

# ARE YOU READY TO GET READY FOR AI?

***A pragmatic guide to the current state of Generative AI in marketing and content operations, and how to assess your organization's readiness to successfully adopt and use it.***

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THE CONTENT ADVISORY**

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# IS YOUR TEAM READY TO BE GOOD AT AI?

## **Generative AI is here. Are your marketing and content teams ready?**

Generative AI is a type of artificial intelligence that can produce content based on prompts via a chat interface. There is no shortage of advice when it comes to helping marketing teams “get good” at this. But do you know what “getting good” at Generative AI even means?

### **Is it better prompting for better results?**

Almost certainly not. The technology will no doubt help marketers ask the right questions to get the desired output and move beyond the current “wordplay” of getting the best answers. But that is just a small part of its capabilities.

### **Is it immersing yourself in use cases?**

Maybe. But how do you know which of the hundreds of use cases will most profoundly impact your needs?

Currently, “getting good” at Generative AI seems to mean learning how to utilize the chat interface in a way that builds upon an existing, internal, knowledge base, in order to increase efficiency or scale in the research, ideation, or creation of better marketing content.

That sounds nice. But if “getting good” means slowly getting better at leveraging the tool for things we already do – like practicing piano, but only the songs we already know how to play – why does it all feel so rushed and experimental?

The reason: FUD – Fear, Uncertainty, and Doubt – is plaguing businesses large and small. They wonder how much efficiency can be created by using this new technology. Content practitioners fear that the answer will result in the end of their jobs. And everyone has doubts about whether the technology is reliable and free of plagiarism issues.

So, many businesses have explored their “readiness for AI” by simply allowing marketing teams or individual practitioners to experiment with it and see what use cases emerge.

But there are problems with that approach.

For one, many of these businesses have no set standards, consistency, or organized processes for the ideation, creation, management, or measurement of content in marketing. And with no standards, it becomes extraordinarily difficult to know which, if any, of the many AI use cases will provide any level of scalable efficiency or added effectiveness.

So, without an existing and accepted content strategy, it becomes near impossible to understand how team(s) can “get good” at Generative AI. Thus, the only insight that comes from individual experimentation is the rationalization of all the things the technology cannot do that humans can.

Businesses will never get an accurate sense of readiness in that kind of environment.



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# UNDERSTANDING THE GENERATIVE AI OPPORTUNITY

***Generative AI has a tremendous amount of potential.***

Many of our clients are asking for advice on how their teams can practically integrate this new technology into existing content research, ideation, and creation processes.

It offers so many promises:

- Competitive research at your fingertips
- Automated SEO or other content opportunity research
- Maintenance of consistent tone of voice across multiple writers/sources
- Scalability – multiple versions of headlines or other content
- Variables of content creation at scale
- Increased efficiency by automatically creating derivative content such as meeting notes, sales emails, and webinar transcriptions

But the irony is that in order to assess where many of these opportunities lie for content teams, we must assume that there are existing processes for content research, ideation, and creation to begin with.

And as we just said, there often isn't. For many companies, how marketing content is requested, brainstormed, and created is basically the Wild West.

It's only when it comes to producing the assets – pulling the content components into the final format – that any kind of well-regulated and understood workflow process exists.

So naturally, where many companies go wrong is that they start by asking “how can teams leverage Generative AI to fix inefficiencies across the content lifecycle?” When the question they should be asking is “how can individuals use AI across multiple touchpoints of our greater strategic workflow?”

You know, if they actually had a strategic workflow.

The absence of a content strategy is a prevalent challenge for any kind of AI readiness initiative. By jumping ahead to individual experimentation or developing a technology implementation roadmap, businesses are saying “let's try and discover the benefits to solving a problem that we don't understand or know if we even have”.



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# RESEARCH VALIDATES OUR IDEA

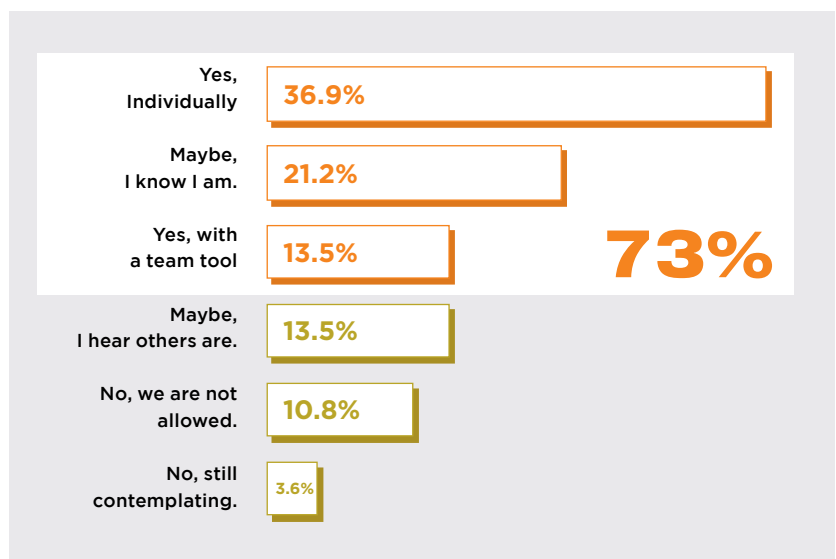
***Assessing AI readiness is not a technology question, it's a content strategy challenge.***

We interviewed more than 200 marketers during the summer of 2023. Here's what we learned:

## PEOPLE, NOT TEAMS, ARE EXPERIMENTING.

We asked if the companies these marketers worked for currently make Generative AI available for workers or if experimentation was going on individually. The largest percentage (73%) said that they were either themselves experimenting with it or knew that other individuals in the company were (see Figure 1).

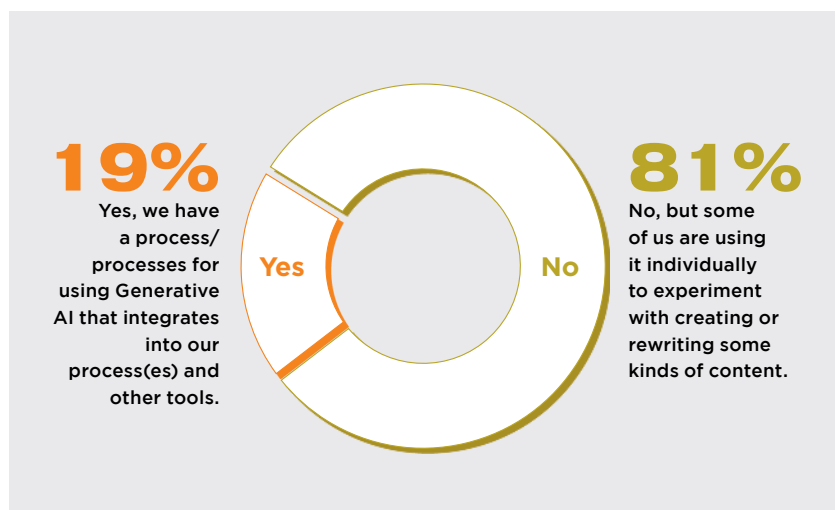
Figure 1  
Does the company you work for currently use Generative AI to create marketing or marketing-related content?



## AI ISN'T INTEGRATED AT ALL ... YET

Of those who indicated they were using Generative AI in some way, unsurprisingly 81% said that it was not integrated into their existing workflow (see Figure 2). They were simply experimenting with it.

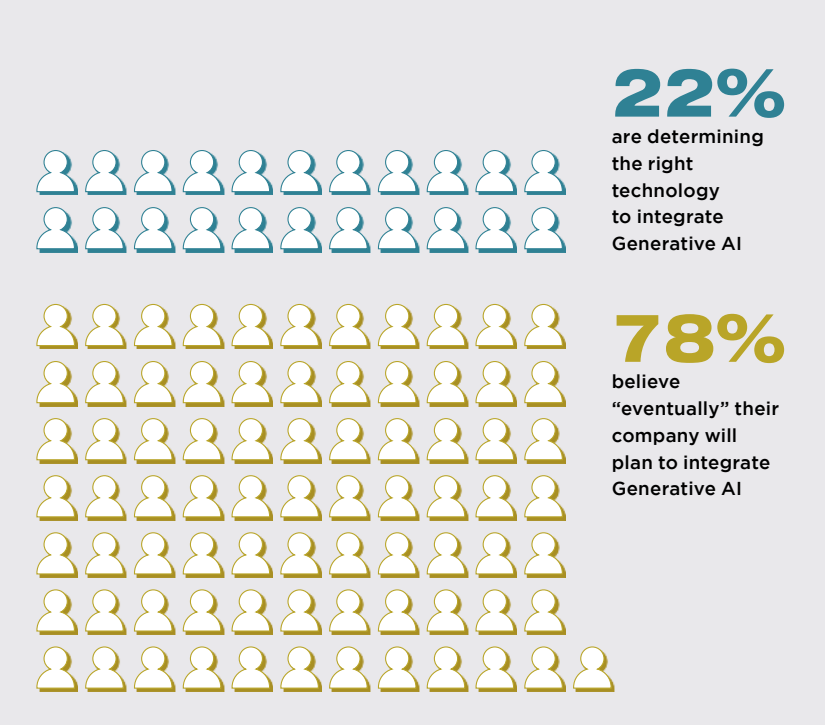
Figure 2  
Is your current work with Generative AI content creation integrated into your overall content workflow or lifecycle?



# THERE IS A FEELING OF INEVITABILITY

Only 25% of the respondents said their company has no plans to integrate Generative AI into content creation. However, among the 75% of those who stated they ARE planning to integrate Generative AI, there was a marked split between those who are actively determining the right technology (22%) and those who believe that “eventually” their company will get there (78%) (see Figure 3).

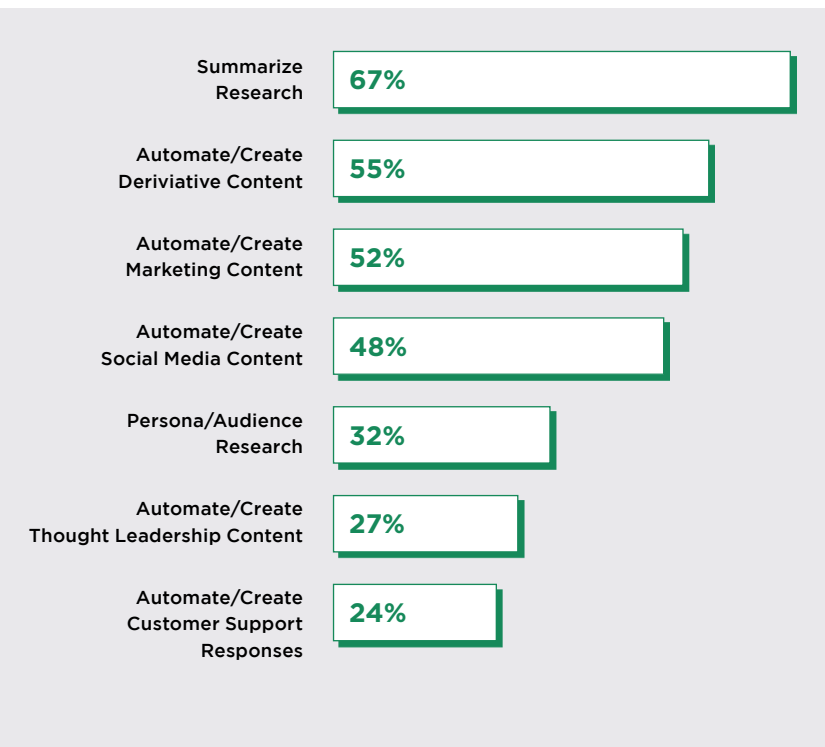
Figure 3  
Is your current work with Generative AI content creation integrated into your overall content workflow or lifecycle?



# WHAT ARE THE USE CASES?

We asked what the marketers believed would be the primary use cases for Generative AI. The top answers were around summarizing original research and creating derivative content (see Figure 4).

Figure 4  
Whether or not you are currently utilizing any Generative AI tools, what are the use cases or opportunities that excite you the most about including it in your work in marketing?





# TCA RECOMMENDATIONS

***Generative AI will not improve your content creation process until there are standard, well-understood, established, content creation processes.***

Today's Generative AI tools can't proactively suggest how the business should express itself or what its content priorities should be. These tools dutifully comply with any prompt request – whether the idea is good, bad, or indifferent.

Thus, you cannot even begin to understand if your team is ready for AI until the business understands the right kind of content, the quantity needed, and the underlying processes that can be made more efficient or effective.

So, step one in determining a team's AI readiness has nothing to do with AI. It is to understand and document the overall process of how ideas are formulated, harnessed, transformed into raw content, and ultimately designed into the assets that will provide the content experiences. In the simplest terms: you cannot determine AI readiness until you have assessed your content strategy. Following are three steps to do just that.



## STEP ONE: MAP THE CURRENT PROCESSES

TCA recently worked with a large, fast-growing media and technology company that was looking to integrate Generative AI into its content marketing (e.g., thought leadership) processes. The team, like so many, was seeking counsel on where to start their journey with Generative AI.

Our action plan began with an audit of what we call the “occurrent processes”; in other words, how stuff really gets done. We then made recommendations on how to create standardized, consistent processes that can help the business take a content operations approach that makes sense with or without AI.



***In the simplest terms: you cannot determine AI readiness until you have assessed your content strategy.***

Only when that was implemented were they ready to think about integrating Generative AI into any number of activities in those processes to see which would be the prioritized use cases. This gave us a current maturity level as well as a gap analysis on evolving to and maturing into other areas.

Typically, once the audit is complete, we define two categories of recommendations:

1. Tasks or processes where applying more standardized approaches could make content creation more efficient, effective, and or measurable.
2. A prioritized list of use cases to begin utilizing Generative AI to understand where benefits can be gained (if at all) and, importantly, the associated cost or compromise associated with getting to those benefits.

These give the business options for determining what, where, and when a new Generative AI tool might be worth piloting and ultimately adopting.



## STEP TWO: IDENTIFY USE CASES TO GUIDE AI TOOL SELECTION

Successfully implementing, adopting, and scaling Generative AI within an organization will challenge existing processes and requires careful planning, resourcing, and training. Step one showed that auditing your existing processes for the occurrent behavior (what's really happening) vs. the actual documented processes (if they exist) is a great place to start assessing your readiness to integrate AI into your business.

Once you've begun to perform the use cases, you can generate a prioritized gap analysis and associated maturity model (see Figure 5 on next page) to identify where existing (and new) AI use cases would be profitably enhanced by applying new toolsets to make the current team members more efficient in their jobs, expand their capabilities so they can do more activities, or change the nature of the collaboration itself. This helps you select the right level of tool.

The outcome of this assessment is placement along a maturity model – somewhere between experimentation and proficiency – to indicate the best kinds of pilot programs you are ready for in the journey.

This maturity model is not meant to be prescriptive, nor is it linear. It is typical, even expected, that different teams across the organization – and even within the marketing department – will be at different points across the spectrum. What this model outlines are typical stages of adoption, with each

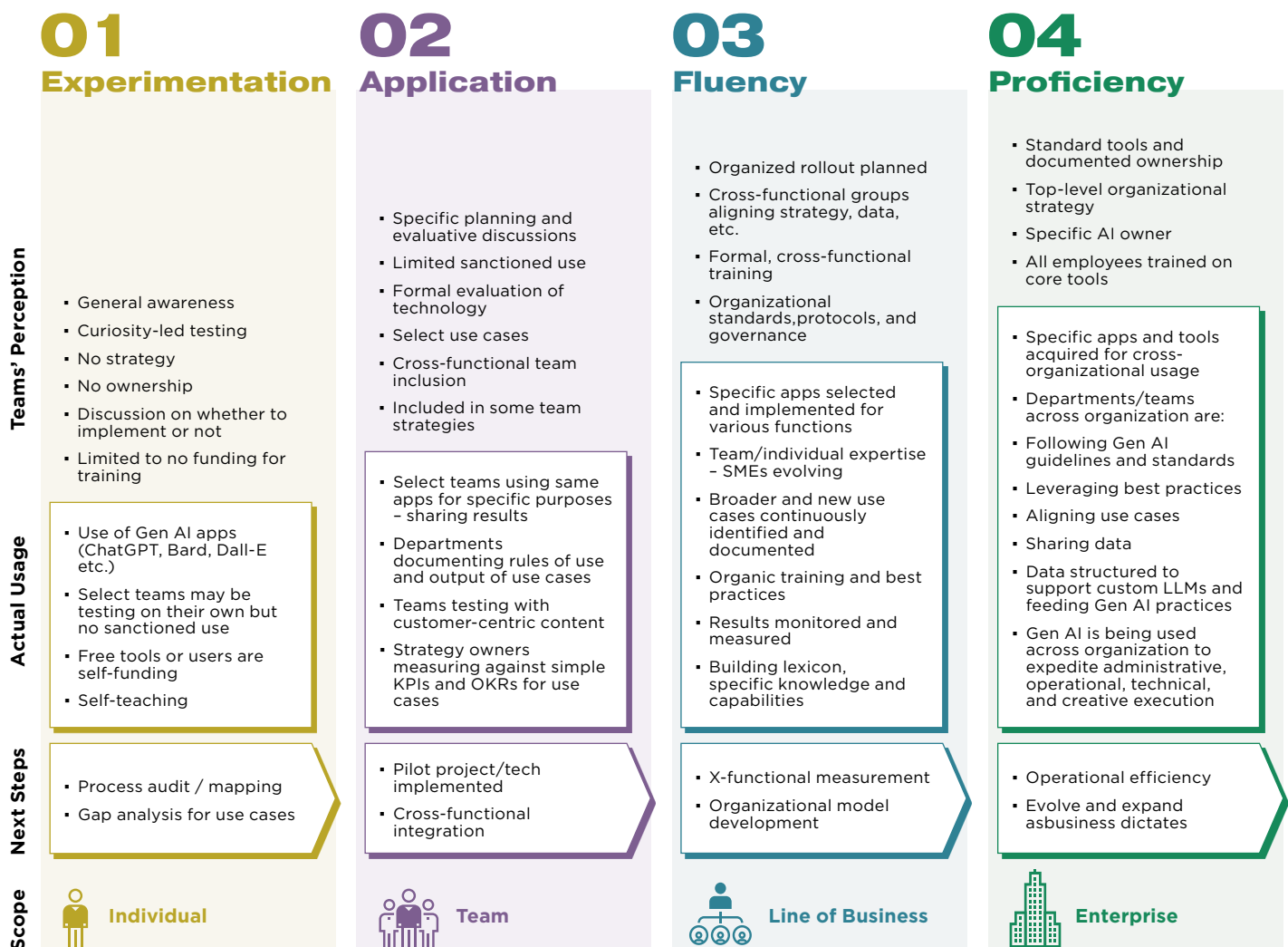


**Successfully implementing, adopting, and scaling Generative AI within an organization will challenge existing processes and requires careful planning, resourcing, and training.**

representing a set of capabilities and practices that organizations can strive to achieve, as well as the state of planning/consideration at the different steps to maturity.

Throughout this journey, organizations can identify their strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement, enabling them to make informed decisions about resource allocation, talent acquisition, and technology investments. By following the maturity model, organizations can incrementally enhance their Generative AI capabilities and drive innovation across their business.

Figure 5  
Generative AI Adoption Maturity Model



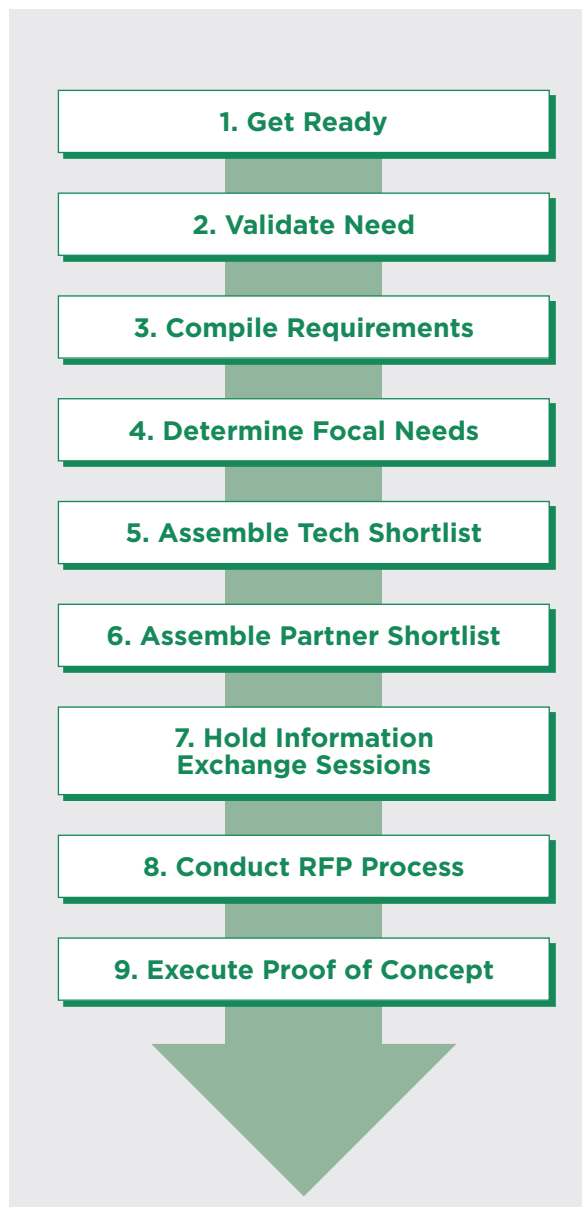




## STEP THREE: FIND THE RIGHT FIT FOR GENERATIVE AI ROADMAPPING

Selecting a technology takes time and investment. TCA's step-by-step guide to technology selection process and consulting services can help you choose the right-fit Generative AI solution(s) (see Figure 6).

Figure 6  
**Steps for a Successful Technology Selection**



## WHAT NOW?

Generative AI has emerged as a powerful tool in the field of marketing, offering unique opportunities for personalized and creative content generation. This technology has the potential to revolutionize how organizations engage with their customers, create impactful marketing campaigns, and drive business growth. That potential can only be reached if this revolutionizing technology is planned for strategically and with purpose.

It is important to remember that Generative AI is not a replacement for human creativity and intuition. While the technology can assist marketers in generating new ideas and content, human input and oversight are still crucial to ensure accuracy and quality, and to maintain brand integrity. As organizations continue to explore the potential of Generative AI in marketing, it is essential to establish a responsible and ethical approach. This involves being transparent about the use of AI, ensuring fairness and inclusivity, and safeguarding consumer privacy.

Generative AI holds immense promise for the future of marketing. By leveraging this technology effectively and responsibly, and starting with a foundational content strategy, organizations can elevate their marketing efforts, deliver impactful experiences to their customers, and build strong relationships that drive long-term success.

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## **ABOUT** **THE CONTENT ADVISORY**

Founded in 2010, TCA is the leading content strategy consulting, research, advisory, coaching, and education company. Our clients rely on us for valuable insights on content strategy, marketing, digital transformation, data privacy, content orchestration, and customer experience. Since our launch, we've worked with more than 500 organizations, including 15 of the Fortune 100. We've consulted directly with organizations such as Adidas, Anthem Insurance, Capital One, NASA, Microsoft, LinkedIn, Facebook, CVS Health, 3M, and The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation helping them tell their stories more effectively and efficiently.

An audience and the ability to communicate with them is the most valuable asset any company will have and need to manage. We know that marketers have the disruptive power to create or acquire owned-media experiences and build highly valued and valuable audiences for themselves. TCA has the expertise and is committed to accelerating this shift and fundamentally transforming the practice of marketing for any company. We like to think of ourselves as conspirators of long-term business success.

The Content Advisory is led by CEO and Chief Strategy Officer Robert Rose and Chief Problem Solver and Lead Analyst Cathy McKnight. Together they drive client success via strategic advisories, education, research, coaching, as well as analyst and consulting services.

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