

The AI-Forward CPG Marketing Organization

By Julie Jefson, Shelby Senzer, Federica Furlan, and Noah Cominsky

ARTICLE FEBRUARY 12, 2026 12 MIN READ

Marketing consumer packaged goods (CPG) has gotten more complex and sophisticated. It's had to. An explosion of touchpoints have replaced TV as the go-to option for reaching people. Social media and cultural relevance have upended traditional marketing campaign planning and measurement. Heavily outsourced marketing functions have disintermediated brands from shoppers.

To address such a volatile business environment, CPG companies are reinventing their marketing organizations to be growth oriented and AI enabled. They're also streamlining interactions between global and local teams. A new BCG survey and benchmark of major industry players found that:

- CPG marketing leaders are assuming more responsibility for end-to-end growth. They are taking on a broader scope of activities into one function to create holistic value, integrating innovation, insights, category strategy, design, and in some cases, traditional sales activities like revenue growth management.
- CPG marketing leaders are keen to harness the power of AI but are encountering challenges to fully scaling the technology. Seven out of ten leaders say they expect GenAI to help them work faster and be more efficient in the future, yet only 13% report that it's in widespread use or fully integrated into marketing workflows. This highlights a major maturity gap.
- Because AI tools allow for both better centralization and more efficient localization, companies are changing how work is done. To reduce complexity, a majority of CPG companies are streamlining how their global and local marketing teams interact, reducing the need for a middle regional marketing teams layer. Global teams are increasingly becoming responsible for setting overall guardrails, methodologies, and AI capabilities, while local teams are executing closer to the consumer. Additionally, as AI adoption grows and ways of working shift, many CPG marketing functions are moving activities in house that external agencies or partners had performed in the past.

The findings illustrate how CPG marketing functions are reinventing themselves as AI-forward entities are rewired for speed and localization. For the changes to be successful, CPG marketing leaders must choose how best to update their function's structure or scope to maximize growth, integrate AI tools, and reimagine workflows that will have the most impact. Leaders must embrace new approaches to work, including upskilling people on AI capabilities, and make it easier for marketing to collaborate internally with other functions as well as with outside partners.



CPG marketing leaders must choose how best to update their function's structure to maximize growth, integrate AI tools, and reimagine workflows that will have the most impact.

A Growth-Focused Marketing Function

CPG companies face an increasingly complex and volatile marketing environment brought on by factors such as economic uncertainty, softening consumer demand, and an explosion of media touchpoints and purchasing pathways that have created an expectation of personalized, consistent engagement across online and offline channels. The rise of AI—and GenAI in particular—has reshaped CPG product innovation, measurement and insights, content development, and media.

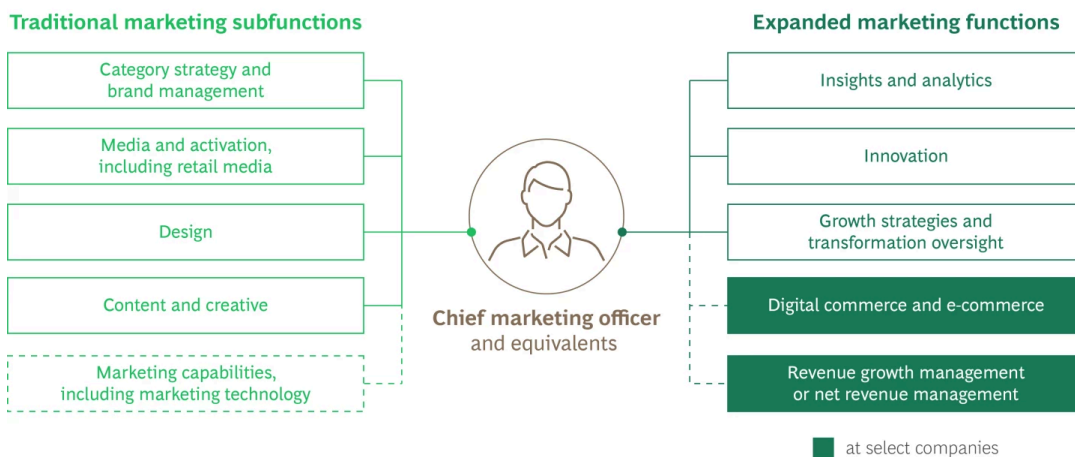
To understand how CPG marketing organizations are reacting to current trends, we surveyed 100 C-level marketing leaders, vice presidents, and directors at US and European companies in the sector that had \$1 billion in annual revenue or more. We also benchmarked CPG companies and interviewed CPG marketing leaders to analyze their organizational structures and operating models. The goal was to identify where companies see the greatest opportunities in their marketing organizations and anticipate the most significant changes, particularly in response to new technologies and evolving consumer expectations.

“ To unlock growth, CPG companies are seeking more integrated, end-to-end insights and more seamless ways of working across sales and marketing.

A key finding of our analysis is that CPG companies are asking marketing functions to take on more responsibility for growth. Historically, marketing focused on select drivers of growth, such as generating demand. Today, companies are expanding the scope of the traditional marketing function to include innovation and end-to-end consumer and commercial insights, overseeing elements of growth strategy and transformation, and, in some cases, leading e-commerce or revenue growth management. This shift reflects a broader trend seen in our benchmark: to unlock growth, CPG companies are seeking more integrated, end-to-end insights and more seamless ways of working across sales and marketing. (See Exhibit 1.)

EXHIBIT 1

The Scope of CPG Marketing Is Evolving to Focus on Growth



Sources: CPG Marketer Survey 2025 (n = 100); CPG marketing organization benchmark; BCG analysis.
 Note: CPG = consumer packaged goods.

Some companies have rebranded the role of chief marketing officer as chief growth officer, or CGO. It's an indication of just how much more important increasing growth has become to the role and of CGOs' elevated status in directing those efforts. Nearly 70% of company leaders in our benchmark said they had a CGO or equivalent role with responsibilities that extend beyond traditional marketing functions to include insights, innovation or R&D, digital commerce or e-commerce, net revenue management, and brand, media, and design.

In addition to expanding its role, CPG companies want marketing to collaborate more closely with other functions such as sales. As a result, they cite implementing business models that make it easier for teams to collaborate across functions as a top trend. Close to half of the leaders we surveyed (48%) said that standing up these agile, cross-functional organizational structures is the trend that affects them the most.

To create growth that makes an impact, it's not enough for CPG companies to expand marketing's scope. They need to channel resources into marketing subfunctions that best support the enterprise's overall strategy and goals. One CPG company's experience illustrates how the function is putting this philosophy into practice. Its redesigned function emphasized the role of innovation, stronger consumer insights, and standardized processes and tools. To that end, the company intentionally made the following moves, with specific reasons for each:

- It globalized the media subfunction by establishing consistent, refined standards, frameworks, and methodologies across markets. It also scaled global centers of excellence for specialized capabilities with locally embedded roles. And it took an end-to-end view across consumer touchpoints to drive full-funnel connections. This model increased transparency across the media supply chain and measurement, enabling continuous optimization and stronger ROI.
- The global insights team assumed responsibility for analysis—including market, category, business performance, consumer, shopper, and innovation—uniting previously siloed capabilities under a single, integrated function. By expanding its mandate, the team created a holistic, 360-degree view across key growth drivers.
- The innovation subfunction was redesigned to span both innovation and commercialization. The subfunction established clear decision rights to centralize transformation and to empower local markets to bring proximal or so-called near-in innovation closer to consumers. Unifying management of the innovation pipeline from concept through deployment strengthened rigor and strategic alignment and achieved a better balance between transformational and near-in innovation.

GenAI Can Be a Catalyst—or a Barrier

At the same time that CPG marketing leaders are taking on more responsibility for growth, they're also adopting GenAI to be more productive—but scaling adoption has been slow going. CPG marketers see GenAI as a necessary tool, and 70% expect it to help them work faster or more efficiently. However, just 13% say that GenAI use is either widespread within the function or fully integrated into workflows. (See Exhibit 2.)

The dissonance illustrates why marketers need to update their teams' skill sets. CPG marketers in our benchmark rank GenAI prompting as one of the most relevant new skills for the function. In addition, they expect that insights, content creation, and innovation powered by GenAI will be key capabilities that will become increasingly relevant over the next three years.

However, integrating GenAI is not as straightforward as adopting other tools or technologies. Marketing personnel must rethink workflows, embed GenAI into newly designed processes, and devote the time they previously spent on manual tasks to new, AI-enabled activities. Making the change will require broad upskilling, enablement, and capability building. Previous BCG research found that lack of skills training is the top barrier to AI adoption, and successfully upskilling people on the technology takes a minimum of five hours or more of training.

Although adopting GenAI requires effort, organizations that do it successfully see outsized benefits, as has been the case at a global CPG company. The business developed custom GenAI solutions to redesign marketing workflows, which improved productivity, impact, and employee satisfaction. As a result, marketing employees who adopted GenAI tools spent 25% to 40% less time on key workflows. AI-enabled marketing processes helped the company bring products to market twice as fast. Employees' experience with GenAI tools was overwhelmingly positive, with 90% reporting being satisfied with how the tools reduced manual and administrative work.

According to our survey, GenAI-based integrations and transformations have produced similar positive results at other CPG companies, including up to a 50% increase in ROI on marketing spending and up to a 20% savings in labor, marketing spending, and related costs. Businesses routinely invest that value into building new AI capabilities or to apply more resources to high-growth areas.

Reworking the Marketing Organization Structure

As part of rethinking how and where work is done, CPG marketing leaders are restructuring their organizations to be both more centralized, to scale AI capabilities and standardize workflows, and more localized, to stay agile and relevant near the consumer. Of CPG companies in our benchmark, nearly 60% said they're centralizing marketing functions to achieve cost efficiencies or drive scale. What's more, nearly 50% of the same group said their organizations are becoming more localized to suit specific market dynamics or nuances. (See Exhibit 3.)

In practice, it means that companies are taking advantage of the scale of global, above-market teams to centralize insights, analytics, and creative activities as well as better manage shared capabilities, standards, and guardrails. At the same time, they're enabling local marketers to execute more efficiently on those things in their regions or markets in a way that resonates with consumers. Such a hybrid approach pairs global consistency for efficiency and brand stewardship with local nuances to ensure that marketing is relevant across diverse consumer behaviors and preferences.

Some companies—particularly in Europe—are leaning more heavily on regional resources to address balance, scale, and fragmentation, grouping markets in areas where competitors, consumer preferences, or retailers are fairly consistent.

As organizational structures evolve and AI adoption scales, CPG marketing is moving some work in house that external agencies or partners performed in the past. Marketing leaders we surveyed expect to move in house the subfunctions that are most likely to be affected by GenAI and automation, including content and creative, insights and analytics, and retail media.

Nearly 60% of survey respondents said they are bringing GenAI-related creative content generation and retail media planning and optimization in house. They ranked GenAI-based insights and analytics as the most important internal capability they expect to build over the next three years. In practice, the trend is leading some CPG marketing leaders to create their own global in-house agencies, which can provide in-market teams with creative output that they can tailor to use locally.

How CPGs Can Unlock Marketing Value

CPG companies are reinventing the marketing function to reduce costs, improve productivity, increase ROI, and free up individuals to concentrate on work that adds the most value. To move forward on those objectives, CPG companies must undertake a full-scale rethink of the marketing function in some of the following ways:

Reset the operating model, including where work gets done. Identify changes to the marketing function structure or scope that maximize the potential for growth. That could mean undertaking an integrated marketing transformation or making adjustments to solve a specific issue. In either case, determine whether global, regional, or local teams will be responsible for specific growth-related activities. Make it easy for teams to work together, whether it's interactions between global and local marketing teams or between marketing and sales. Doing so encourages efficiency and consistency and helps establish an end-to-end view of the actions that will drive growth.

Reimagine workflows with AI. Rethink core processes to determine where adding GenAI, AI agents, and other AI apps can activate value. Determine which marketing use cases would propel the business to generate the most gains if GenAI data and tools were integrated.

Use upskilling and change to help the new organization thrive. Previous BCG research found that the best approach to effective AI upskilling includes prioritizing key processes, defining and embedding the new skills and tools, measuring outcomes, and preparing people for change. Successful approaches also incorporate incentives to encourage adopting new skills and AI tools and put the C-suite at the forefront of the initiative.

CPG marketing organizations are reinventing how they work, evolving their AI tools and skills, and rewiring collaborations between global and local teams. Companies that make the right moves put themselves in a better position to promote sustained, holistic growth now and in the future.

Authors



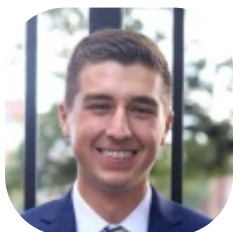
Julie Jefson

Managing Director & Partner
Chicago



Shelby Senzer

Managing Director & Partner
Atlanta



Noah Cominsky

Associate
Bridge Participant, GFL Intern,
Summer Associate – Harvard
University
Chicago



ABOUT BOSTON CONSULTING GROUP

Boston Consulting Group partners with leaders in business and society to tackle their most important challenges and capture their greatest opportunities. BCG was the pioneer in business strategy when it was founded in 1963. Today, we work closely with clients to embrace a transformational approach aimed at benefiting all stakeholders—empowering organizations to grow, build sustainable competitive advantage, and drive positive societal impact.

Our diverse, global teams bring deep industry and functional expertise and a range of perspectives that question the status quo and spark change. BCG delivers solutions through leading-edge management consulting, technology and design, and corporate and digital ventures. We work in a uniquely collaborative model across the firm and throughout all levels of the client organization, fueled by the goal of helping our clients thrive and enabling them to make the world a better place.

© Boston Consulting Group 2026. All rights reserved.

For information or permission to reprint, please contact BCG at permissions@bcg.com. To find the latest BCG content and register to receive e-alerts on this topic or others, please visit bcg.com. Follow Boston Consulting Group on [Facebook](#) and [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#).