▲ +9%
Lack of IT support	53%	35%	▼ -18%
Poor data quality	48%	30%	▼ -18%
Cultural resistance	48%	23%	▼ -25%

The time savings from AI are real but modest – and they're not landing where they should. Leaders report spending an average of 12.3 hours per week on tasks that could be automated, down from 15 hours in 2025. But they still spend roughly 19% of their time on tactical execution and campaign management, nearly unchanged from a year ago. Strategic planning has actually declined as a share of time, from 29% in 2025 to 26% in 2026. AI is generating content. It's not yet freeing the people who manage it.

The path forward

Solving the AI Speed Paradox requires the same thing for every organization: not more tools, but a system that connects the tools you already have.

Treat workflow design as your primary AI investment.

Content generation is a solved problem for most teams. Approval flows, handoff protocols, and cross-functional sign-off chains are not. Map every step between brief and launch. Identify where campaigns stall. That's where orchestration needs to start.



Standardize before you scale.

Only 20% of marketing organizations have documented workflows ready for AI. Without them, every deployment becomes an isolated success. Codify campaign templates, brand standards, and approval logic so AI can operate consistently across teams and channels.



Build governance into the workflow, not around it.

Brand control is the #1 concern for 37% of marketing leaders. The answer isn't more review cycles, it's embedding brand standards, compliance guardrails, and quality checks into the workflow itself. Governance that runs alongside production doesn't slow teams down. Governance that sits at the end does.



Move from AI usage to AI orchestration.

Eighty-six percent of teams use AI. Only 36% have scaled it. The difference is orchestration: connecting workflows, governance, and enterprise systems so AI operates as a coordinated system—not a collection of disconnected tools. That's what turns AI adoption into enterprise transformation.



What comes next & methodology

As AI reshapes marketing operations, Typeface will continue tracking how organizations **close the gap between AI adoption and AI performance** – examining how governance, personalization, and cross-functional orchestration evolve across industries and company sizes.

Methodology

The Typeface Signal Report: The AI Speed Paradox is based on an online survey of 200+ marketing leaders at the VP level or above. Respondents represented organizations including large enterprises, across industries such as retail, financial services, professional services, manufacturing, healthcare, education, and hospitality. Results are reported in aggregate. Typeface fielded the survey in May 2026, with comparative data drawn from a prior survey conducted in September 2025.

About **Typeface**

Typeface is a marketing orchestration engine for the world's leading enterprises, coordinating brand intelligence, AI agents, and enterprise systems across cross-channel marketing operations. Built for large organizations, Typeface combines shared brand intelligence, governed agent workflows, and deep enterprise integration at scale – connecting seamlessly with platforms like Salesforce, Microsoft, and Google – to help teams scale what works without sacrificing quality or control. Trusted by Fortune 500 companies, Typeface enables organizations to operationalize AI inside real marketing workflows, turning brand standards, approvals, and performance signals into coordinated systems that improve over time. Typeface is backed by Lightspeed, GV, Salesforce Ventures, Madrona, Menlo, and M12, and has been recognized by Fast Company, Gartner, TIME, LinkedIn, and Adweek as a leader in AI for marketing.

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