3 AI Uses For Beginners

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3 ways to use AI beyond content creation

While many marketers only use AI for content generation, this playbook reveals three simple alternatives that deliver impact with minimal setup. These AI uses help you gain better insights, understand customers deeper, and make smarter decisions by unlocking opportunities in the data you're already collecting.

Building AI comfort happens through small wins that compound. Each method takes under 20 minutes to set up, uses free or low-cost tools, and works with familiar data like customer feedback, meeting notes, and competitor information. Only basic technical skills are needed. AI reveals patterns you may never spot manually.

The marketers winning with AI use it strategically to make better decisions faster than their competition. These approaches build AI confidence while delivering immediate value and creating a foundation for more advanced applications later.
You'll spend less time on manual tasks, get better insights from existing data, and benefit from continuous intelligence gathering that compounds over time.

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Responsible AI foundations

Before implementing any AI solution, keep these foundations top of mind:
- Human oversight: Always review AI outputs before acting on insights or recommendations
- Data privacy: Ensure customer consent for recording/analyzing conversations and feedback
- Brand voice consistency: AI should enhance, not replace, your strategic judgment and brand standards
- Transparency: Be clear with customers when AI is involved in analyzing their interactions

Additional considerations:
- Keep records of AI decisions for accountability and continuous improvement
- Test AI outputs with low-risk applications before scaling to business-critical decisions

These are designed to augment human decision-making, not replace it. You remain in control of all strategic decisions and customer communications.

Convert customer feedback into insights

You already collect customer feedback, now let AI find the patterns for you. AI can process thousands of customer comments, reviews, and surveys and spot trends you would be unable to catch manually or have time to analyze thoroughly.

Examples of what AI reveals:
- A SaaS company discovered "billing issues" were upgrade attempts, leading to a one-click upgrade button that increased revenue.
- A retailer found customers using "cozy" instead of "comfortable", switching product descriptions increased conversions
- A service business identified "response time" mentioned in many negative reviews, addressing this metric with their customer service agents improved their reputation.

Ethical considerations:
- Only analyze feedback you have legitimate permission to use
- Protect customer identity - remove names and personal details before AI analysis
  Verify AI insights with human judgment before making major business decisions

Getting started (15 minutes):
- Export customer feedback to a spreadsheet, ask ChatGPT: "What are the main themes in this feedback? What problems come up most often? What language do customers use most frequently?" You'll surface actionable insights in minutes that would take days to find manually.

Meeting intelligence

Every customer call contains valuable insights, but most get lost in notes or forgotten entirely. AI can capture and analyze every conversation automatically, turning verbal feedback into searchable, actionable data, turning verbal feedback into searchable, actionable data.

This approach means you never lose customer insights, captures exact objections and pain points, creates buyer personas based on actual conversations, and builds a searchable database of real customer language and concerns.

Ethical considerations:
- Always obtain clear consent from all participants before recording any conversation
- Use platforms with proper encryption and data protection
- Anonymize insights when sharing across teams to protect individual privacy

Examples of insights AI captures:
- An agency noticed a high percentage of clients mentioned ROI concerns in onboarding calls; in turn they created a proactive dashboard that reduced churn.
- A B2B company found prospects always asked about "integration time", they introduced a 48-hour setup guarantee that increased close rates.
- A consultant discovered clients used "overwhelmed" in a lot of calls, restructuring services around simplicity increased referrals.

Getting started (10 minutes):
- Use Otter.ai to record and transcribe calls (with consent), then ask ChatGPT: "Summarize the main concerns, buying signals, and exact language this customer used. What objections came up?" You'll build a database of customer intelligence that improves every conversation.

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Start small, win big and build confidence.

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AI-driven competitive notification

Instead of manually checking competitors when you remember, AI can monitor them continuously and alert you to changes and make recommendations for your evaluation.

You'll know about competitor changes quickly, surface new opportunities quickly and stay updated on their messaging, all automatically. This creates strategic advantage through speed and consistency of intelligence gathering.

Examples of competitive intelligence wins:
- A Canadian marketing agency noticed competitors raising prices across the industry. They prepared clients for market changes and positioned their stable pricing as a differentiator.
- A Vancouver retailer noticed supply chain mentions in competitor communications. They proactively secured alternative suppliers and maintained full inventory while competitors faced stock-outs during peak season.

Ethical considerations:
- Monitor only publicly available information, never use insider information or unauthorized access
- Focus on market intelligence, not personal attacks on competitors or their teams
- Use insights to improve your offering, not to spread negative information

Getting started (20 minutes):
Set up Google Alerts for competitors' names + "launch," "pricing," "partnership," "hiring," "funding." Weekly, feed all alerts to ChatGPT asking: "What are the 3 most important changes here? What opportunities does this create for our positioning?" You'll stay ahead of market trends and position your business strategically rather than reactively.

3–week implementation plan

Start simple and build confidence with each win, this is how AI adoption succeeds.
- Week 1: Try feedback analysis to prove AI can find insights you missed.
  Week 2: Add meeting intelligence to capture verbal insights automatically.
  Week 3: Set up competitive monitoring for continuous market intelligence.

Ethical checkpoints:
- Week 1: Confirm you have permission to analyze all customer feedback data
- Week 2: Establish consent protocols for recording customer conversations
- Week 3: Set up monitoring only for publicly available competitor information
Ongoing: Schedule weekly human review of all AI-generated insights before acting

This approach works because each week builds specific AI confidence while delivering measurable value. They work because they're simple to start, use data you already have, deliver immediate results in days rather than months, and start free or low-cost. Most importantly, success with these foundational AI uses builds the confidence and skills needed for more advanced AI applications while maintaining ethical responsible standards. The more you use them, the smarter your marketing gets and the more comfortable you become with AI as a strategic tool.

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Evaluation lens

Before implementing any of these AI approaches, use these evaluation lenses to ensure responsible and effective adoption.

AI feedback analysis
- Insight check: Is AI helping surface patterns in volume data I'd miss manually, rather than making unsupported conclusions?
- Data check: Is the feedback data appropriate to analyze, compliant with privacy expectations, and properly anonymized?
- Decision check: Am I using AI insights to inform improvements, not justify decisions already made?

AI meeting intelligence
- Value check: Does this help me capture insights I'd otherwise lose, rather than replace active listening during conversations?
- Consent check: Have all participants explicitly agreed to recording and AI analysis of their conversations?
- Quality check: Am I using AI summaries as starting points for deeper analysis, not final interpretations?

AI competitive monitoring
- Ethics check: Am I monitoring only publicly available information and using insights to improve my own positioning?
- Strategy check: Does this help me respond to market changes proactively, rather than react defensively to competitors?
- Accuracy check: Am I verifying AI interpretations of competitive intelligence before making strategic decisions?

Remember: These evaluation questions help ensure AI augments your decision-making rather than replacing human judgment and strategic thinking.

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Recommended reading and references

For further learning, these resources provide practical guidance on responsible AI adoption, strategy, and implementation.

CMA resources
- CMA Guide on AI for Marketers
- Setting the Stage on Artificial Intelligence: A CMA Primer on AI for Marketers
- CMA Accountability Checklists for AI in Marketing
- CMA Mastery Series: AI Playbooks
- CMA Generative AI Readiness Survey
- Canadian Marketing Code of Ethics and Standards

The CMA

This playbook is developed with guidance by the CMA AI Committee and is part of the CMA's comprehensive AI initiative designed to empower Canadian marketers with the knowledge, skills, and ethical frameworks needed to implement AI responsibly and effectively.

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Start smart, scale fast, stay strategic.

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