CMA ACCOUNTABILITY CHECKLISTS FOR AI IN MARKETING

Accountability Checklists for AI in Marketing

Introduction

The rapid adoption of AI in marketing has created a complex ecosystem where multiple stakeholders interact with and deploy AI technologies in various ways. While AI offers unprecedented opportunities for innovation and efficiency, it also introduces new responsibilities and risks that must be carefully managed. The Canadian Marketing Association (CMA) recognizes that different stakeholders have distinct roles and responsibilities in ensuring the ethical and effective use of AI in marketing.

These checklists address a critical challenge in AI governance: the need for clear, role-specific guidance in a landscape where responsibilities often overlap or remain unclear. By introducing the concept of Key Accountable Stakeholders, we provide a structured framework that clearly delineates who is responsible for what in the AI marketing ecosystem. This approach ensures that all participants in the marketing value chain understand their specific obligations and can implement appropriate governance measures.

This document serves as both a practical tool for compliance and a strategic guide for implementing responsible AI practices. It is designed to help organizations navigate the complex regulatory landscape while maintaining the agility needed for innovation in AI-driven marketing. These checklists should be reviewed alongside the **CMA Guide on AI for Marketers**, which provides essential frameworks and protocols for responsible AI usage. Following the CMA guide will help ensure organizations meet significant compliance, ethical, and performance standards.

What this document is

- A framework to ensure the ethical, transparent, and effective use of AI in marketing by clearly defining roles and responsibilities for stakeholders.
- A set of guidelines to help organizations comply with existing and evolving AI regulations, ensuring that AI practices are responsible and aligned with industry standards.\A practical tool for assessing and managing AI-related risks in marketing activities, providing actionable steps for maintaining compliance and accountability.

What this document is not

- A guarantee of full autonomy for AI systems; there is always a 'human in the loop' ensuring that AI does not operate 100% autonomously without oversight.
- A substitute for human judgment. Stakeholders are expected to monitor AI outputs continuously and ensure they align with business goals, ethical standards, and regulatory requirements.
- A waiver of existing agreements. All liabilities governed by Master Service Agreements (MSA), Service Level Agreements (SLA), Statements of Work (SOW), and other contractual obligations remain in force, whether AI is used or not.

Overarching principles for AI use

1.Human Oversight:

- Organizations should maintain human oversight in the development and deployment of AI systems, especially in customer-facing activities or those with a significant impact on individuals.
- The level of human oversight should be proportionate to the potential risk posed by the AI system.

2.Transparency:

- Organizations should be transparent with consumers about the use of AI in marketing activities. This includes:
  - Providing clear communication about how AI is used to collect, analyze, and use consumer data.
  - Disclosing the use of AI in making significant decisions that affect consumers, such as personalized content or product recommendations.

3.Bias and Fairness:

- Organizations should proactively audit their AI systems for bias and fairness on an ongoing basis.
- Auditing should include analyzing data used to train AI models and evaluating AI outputs for discriminatory outcomes.
- Organizations should take corrective actions to mitigate bias and ensure fairness, including the use of diverse datasets and fairness-aware algorithms.

4.Explainability:

- Organizations should be prepared to explain how AI-driven decisions that affect consumers are made.
- Explanations should include information about the factors used by the AI system, the logic behind its decisions, and the types of content it generates.

5.Data Privacy and Security:

- Organizations shall ensure that their use of AI complies with all applicable data privacy laws, including obtaining consent for the collection and use of personal information.
- Organizations shall adhere to the principles of data minimization and purpose limitation when collecting and using consumer data for AI purposes.
- Organizations should implement appropriate security measures to protect consumer data used by AI systems.

6.Ethical Considerations:

- Organizations should ensure that their AI systems align with human-centered values, including:
  - Equality and fairness
  - Respect for the rule of law
  - Promotion of social justice
  - Protection of data protection and privacy
  - Upholding consumer rights and commercial fairness
- Organizations should take steps to prevent their AI systems from being used for manipulation, exploitation, or to perpetuate existing societal biases.

7.Performance Monitoring:

- Organizations should establish robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to ensure that their AI systems are delivering expected outcomes.
- This includes defining clear performance metrics and KPIs, regularly assessing AI system performance, and investigating and addressing any anomalies.

8.Accountability:

- Organizations are accountable for their customers' experiences with AI, including when using third-party AI solutions.
- Contracts with third-party providers should include provisions requiring compliance with these AI principles.

Definition of Key Accountable Stakeholders

Key Accountable Stakeholders (KAS) are entities within the marketing value chain who bear direct responsibility for the deployment, management, and outcomes of AI systems in marketing activities. These stakeholders are legally and ethically accountable for ensuring compliance with AI guidelines, maintaining transparency, and upholding ethical standards in AI implementation.

How to use these checklists

- Identify your KAS category
- Navigate to your specific section
- Review and implement all items (that apply) in your section
- Document compliance and maintain records
- Conduct quarterly reviews of checklist completion
- Update procedures based on new regulations or guidelines

Brand marketer accountability checklist

Transparency and customer communication

Clearly communicate to customers when AI is being used in marketing activities	☐
Provide clear explanations of how AI influences customer experiences	☐
Implement transparent labeling for AI-generated content	☐
Maintain public documentation of AI use cases	☐

Data and privacy

Obtain and maintain explicit consent for AI data usage	☐
Implement data minimization practices	☐
Establish clear data retention and deletion policies	☐
Conduct regular privacy impact assessments	☐

Risk management and compliance

Develop brand-specific AI risk assessment framework	☐
Monitor AI impact on brand safety and reputation	☐
Create contingency plans for AI system failures	☐
Maintain documentation of all AI initiatives and outcomes	☐

Consumer protection

Establish clear opt-out procedures for AI-driven marketing	☐
Ensure accessibility of AI systems for all customer segments	☐
Implement special protections for vulnerable consumers	☐
Provide clear channels for customer feedback and concerns	☐

Signature: _____
Name: _____
Date: _____
Campaign: _____

Marketing/PR agency accountability checklist

Creative process and transparency

Document AI usage in creative development	☐
Maintain clear communication about AI's role in deliverables	☐
Establish review processes for AI-generated content	☐
Implement quality control measures for AI outputs	☐

Client relations

Inform clients about specific AI applications in their campaigns	☐
Document AI-related decisions and approvals	☐
Provide regular reports on AI performance metrics	☐
Establish clear escalation procedures for AI-related issues	☐

Ethical implementations

Review AI-generated content for bias and fairness	☐
Ensure diverse representation in AI training data	☐
Maintain human oversight of creative processes	☐
Document ethical considerations and decisions	☐

Technical compliance

Establish AI governance frameworks	☐
Maintain audit trails of AI usage	☐
Implement testing protocols for AI systems	☐
Regular staff training on AI tools and ethics	☐

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Name: _____
Date: _____
Campaign: _____

Publisher/platform accountability checklist

System transparency

Document and disclose AI algorithm operations	☐
Provide clear information about AI-driven content distribution	☐
Implement transparent reporting on AI performance	☐
Maintain public documentation of AI systems	☐

Technical implementation

Monitor algorithm performance and outcomes	☐
Implement fairness metrics and testing	☐
Establish override mechanisms for AI decisions	☐
Regular system audits and updates	☐

Data management

Implement robust data security measures	☐
Maintain clear data usage policies	☐
Regular privacy compliance reviews	☐
Document data flows and processing	☐

User protection

Provide clear opt-out mechanisms	☐
Monitor for discriminatory outcomes	☐
Implement user feedback systems	☐
Regular impact assessments	☐

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Date: _____

Campaign: _____

Technology provider accountability checklist

System development

Implement transparent AI development processes	☐
Document system capabilities and limitations	☐
Regular testing and validation procedures	☐
Maintain comprehensive technical documentation	☐

Security and performance

Implement robust security measures	☐
Regular performance monitoring and optimization	☐
Establish incident response procedures	☐
Maintain system reliability metrics	☐

Client support

Provide clear system documentation	☐
Establish support protocols	☐
Regular client training and updates	☐
Maintain communication channels	☐

Compliance

Regular compliance audits	☐
Document regulatory adherence	☐
Update systems based on regulatory changes	☐
Maintain compliance documentation	☐

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Date: _____

Campaign: _____

Data provider accountability checklist

Data quality

Implement data quality assurance measures	☐
Regular data accuracy assessments	☐
Document data collection methodologies	☐
Maintain data quality metrics	☐

Privacy and compliance

Ensure compliance with privacy regulations, as applicable	☐
Maintain proper consent documentation	☐
Conduct regular privacy impact assessments	☐
Document data handling procedures	☐

Security

Implement data security measures	☐
Regular security audits	☐
Incident response planning	☐
Document security protocols	☐

Client services

Clear documentation of data services	☐
Regular client reporting	☐
Support for data-related inquiries	☐
Maintain service level agreements	☐

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Date: _____
Campaign: _____

Media agency accountability checklist

Campaign management

Document AI usage in media planning	☐
Monitor campaign performance	☐
Implement optimization protocols	☐
Maintain performance metrics	☐

Client transparency

Clear reporting on AI-driven decisions	☐
Regular client updates	☐
Document optimization strategies	☐
Maintain communication logs	☐

Data usage

Implement data handling procedures	☐
Regular data quality assessments	☐
Document data sources	☐
Maintain data usage logs	☐

Performance monitoring

Establish KPI tracking	☐
Regular performance reviews	☐
Document optimization decisions	☐
Maintain performance records	☐

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Name: _____

Date: _____

Campaign: _____

Review cycles

Monthly reviews

Operational performance	☐
System functionality	☐
Client feedback	☐
Incident reports	☐

Quarterly reviews

Compliance status	☐
Documentation updates	☐
Performance metrics	☐
Risk assessments	☐

Annual audits

Comprehensive system review	☐
Policy updates	☐
Training requirements	☐
Strategic planning	☐

Notes

- Each KAS should maintain detailed documentation of their compliance efforts.
- Regular updates may be needed as AI regulations evolve.
- Cross-functional collaboration should be documented when required.
- All stakeholders should stay informed of regulatory changes.

Appendix A: Marketing value chain - stakeholder map

Content creation and creative services

Independent creators

- Freelance writers
- Visual designers
- Videographers
- Photographers
- Influencers
- Voice artists
- Copywriters
- UX/UI designers

Creative agencies

- Full-service agencies
- Boutique creative shops
- Digital agencies
- Social media agencies
- Content studios
- Production houses
- Animation studios
- Design firm

Media and distributions

Media agencies

- Media planning firms
- Media buying agencies
- Programmatic specialists
- Search marketing agencies
- Social media management firms

Publishers and platforms

- Social media platforms
- Search engines
- Traditional media (TV, radio, print)
- Digital publishers
- Content platforms
- Streaming services
- Ad networks
- Email service providers
- SMS/messaging platforms

Technology and data

Marketing technology providers

- CRM platform providers
- Marketing automation platforms
- Analytics tools providers
- AI/ML solution providers
- Customer data platforms
- Content management systems
- Email marketing platforms
- Social media management tools

Data providers and services

- Data brokers
- Market research firms
- Analytics companies
- Data management platforms
- Data enrichment services
- Business intelligence providers
- Audience measurement services
- Consumer insights companies

Strategy and consulting

Strategic consultants

- Marketing consultants
- Brand strategists
- Digital transformation consultants
- Customer experience consultants
- Innovation consultants

Specialized agencies

- SEO specialists
- PR firms
- Event marketing agencies
- Experiential marketing firms
- Loyalty program managers
- Customer service providers

Brand and client side

Brand organizations

- In-house marketing teams
- Brand managers
- Product marketing managers
- Digital marketing specialists
- Content managers
- Social media managers
- Marketing analysts

Client support

- Customer service teams
- Community managers
- Brand ambassadors
- Sales teams
- Technical support

Research and insights

Research providers

- Market research companies
- Consumer behavior analysts
- Focus group facilitators
- Survey companies
- Social listening firms
- Competitive intelligence providers

Legal and compliance

Regulatory Bodies

- Privacy regulators
- Advertising standards bodies
- Industry associations
- Consumer protection agencies

Professional Services

- Marketing law firms
- Privacy consultants
- Compliance advisors
- Auditors
- Quality assurance specialists

Technical infrastructure

- Cloud service providers
- Web hosting companies
- Canadian providers
- Security service providers
- API service providers
- Integration specialists

Education and training

Knowledge providers

- Marketing education institutions
- Professional trainers
- Certification bodies
- Industry analysts
- Thought leaders
- Workshop facilitators

Support services

Operational support

- Project management tools
- Collaboration platforms
- Resource management systems
- Financial services
- HR services
- Translation services
- Localization specialists

Measurement and analytics

Performance analysts

- Attribution modeling specialists
- ROI analysts
- Web analytics experts
- Media measurement firms
- Campaign tracking specialists
- Conversion optimization experts

Specialized Services

Niche Providers

- Accessibility consultants
- Sustainability advisors
- Cultural adaptation specialists
- Voice search optimizers
- AR/VR content creators
- Gaming marketing specialists
- Podcast marketing specialists

Appendix B: Case study - ethical AI implementation in a campaign

Overview

A consumer electronics brand, "TechSpark," partnered with a creative marketing agency to launch a campaign for its latest AI-powered smart home device. The campaign aimed to use personalized content, leveraging customer data to provide targeted messaging. Various stakeholders, including a brand marketer, marketing agency, technology provider, and data provider, were involved in this AI-driven initiative.

Stakeholders

- **Brand marketer (TechSpark)**: Ensured transparency with consumers about AI's role in personalization and the data collected.
- **Marketing agency**: Utilized AI to develop personalized creative content while ensuring the content was ethically reviewed.
- **Technology provider**: Supplied the AI technology used in content personalization, ensuring its capabilities were clearly communicated.
- **Data provider**: Provided data to the marketing agency, ensuring that data quality and privacy regulations were maintained.

Challenge

The campaign faced challenges around ensuring that the AI-driven content did not exhibit bias, especially when targeting different demographic groups. There were concerns about the AI's ability to fairly represent diverse consumer segments without inadvertently reinforcing stereotypes.

Approach

1. **Data quality and bias review**: The data provider conducted an extensive review of the training data to ensure diverse representation and mitigate any biases in the dataset. They implemented a data quality assurance process that involved regular assessments to identify potential gaps in representation.
2. **Creative oversight by marketing agency**: The marketing agency established a multi-step review process involving both human oversight and AI-driven bias detection tools. Creative content was tested to ensure that it did not exhibit biases related to age, gender, or socioeconomic status. This review included feedback loops from diverse focus groups.
3. **Transparency from TechSpark**: The brand marketer took steps to ensure customers understood when and why AI was being used in content personalization. They created a consumer-facing FAQ page explaining how data influenced their personalized experiences and provided clear opt-out options for users who did not wish to have their data used.
4. **Performance and compliance monitoring**: The technology provider and brand marketer collaborated to monitor the performance of the AI system. They tracked engagement metrics and monitored any unintended consequences or feedback from customers regarding the AI-driven content.

Outcome

The campaign successfully launched with personalized messaging that resonated well with diverse consumer groups. The brand received positive feedback for transparency, and the use of diverse data helped prevent the AI from creating biased messaging. A post-campaign analysis showed increased engagement rates, particularly among segments previously less engaged, due to the improved relevancy and fairness of the AI-generated content.

Lessons Learned

- **Collaboration is key**: Successful AI campaigns require active collaboration between data providers, creative agencies, and technology providers to ensure both ethical and effective outcomes.
- **Transparency drives trust**: Clearly communicating AI's role and giving customers control over their data helped build trust and engagement.
- **Bias prevention requires multi-layered efforts**: Addressing bias required steps at multiple points in the campaign lifecycle—from data collection and training to content review and customer feedback.

Conclusion

The structured approach and defined accountabilities of each KAS, along with the inclusion of a cross-accountability framework and case study, provide a comprehensive guide for organizations to implement responsible AI practices in marketing. By understanding the roles and interdependencies, stakeholders can better collaborate to mitigate risks, enhance transparency, and maximize the benefits of AI-driven marketing initiatives.

About CMA Guides and Tools

Marketers need to have a broad skill set that includes knowledge of marketing compliance and best practices. The CMA and its members recognize that complying with all relevant laws and maintaining high standards of practice is a fundamental responsibility to the public, critical to the reputation of the marketing profession, and the foundation for a successful and strong business community.

The CMA is the leader in providing legislative and regulatory guidelines and articulating best practices for the marketing profession in Canada. We provide educational resources to maintain and strengthen the professionalism and integrity of the marketing community. Our Canadian Marketing Code of Ethics and Standards is widely recognized as a benchmark for effective self-regulation and is updated annually.

The Canadian Marketing Code of Ethics and Standards and related Compliance and Best Practices Guides do not purport to replace legal advice or guidance.

For more information, contact the CMA.

Special thanks to the CMA's AI Committee for their work in creating these checklists.