



What Is the Impact of AI Agents and Agentic AI in the Field of Marketing Management?

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Article submitted:

16 December 2025

Revised:

26 December 2025

Accepted:

29 December 2025

Abstract

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) has transformed marketing management from a predominantly human-centered decision-making domain into a hybrid ecosystem where intelligent agents and agentic AI systems increasingly assume autonomous roles. This opinion-based article critically examines the impact of AI agents and agentic AI on marketing management, emphasizing their transition from decision-support tools to semi- and fully autonomous decision-makers. Drawing on contemporary literature, this study argues that AI agents reshape strategic, operational, and relational dimensions of marketing by automating complex decisions, enabling agentic personalization, and redefining marketer–consumer relationships. Using a conceptual framework grounded in autonomy theory and the marketing mix, the article synthesizes existing research to highlight opportunities, risks, and managerial implications. The findings suggest that while agentic AI enhances efficiency, scalability, and responsiveness, it simultaneously raises ethical, governance, and consumer autonomy concerns. This article contributes to marketing management scholarship by integrating classic and emerging perspectives on AI agents into a coherent analytical narrative relevant for researchers and practitioners.

Keywords: AI agents, agentic AI, marketing management, autonomous decision-making, personalization, marketing strategy

Introduction

Marketing management has traditionally been grounded in human judgment, experiential knowledge, and managerial intuition, supported by analytical instruments such as market research, forecasting models, and decision-support systems [1], [2]. Within this paradigm, technology functioned primarily as an auxiliary mechanism that enhanced managerial cognition without displacing human authority. Over the past two decades, however, advances in artificial intelligence (AI) have progressively altered this foundation by enabling data-driven systems capable of large-scale prediction, segmentation, recommendation, and optimization [3], [4], [5]. Early AI applications in marketing largely reinforced managerial decision-making by improving efficiency and analytical precision while preserving human control over strategic and tactical choices. These developments marked a gradual transition from decision-support technologies toward semi-autonomous systems that increasingly influence marketing outcomes. Consequently, the evolving role of AI raises critical questions regarding managerial agency, accountability, and the redistribution of decision authority within marketing organizations.

More recent developments signal a qualitatively different transformation. AI agents and agentic AI systems are increasingly transitioning from decision-support tools to autonomous or semi-

autonomous decision-makers operating within predefined organizational, strategic, and ethical constraints [5], [6], [7]. This shift represents not merely an incremental technological improvement but a structural reconfiguration of marketing management, wherein decision authority is partially delegated to intelligent systems capable of acting independently in dynamic and uncertain market environments [6], [8]. As a result, marketing decision-making is becoming more continuous, adaptive, and algorithmically mediated.

AI agents in marketing can be defined as software entities endowed with capabilities for environmental perception, continuous learning, interaction, and action execution to achieve specific marketing objectives with minimal human intervention [5], [9]. These objectives may include campaign optimization, dynamic pricing, customer targeting, or relationship management. Agentic AI extends this concept by emphasizing higher levels of autonomy, goal-oriented behavior, and contextual adaptivity across channels and customer touchpoints [8], [10], [11]. Consequently, marketing systems increasingly resemble interconnected multi-agent ecosystems, in which autonomous agents coordinate, negotiate, and optimize decisions in real time rather than following linear, human-driven workflows [9].

The managerial implications of this evolution are substantial. Existing literature indicates that AI-driven agents already exert significant influence over core marketing functions, including pricing, promotion, customer service, sales enablement, and relationship management [4], [12]. In professional services firms, for example, AI systems shape pricing strategies and client interactions by leveraging predictive analytics and behavioral data, thereby redefining established marketing practices and professional norms [13], [14]. These developments challenge traditional conceptions of managerial expertise, as algorithmic decision-making may outperform human judgment in complex, data-intensive contexts characterized by high velocity and uncertainty [4], [12].

At the interface between firms and markets, intelligent agents embedded in chatbots, recommender systems, and virtual personal assistants increasingly mediate consumer interactions [12], [15]. Rather than engaging directly with marketers, consumers often interact with algorithmic agents that curate information, recommend alternatives, and even negotiate transactions on their behalf. While such mediation can enhance efficiency and relevance, it simultaneously raises critical concerns regarding consumer autonomy, transparency, trust, and ethical accountability [16], [17]. Prior research highlights a growing tension between the welfare-enhancing potential of AI-driven personalization and the risk of consumer reactance when algorithmic influence is perceived as intrusive or manipulative [16], [18].

Despite the expanding body of research on AI in marketing, existing studies remain fragmented, often focusing either on technical capabilities or isolated functional applications. There is a notable lack of integrative, conceptually grounded analyses that explicitly examine AI agents and agentic AI as autonomous actors reshaping marketing management decision structures, managerial roles, and consumer agency simultaneously. Accordingly, this article addresses this gap by offering a literature-informed, opinion-based synthesis that conceptualizes the impact of agentic AI on marketing management as a systemic transformation, thereby contributing to ongoing scholarly debates on governance, ethics, and strategic control in the era of autonomous AI systems [6], [19], [20].

Methods

A. Research Approach

This study employs a conceptual and opinion-based literature synthesis approach. Such an approach is appropriate for emerging phenomena where theoretical integration and critical reflection are needed to frame future empirical inquiry [2], [4]. Peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, and authoritative book chapters on AI agents, agentic AI, and marketing management form the primary data sources [1], [3], [7].

B. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework integrates three core components: AI Agent Capabilities, Marketing Management Functions, and Outcomes and Implications. It is grounded in the notion that marketing is transitioning from human-led decision-making to human-AI co-agency, and in some cases, AI-dominant agency [3], [8].



Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework of Agentic AI in Marketing Management

AI agent capabilities (learning, autonomy, adaptivity, and interaction) enable agents to act beyond decision support. These capabilities influence core marketing management functions, including strategy formulation, promotional execution, pricing decisions, and relationship management. The interaction between AI agents and marketing functions generates outcomes such as efficiency gains and hyper-personalization, while also producing ethical challenges and tensions related to consumer autonomy and managerial control [3], [13], [14].

Results and Discussions

A. AI Agents and the Transformation of Marketing Decision-Making

One of the most significant impacts of AI agents lies in the transformation of marketing decision-making processes. Traditionally, AI systems functioned primarily as decision-support tools that enhanced human judgment by providing analytics, forecasts, and structured recommendations, while final authority remained firmly in the hands of marketing managers [3], [4]. In this configuration, AI augmented managerial cognition without fundamentally altering the locus of control. However, recent research demonstrates a marked shift toward autonomous decision-making, particularly in domains characterized by high data velocity and rapid feedback loops, such as digital promotion, campaign optimization, dynamic pricing, and customer targeting [6], [10].

Mirzayi and Talajouran emphasize that AI agents are increasingly operating as decision-makers within the Process and Promotion elements of the marketing mix, executing decisions in real-time with

minimal or no direct human intervention [6]. These agents continuously learn from market responses and adjust strategies accordingly, enabling faster execution and greater operational consistency compared to traditional human-led decision processes [6], [8]. As a result, marketing decisions are no longer episodic or periodic but become continuous and adaptive, reshaping the temporal logic of marketing management [10], [12].

From a managerial perspective, this shift toward AI-driven autonomy offers substantial advantages. Autonomous agents can process vast volumes of heterogeneous data, detect subtle patterns, and respond instantaneously to market signals, often outperforming human decision-makers in complex, data-intensive environments [4], [12]. Such capabilities are particularly valuable in highly competitive digital markets where speed and precision are critical sources of advantage [4], [13]. Nevertheless, the growing autonomy of AI agents also introduces significant challenges. Reduced managerial visibility into algorithmic decision rationales complicates oversight and accountability, thereby challenging established governance and control mechanisms within marketing organizations [8], [19].

Moreover, scholars caution that excessive reliance on autonomous agents may gradually erode marketers' strategic reasoning and critical decision-making skills, as humans become supervisors rather than active decision participants [16], [18]. This potential deskilling effect underscores the need for carefully designed human-AI collaboration models that balance algorithmic efficiency with managerial judgment. Consequently, the transformation of marketing decision-making by AI agents should be understood not only as a technological advancement but also as a profound organizational and cognitive shift with long-term implications for marketing management practice [6], [19].

Table 1. Impact of AI Agents on Marketing Decision-Making

Aspect	Role of AI Agents	Managerial Implication
Campaign optimization	Autonomous real-time adjustments	Enables faster campaign execution and responsiveness while requiring managers to redesign oversight mechanisms, redefine accountability, and balance efficiency gains with reduced direct human control.
Pricing decisions	Algorithmic dynamic pricing	Supports revenue optimization through adaptive pricing strategies but demands strong governance frameworks to address fairness, transparency, consumer trust, and potential regulatory scrutiny.
Customer targeting	Predictive segmentation and activation	Improves targeting precision and personalization outcomes; however, managers must actively mitigate algorithmic bias, protect consumer privacy, and ensure ethical data use practices.
Resource allocation	Automated budget distribution	Enhances operational efficiency and cost effectiveness, yet requires transparent decision rules and managerial monitoring to prevent misallocation and overdependence on automated systems.
Performance evaluation	Continuous learning-based assessment	Provides richer and adaptive performance metrics, but managers face challenges in explaining AI-driven evaluations and aligning them with human judgment and organizational values.

The evidence suggests that AI agents fundamentally redefine how decisions are made in marketing management, shifting authority from humans to intelligent systems while demanding new forms of oversight and strategic alignment [6], [13].

B. Agentic AI and Personalized Marketing Experiences

Agentic AI plays a central role in enabling scalable, adaptive, and dynamic personalization across marketing channels. Unlike traditional rule-based or segmentation-driven systems, agentic personalization systems autonomously explore large and complex action spaces to identify optimal

messaging strategies for individual users in real time [5], [7], [10]. These systems continuously learn from user interactions and contextual signals, allowing marketers to move beyond static personalization toward highly responsive, user-level adaptation. As a result, agentic AI significantly reduces operational overhead associated with manual campaign design while simultaneously expanding the range and diversity of possible marketing interactions [8], [10].

Prior research highlights that AI agents embedded in sales, customer service, and customer relationship management systems increasingly operate as collaborative partners rather than passive tools [21]. Davenport et al. emphasize that these agents monitor customer interactions, including conversations, browsing behavior, and transaction histories [4]. They provide real-time guidance to human sales representatives, enabling value co-creation through effective human-AI collaboration. Similarly, conversational agents, chatbots, and virtual personal assistants frequently serve as the primary interface between brands and consumers, shaping how information is accessed, evaluated, and acted upon throughout the customer journey [11], [12], [15]. In this context, personalization is no longer solely marketer-driven but increasingly mediated by autonomous agents acting on behalf of both firms and consumers.

Despite these advantages, personalization driven by agentic AI introduces a well-documented paradox. While increased relevance and contextual adaptation can enhance consumer satisfaction, engagement, and perceived usefulness, excessive algorithmic influence may undermine consumers' sense of autonomy and control over their own choices [16], [17]. When personalization becomes opaque or overly prescriptive, consumers may experience psychological reactance, leading to resistance, avoidance behaviors, or diminished trust in the brand [16], [18]. This risk is particularly salient when AI agents infer preferences or nudge decisions without explicit consumer awareness.

Consequently, scholars increasingly emphasize the importance of ethical design principles, transparency, and explainability in agentic marketing systems [18], [22]. Ensuring that consumers retain meaningful agency requires informed consent, sufficient controllability, and transparency regarding algorithmic involvement. This issue represents a critical challenge for managers and raises significant ethical considerations. Thus, the strategic value of agentic personalization depends not only on technical sophistication but also on the careful alignment of autonomy, transparency, and consumer trust within marketing management practice [10], [16]. In this context, marketing managers are required to move beyond operational adoption and engage in active governance of agentic AI systems throughout their lifecycle. This includes establishing ethical guidelines, monitoring unintended behavioral nudges, and ensuring that personalization strategies do not exploit cognitive vulnerabilities or information asymmetries. Furthermore, organizations must develop internal capabilities to audit algorithmic decisions and communicate AI-driven processes in ways that are intelligible to both consumers and regulators. As agentic systems become embedded across customer touchpoints, balancing competitive advantage with ethical responsibility becomes a defining competence of contemporary marketing management in data-intensive environments.

Table 2. Agentic AI and Personalized Marketing

Dimension	Agentic Contribution	Strategic Consideration
Cross-channel messaging	Autonomous orchestration	Ensures consistent messaging across platforms but requires strategic limits to prevent excessive automation that may reduce brand authenticity and weaken meaningful customer engagement.
Customer interaction	Conversational agents and chatbots	Enhances scalability and responsiveness in customer interactions, yet organizations must prioritize trust building, emotional alignment, and clear disclosure of non-human interactions.
Recommendation systems	Predictive personalization	Improves content relevance and conversion rates; however, firms must carefully manage manipulation risks, filter bubbles, and ethical boundaries in personalized recommendation strategies.
Sales support	Real-time feedback for agents	Strengthens sales effectiveness through augmented decision support while demanding deliberate human-AI collaboration models to preserve professional judgment and accountability.
Customer journey design	Adaptive experience optimization	Enables continuous journey optimization but necessitates transparency, informed consent, and governance mechanisms to ensure ethical data use and sustained customer trust.

Overall, agentic AI extends personalization from segmentation to individual-level autonomy, fundamentally reshaping customer experience management while challenging traditional ethical boundaries [3], [10], [16]. This shift transforms personalization into a continuous, self-directed process in which AI agents dynamically interpret context, intent, and behavior in real time. As a result, organizations must reassess governance structures, redefining responsibility, oversight, and ethical accountability in increasingly autonomous marketing ecosystems.

C. Implications for Marketing Management and Governance

The rise of AI agents has profound implications for marketing management roles, required skill sets, and governance structures. As autonomous and semi-autonomous systems assume greater responsibility for operational and tactical decisions, marketing managers increasingly shift from being direct decision-makers to acting as designers, orchestrators, and supervisors of intelligent systems [1], [4]. This transformation redefines managerial authority and responsibility, emphasizing system configuration, goal setting, and performance oversight rather than hands-on execution. Consequently, marketing leadership increasingly depends on competencies in data literacy, algorithmic reasoning, and ethical judgment, alongside traditional strategic and creative skills [12], [19].

Early research on intelligent agents in marketing relationship management already recognized the potential of multi-agent systems to mediate complex, information-rich interactions among firms, consumers, and intermediaries [9]. These foundational studies conceptualized agents as intermediaries capable of interpreting data and supporting relationship-building activities. Contemporary agentic AI systems significantly extend this vision by operating at unprecedented scale and speed, enabling real-time coordination across channels, markets, and customer segments [6], [8], [11]. While such

capabilities create opportunities for efficiency, responsiveness, and personalization, they also amplify risks related to loss of human control, systemic bias, and unintended strategic consequences [8], [16].

Governance therefore emerges as a central challenge in the adoption of agentic AI within marketing management. Key concerns include accountability for autonomous decisions, transparency of algorithmic processes, mitigation of bias in data and models, and compliance with evolving regulations on data protection, consumer rights, and algorithmic accountability [16], [18]. Traditional governance mechanisms, which assume human decision-makers, are often ill-suited to contexts in which decisions are generated and executed autonomously by learning systems [18], [19].

Scholars increasingly argue that the sustainable integration of agentic AI in marketing requires a carefully calibrated balance between algorithmic autonomy and human oversight [16], [23]. Human-in-the-loop or human-on-the-loop governance models are proposed as mechanisms to preserve strategic alignment, ethical accountability, and organizational values while still leveraging the efficiency and adaptability of autonomous agents [16], [18]. Thus, the managerial challenge is not whether to adopt agentic AI, but how to govern it in ways that enhance performance without compromising trust, responsibility, and long-term strategic control [6], [22].

Table 3. Managerial and Governance Implications of Agentic AI

Area	Impact of Agentic AI	Required Managerial Response
Organizational roles	Shift to AI supervision	Upskilling and role redesign
Ethical governance	Algorithmic influence on consumers	Transparency and ethical guidelines
Decision accountability	Blurred responsibility	Clear governance frameworks
Consumer trust	Mediated interactions via agents	Trust-building mechanisms
Strategic control	Reduced direct human intervention	Human-in-the-loop systems

These implications suggest that agentic AI is not merely a technological tool but a structural force reshaping the foundations of marketing management [4], [6], [19]. By redistributing decision authority from managers to autonomous systems, agentic AI reconfigures organizational roles, strategic control, and performance accountability within marketing functions. Consequently, marketing management must evolve toward hybrid governance models that integrate human judgment with machine autonomy to ensure strategic coherence and ethical integrity.

Conclusion

This article has examined the impact of AI agents and agentic AI on marketing management through a literature-supported, opinion-based analysis. The findings indicate that AI agents are transforming marketing from a human-centered discipline into an ecosystem characterized by autonomous decision-making, scalable personalization, and redefined managerial roles. While these developments offer substantial efficiency and strategic benefits, they also raise critical concerns regarding consumer autonomy, ethics, and governance. The future of marketing management will likely depend on how effectively organizations balance AI autonomy with human oversight [11]. Rather than replacing marketers, agentic AI repositions them as architects of intelligent systems and stewards of ethical value creation. Future research should empirically investigate long-term organizational outcomes and consumer responses to agentic marketing systems across cultural and regulatory contexts.

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