

AI PLAYBOOK 11



3 Human Skills AI Can't Replace


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theCMA.ca

Content partially generated by artificial intelligence, refined by human expertise.

This Playbook is part of the CMA's AI Mastery Series, empowering marketers to Implement AI in ways that earn regulatory confidence, maintain strong brand reputation, and foster consumer trust



Position yourself for future success

The marketing landscape is shifting rapidly. While we've been debating AI's impact, the transformation is already underway, creating both unprecedented opportunities and real risks for those who are not adapting. Future jobs will look very different than the work we do today. **The question isn't whether AI will change your role, it's whether you'll lead that change.**

The global AI market for sales and marketing is projected to reach USD 57.99 billion by 2025 and USD 240.58 billion by 2030, at a CAGR of 32.9%. North America is anticipated to hold the largest share, driven by advanced technological infrastructure and high AI adoption rates.













According to the World Economic Forum, 170 million new jobs will be created globally by 2030, while 92 million existing roles will be displaced, resulting in a net gain of 78 million jobs for those who develop the right skills.

This playbook will help you understand and hone the skills required to adopt and succeed in a transformed marketing landscape.

Your strategic advantage framework

The human-AI partnership reality.

AI is becoming an increasingly critical tool for success. As a forward-thinking professional in the Canadian market, you have a unique opportunity to position yourself as a strategic leader delivering human value in AI-enhanced marketing.

 What AI does exceptionally well	 What humans do (strategic advantage)
 Processes millions of data points per second	 Understands cultural nuances and emotional context
 Automates routine tasks and workflows (email scheduling, basic segmentation, bid optimization)	 Makes ethical judgments about data usage and messaging
 Identifies patterns in customer behaviour and market trends	 Build authentic relationships and consensus.
 Generates content at scale (copy verification, image creation, basic analytics)	 Provides strategic vision beyond historical patterns
 Optimizes campaigns through continuous testing and learning	 Navigates complex stakeholder dynamics and change management

Three human skills that can secure your future

As AI handles more routine tasks, three distinctly human capabilities can give you a competitive edge. These skills aren't just AI-resistant, they're AI-amplified, becoming more valuable precisely because machines can't replicate the nuanced judgment, emotional intelligence and strategic thinking that drive breakthrough marketing results.

1. Strategic AI partnership

Become the conductor, not the instrument.

- Align AI capabilities with business objectives and long-term strategy.
- Critically evaluate AI outputs for bias, accuracy and strategic relevance.
- Understand AI ethics, limitations, and optimal use cases.
- Transform AI insights into actionable business strategies.

2. Human-centric creativity

Inject emotional authenticity into AI-enhanced marketing.

- Apply empathy and cultural intelligence to guide AI-generated content.
- Solve complex problems through creative approaches AI wouldn't generate.
- Ensure brand voice and emotional resonance in all AI-assisted communications.
- Develop innovative campaign concepts that leverage AI for execution.

3. Adaptive communication and influence

Bridge AI capabilities with human decision-making.

- Translate complex AI insights into clear, actionable recommendations.
- Foster collaboration between technical and non-technical teams.
- Lead organizational change and AI adoption initiatives.
- Build consensus around AI-driven strategies across stakeholders.

Skill 1: Strategic AI partnership

Become the conductor, not the instrument.

Core components

- Strategic thinking aligned with business objectives
- Critical analysis of AI outputs and recommendations
- Applied AI literacy (capabilities, limitations, ethics)

Self-assessment questions (Rate 1-5)

- I can clearly articulate how AI tools support our business objectives.
- I question AI-generated insights before implementing them.
- I consider long-term implications of AI-driven decisions.
- I can identify when human judgment should override AI recommendations.
- I understand what different AI tools can and cannot do.
- I can craft effective prompts for generative AI tools.
- I stay informed about new AI developments relevant to marketing.
- I consider ethical implications when using AI tools.

Strategic AI partnership – implementation

Daily micro-practices (10-15 minutes each)

- Morning AI strategy check: Review one AI-generated insight from yesterday, ask 'What assumptions underpin this?' For example, AI suggested targeting 25-34 age group for a retirement product. A marketer questioned this, realizing the algorithm was based on engagement data, not purchase intent, leading to a strategic pivot toward those aged 45-54.
- Prompt refinement practice: Refine one routine AI prompt, test different approaches.
- Weekly AI tool evaluation: Explore a new feature of an AI tool you haven't used.

Monthly growth challenges (3-4 hours each)

- AI tool experimentation sprint: Test a new AI marketing tool with structured evaluation. For example, a B2B marketer tested an AI-powered LinkedIn outreach tool, discovered it generated generic messages, then used human insight to create industry-specific templates, improving response rates .
- Quarterly strategic AI review: Analyze how AI tools support your marketing strategy.

Showcase Your Value

- Lead an AI-enhanced project: Propose and manage a project leveraging AI for measurable business outcomes.
- Develop AI-informed strategic recommendations: Use AI for market research to build strategic proposals.
- Become the AI strategy consultant: Position yourself as the go-to person for AI strategy questions.

Skill 2: Human-centric creativity

Inject emotional authenticity into AI-enhanced marketing.

Core components

- Empathetic insight into customer emotions and motivations.
- Creative problem-solving beyond AI suggestions.
- Emotional intelligence for authentic communications.

Examples

- AI suggested promoting a budgeting app with "Save money effortlessly!" but empathy mapping revealed target users felt shame about overspending. Campaign messaging re-focused on "Take control without judgment" instead.
- AI data showed high cart abandonment for baby products, but human insight revealed new parents' anxiety about "getting it right", shifting from discount messaging to expert reassurance increased completion rates.

Self-Assessment questions (Rate 1-5)

- I regularly consider the emotional state of our target audience.
- I can identify unspoken customer needs and motivations.
- I understand cultural nuances that affect our messaging.
- I seek out direct customer feedback to inform creative decisions.
- I generate original ideas that go beyond obvious solutions.
- I can find creative ways to use AI tools for unique outcomes.
- I approach marketing challenges from multiple angles.
- I can predict how different audiences will emotionally respond to content.

Human-centric creativity – Implementation

You don't need to be a creative expert to excel at human-centric creativity. Start with one simple action like asking 'How would this make me feel?' before sending a customer communication and build from there.

Daily micro-practices (10-15 minutes each)

- Empathy capping: Before creating content, write down 3 emotions your audience might feel.
- AI content humanization: Take AI-generated content and add personality, cultural references, emotional hooks.
- Customer voice integration: Review customer feedback daily to identify underlying emotions.

Monthly growth challenges (2-3 hours each)

- Emotion-led customer journey mapping: Map journeys focusing on emotional highs and lows.
- Creative brief development: Create briefs that explicitly guide AI execution with human insights

Showcase your value

- Champion emotionally resonant campaigns: Develop campaigns driven by deep customer empathy.
- Lead creative strategy with cultural intelligence: Present strategies demonstrating Canadian market nuances.
- Develop emotional guidelines for AI content: Create team guidelines for maintaining authenticity.

Skill 3: Adaptive communication & influence

Bridge AI capabilities with human decision-making.

Core components:

- Insight translation for diverse stakeholders
- Cross-functional collaboration (technical + non-technical)
- Change leadership for AI adoption

Self-assessment questions (Rate 1-5):

- I can explain complex AI outputs in simple, understandable terms.
- I connect AI insights to business implications and actions.
- I tailor technical information for non-technical audiences.
- I work effectively with data scientists and technical teams.
- I can bridge communication gaps between different departments.
- I help others understand the benefits of AI tools.
- I address concerns and resistance to AI adoption.
- I can guide teams through new AI-enhanced processes.

Adaptive communication & influence – implementation

It's important to adapt tone, messaging style and format for the audience and the platform. Start with one approach that most resonates with your audience.

Daily micro-practices (10-15 minutes each)

- Daily AI insight translation: Explain one AI finding to a non-marketing colleague in less than 2 minutes.
- Weekly cross-functional check-In: Connect with sales, product, or customer service about AI opportunities.
- Stakeholder perspective practice: Consider audience priorities before important communications.


Monthly growth challenges (2-3 hours each)

- AI insights presentation workshop: Develop presentations translating AI analytics into recommendations.
- Change management simulation: Create plans for adopting new AI tools or processes.

Showcase your value

- Facilitate AI tool adoption and training: Lead training sessions and provide ongoing support.
- Lead cross-functional AI integration: Spearhead projects requiring collaboration across departments.
- Present AI strategy to leadership: Deliver presentations focusing on business impact and ROI.

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It's whether
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Your 90-day development roadmap

For accountability and progress tracking, consider building this roadmap in your preferred project management tool where you can set reminders, check-off completed items and monitor your skill development momentum.

Month 1: Foundation building

- Complete self-assessments for all three skills (identify strengths and gaps)
- Begin daily micro-practices for your lowest-scoring skill
- Select one AI tool for focused Strategic AI Partnership development
- Research Canadian AI compliance guidelines

Month 2: Skill integration

- Add daily practices for your second-lowest scoring skill
- Complete your first monthly growth challenge
- Begin showcasing activities for your strongest skill
- Start building your AI wins tracker and success documentation

Month 3: Advanced application

- Implement daily micro-practices for all three skills
- Complete monthly growth challenges for two skills
- Take leadership role in an AI-related project
- Present your learnings and results to stakeholders

Beyond 90 Days: Continuous refinement

- Quarterly skill reassessments and goal setting
- Stay current with AI developments and industry trends
- Share learnings to build your reputation as an AI-savvy marketing leader
- Mentor others in AI adoption and skill development

Implementation tools & quick wins

Looking to get started? Here are immediate actions you can take this week. Pick the one(s) that will require the least effort and have the highest impact, based on your unique circumstances.

Strategic AI partnership

- Audit current AI tool usage and rate effectiveness (1-5).
- Refine one AI prompt daily with 3 variations.
- Create an AI ethics checklist (5 questions for customer data use).

Human-centric creativity

- Conduct 5-minute empathy sessions before customer communications.
- Humanize one AI-generated piece daily with personality and cultural references.
- Start a customer voice library with 10 authentic quotes/reviews.

Adaptive communication and influence

- Practice 60-second AI explanations to non-marketing colleagues.
- Schedule weekly cross-functional coffee chats about AI opportunities.
- Create an AI wins tracker to document successes.

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30-day impact projects

Project 1: AI Pilot proposal

- Choose one specific marketing challenge (email personalization, content optimization, social scheduling).
- Research 2-3 AI tools that could address it.
- Create a business case with projected ROI, timeline, and success metrics.
- Present the case to your manager and propose a 30-day pilot.

Expected outcome: Position yourself as an AI innovation leader.

Project 2: Emotional content guidelines

- Analyze the top 10 performing content pieces for emotional elements.
- Create a one-page guide for using AI tools while maintaining authenticity.
- Include before/after examples of AI content improvements.
- Share with your team and measure adoption rates.

Expected outcome: Become the go-to person for AI content quality.

Project 3: AI training Initiative

- Identify one underutilized AI tool your team could leverage.
- Create a 15-minute training session with practical examples.
- Deliver to 3-5 colleagues and gather feedback.
- Document time savings or quality improvements.

Expected outcome: Build your reputation as AI educator and change leader.

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Progress tracking & measurement framework

Weekly check-ins (5 minutes)

- Rate confidence with each skill (1-10).
- Document one AI success or learning.
- Identify one challenge to address next week

Monthly reviews (30 minutes)

- Complete skill self-assessments
- Review and update AI wins tracker
- Plan next month's growth challenge
- Seek feedback from manager or peers

Quarterly deep dives (2 hours)

- Comprehensive skill evaluation
- Update professional development plan
- Research new AI tools and trends
- Set goals for next quarter

Key performance indicators

- Efficiency: 20% reduction in routine task time (first 90 days)
- Impact: Improved campaign performance metrics
- Influence: Increased team adoption of AI tools and best practices
- Recognition: Leadership opportunities in AI-related projects

Note: These performance indicators are flexible. Customize them based on your team's size, goals, and maturity level.

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Recommended reading and references

- [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](#)
- [MarketsandMarkets: AI for Sales and Marketing Market – Global Forecast to 2030](#)
- [World Economic Forum: Future of Jobs Report 2025](#)
- [Precedence Research: Artificial Intelligence in Marketing Market Analysis](#)
- [Harvard Professional Development: AI Will Shape the Future of Marketing](#)
- [Google AI Education: AI Essentials](#)
- [IBM: Artificial Intelligence](#)
- [Equilibrium Consult: Critical Thinking in AI-Enhanced Marketing](#)
- [ContentGrip: Future of AI Marketing](#)
- [Caylor Solutions: AI and Critical Thinking](#)

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The CMA



As the voice of Canadian marketing, the CMA champions our profession's powerful impact. We are the catalyst to help Canada's marketers thrive today, while building the marketing mindset and environment of tomorrow.

We provide opportunities for our members from coast to coast to develop professionally, to contribute to marketing thought leadership, to build strong networks, and to strengthen the regulatory climate for business success. Our Chartered Marketer (CM) designation signifies that recipients are highly qualified and up to date with best practices, as reflected in the CMA's Canadian Marketing Code of Ethics and Standards.

We represent virtually all of Canada's major business sectors, and all marketing disciplines, channels and technologies. Our Consumer Centre helps Canadians better understand their rights and obligations.

AI Mastery Series: This playbook 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.

For more information, visit thecma.ca.



Master these
skills. Lead
the future.

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