EMARKETER

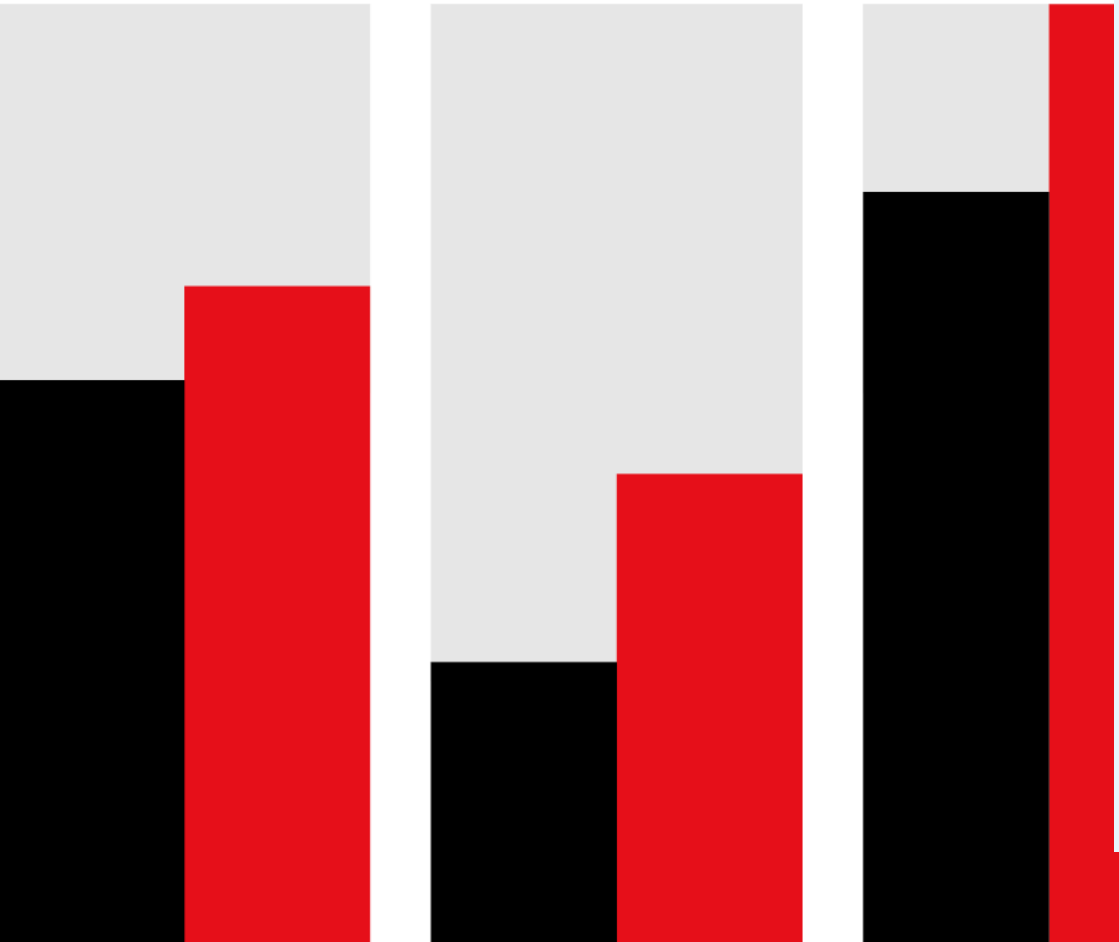
November 17, 2026

B2B Marketing Trends to Watch in 2027

AI Visibility, Brand Differentiation, and Smarter Resource Allocation Will Define Success

By Kelsey Voss

Contributors: Eleni Digalaki, Heather Sprung, Tracy Tang, Matt Torpey, Johann Valderrama, Max Willens, Yoram Wurmser, Ali Young



As a licensed EMARKETER user, you may share this content under the following terms:

INTERNAL SHARING:

- With other licensed users in your organization
- In limited form—up to 5 slides or 300 words—with non-licensed colleagues
- Not permitted on intranet or LMS

EXTERNAL SHARING:

- Limited excerpts only—up to 1 chart and 100 words total (no more than 40 words at a time)
- May be included in presentations or materials created to support business discussions or sales conversations
- Not permitted on public websites or social platforms

In all cases, EMARKETER must be clearly attributed as the source.

For full terms, refer to the EMARKETER Usage Policy.

Contents

3 GEO will become a formal marketing discipline

4 Predictions

4 Brand differentiation will become more urgent as AI content expands

5 Predictions

5 AI will push marketers to rethink which work stays in-house and which goes to agencies

6 Predictions

7 EMARKETER Interviews

7 Read Next

7 Sources

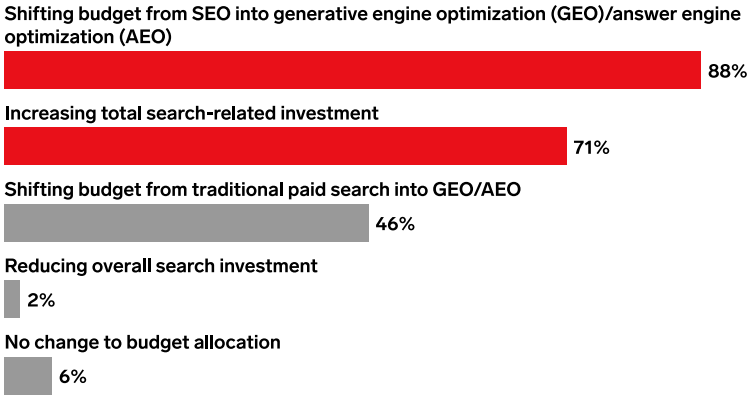
Copyright © 2026, EMARKETER Inc. All rights reserved.

GEO will become a formal marketing discipline

Growing GEO investment will push marketers to formalize their strategies in 2027. Eighty-eight percent of B2B marketers worldwide are shifting budget from SEO to GEO and AEO, and 71% are increasing their total search-related investment, per a June 2026 Plural Strategy survey. Only 1% have a formal GEO/AEO strategy with dedicated resources, while 41% have an informal strategy led by the SEO team as an add-on, and 54% are exploring or piloting. Plural Strategy also found that 81% of B2B marketers saw at least a moderate impact from AI-powered search on their traditional search traffic over the past 12 months.

B2B Marketers Are Shifting SEO Budgets Toward GEO While Growing Total Search Investment

% of B2B marketers worldwide, on how their search/content budget allocation is changing due to AI search, June 2026



Note: n=350; respondents could select more than one answer
Source: Plural Strategy, "Marketing Spend Outlook 2026-2031 B2B edition," July 30, 2026

376399 EMARKETER

Formal GEO strategies will extend beyond owned content to third-party sources. In the Plural Strategy survey, 84% of B2B marketers said they are investing in earned media or digital public relations as part of their GEO/AEO activities. Marketers will need to keep pricing, product claims, and other brand information consistent across reviews, editorial coverage, partner pages, and other sources that shape AI-generated answers.

Formalizing GEO strategies will also require marketers to connect AI visibility to business outcomes. Fifty-four percent of B2B marketing leaders in the US and Western Europe said they measure AI search visibility or brand citations, while 46% include AI visibility or optimization in C-suite reporting, according to 10Fold's August 2026 report. But only 28% rank AI visibility among the most effective channels for driving business outcomes. Buyers may also discover a brand through an AI tool without visiting its website, making that influence difficult to measure through web analytics.

Copyright © 2026, EMARKETER Inc. All rights reserved.

Predictions

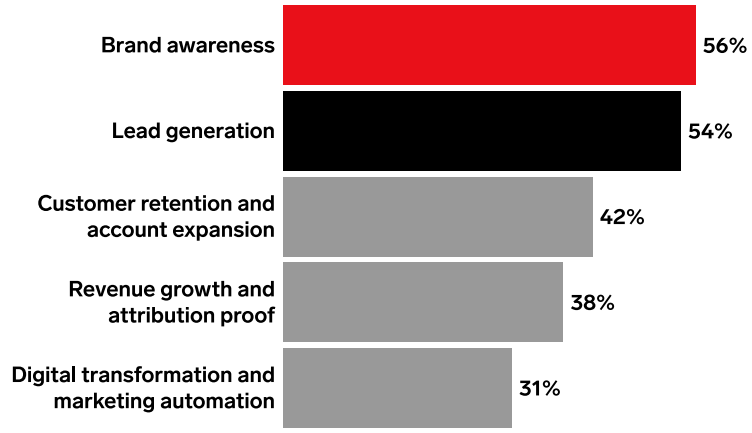
- **Correcting how AI describes a brand will become routine GEO work.** Marketers will trace inaccurate AI answers back to the reviews, profiles, and pages behind them and fix them at the source.
- **GEO will get dedicated budgets and its own reporting.** Marketers will stop treating GEO as an SEO add-on and run it as a distinct practice with its own resources and metrics, with shared responsibility across brand, content, and communications teams.
- **Self-reported attribution will play a larger role in measuring GEO.** Marketers will add open-text "how did you hear about us" fields and review sales call notes to identify where AI shaped a buyer's research.

Brand differentiation will become more urgent as AI content expands

Brand building will remain a priority alongside demand generation in 2027 as wider AI use raises the stakes for differentiation. The share of B2B marketers using AI extensively or across most activities doubled from 35% in 2025 to 71% in 2026, per Plural Strategy. Fifty-six percent of US B2B marketers said building brand awareness is a primary objective for 2027, slightly ahead of lead generation at 54%, according to a July 2026 Sagefrog Marketing Group survey.

Brand Awareness Edges Out Lead Generation as B2B Marketers' Top 2027 Objective

% of US B2B marketers, on their primary marketing objectives for 2027, July 2026



Note: n=127
Source: Sagefrog Marketing Group, "2027 B2B Marketing Mix Report: The Age of Accountability," Sep 30, 2026

376427 EMARKETER

Copyright © 2026, EMARKETER Inc. All rights reserved.

B2B marketers will place greater emphasis on brand assets competitors cannot easily reproduce. Nearly all B2B marketers use genAI for written content creation (98%) and ideation (97%), according to Plural Strategy. But half of respondents said loss of brand voice or authenticity is a top-three challenge for their current AI use cases. Distinctive assets will become even more valuable as AI use expands, and 76% of B2B marketers are investing in original research or proprietary data as part of their GEO/AEO activities.

Maintaining differentiation will require stronger human oversight of marketing content. Fifty-nine percent of US B2B marketers cited misinformation and inaccuracy as an AI concern for 2027, up from 45% for 2026, according to Sagefrog. The share citing overreliance on AI tools rose from 31% to 45%. Brand standards, subject matter expertise, and human review will carry more weight as marketers use AI across more content and marketing activities.

Predictions

- **Proprietary research will be created and distributed with AI visibility in mind.** B2B marketers will produce original research and data both for buyers and AI systems, amplifying those findings through earned media and other third-party sources.
- **Marketing teams will give staff approved AI tools with brand rules built in.** These tools will include brand guidelines, approved claims, and examples, with people making the final creative decisions.
- **Specific proof will carry more weight than polished messaging.** Customer results, verifiable claims, and firsthand expertise will set brands apart as AI makes polished content easy for competitors to produce.

AI will push marketers to rethink which work stays in-house and which goes to agencies

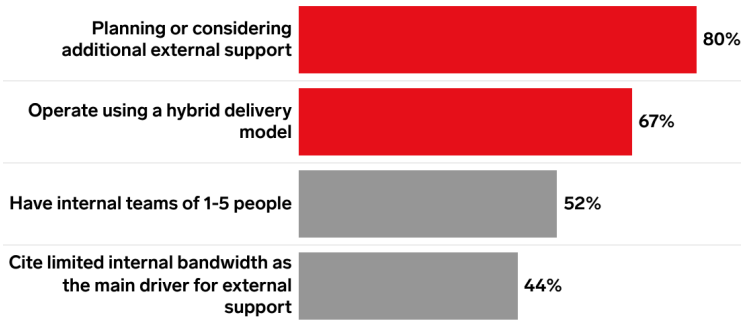
AI will limit new hiring more than it reduces current teams. Eighty-two percent of B2B marketers expect AI to limit hiring for new roles over the next three years, and 8% expect it to reduce their current team size, according to Plural Strategy's survey. Meanwhile, 60% of marketing leaders said content and copywriting roles are likely to be cut, while 20% cited junior and entry-level positions, per a May 2026 Wynter survey. And 44% of B2B marketers said limited internal bandwidth is the main reason they seek external support, per Sagefrog.

Marketers will use more outside support and expect agencies to deliver more for less. Eighty percent of B2B marketers said they are planning or considering additional external support for 2027, while 67% reported using a hybrid delivery model, according to Sagefrog. Over half (56%) of B2B marketers expect to reduce external spend over the next three years due to AI efficiencies within agency partners, while 44%

Copyright © 2026, EMARKETER Inc. All rights reserved.

expect to increase it to develop AI strategy, per Plural Strategy. Only 19% expect to reduce spend by bringing work in-house. Additionally, 93% will expect more from agency deliverables—the work agencies produce in areas such as creative, content, and media—over the next few years.

4 in 5 B2B Marketers Are Considering External Support, and Over Two-Thirds Already Use a Hybrid Delivery Model
% of US B2B marketers, on their current and planned use of internal teams and external support, July 2026



Note: n=127
Source: Sagefrog Marketing Group, "2027 B2B Marketing Mix Report: The Age of Accountability," Sep 30, 2026

376401 EMARKETER

Strategy and institutional knowledge will stay closer to the business, while execution will be divided between AI and agencies. Customer data, brand knowledge, measurement, and judgment will remain important internal capabilities. AI will take on more repeatable executional work, while marketers will use agencies and specialists in areas where they need expertise or additional capacity.

Predictions

- **Entry-level B2B marketing roles will face greater pressure in 2027.** As AI takes on more routine production and execution, teams will have less need to build junior roles around those tasks.
- **Agency pricing will shift toward outcomes.** Marketers will move away from paying for hours and percentage-of-media fees, and toward value-based and performance models.
- **Specialist agencies will gain ground over generalists.** Marketers will bring in outside partners for proven expertise in fast-moving areas such as AI search.

Copyright © 2026, EMARKETER Inc. All rights reserved.

EMARKETER Interviews

EMARKETER research is based on the idea that multiple sources and a variety of perspectives lead to better analysis. Our interview outreach strategy for our reports is to target specific companies and roles within those companies in order to get a cross-section of businesses across sectors, size, and legacy. We also look to interview sources from diverse backgrounds in order to reflect a mix of experiences and perspectives that help strengthen our analysis. The people we interview for our reports are asked because their expertise helps to clarify, illustrate, or elaborate upon the data and assertions in a report.

Ashleigh Cook
CMO
RainFocus
Interviewed October 21, 2026

Howard Diamond
Chief Revenue Officer
Level Agency
Interviewed October 9, 2026

Ashley Fletcher
CMO
Adthena
Interviewed October 9, 2026

Michelle Galvan
Vice President, Growth Marketing
Adstra
Interviewed October 9, 2026

Jonathan Greene
Executive Vice President, Americas
Incubeta
Interviewed October 5, 2026

Saket Mehta
Chief Revenue Officer
Nift
Interviewed October 9, 2026

Steve Nottingham
CEO
RSM&
Interviewed October 9, 2026

Stephen Yap
CEO
SQREEM Technologies
Interviewed October 9, 2026

Read Next

B2B SEO and GEO 2026

Content Marketing 2026

How B2B Marketers Can Respond to AI-Accelerated Buying Cycles

Sources

10Fold

Plural Strategy

Sagefrog Marketing Group

Wynter

Copyright © 2026, EMARKETER Inc. All rights reserved.

Power your next move with clear and credible insights.



Stay informed with daily newsletters

Never fall behind the biggest trends and executive-level decisions shaping your industry with our Industry Briefings— timely subscriber-only newsletters delivered straight to your email.

Learn More

Get the bigger picture

Your organization is affected by diverse industries, geographies, and ideas. Tap into these influencing factors to avoid information silos and see a more complete picture.

Learn if your company subscribes

Get to decision-making, faster

Upgrade to EMARKETER PRO+ for access to exclusive data sets, deep analyst insights, flexible data visualizations, and AI Search.

Talk to your account manager

Contact our Team

For sales inquiries please contact sales@emarketer.com

For Advertising and Sponsorships, contact advertising@emarketer.com.

EMARKETER

Copyright © 2026, EMARKETER Inc. All rights reserved.