

What does an AI-augmented marketing department look like?

Marketing department

Where a marketing and communications function is heading in the next two to three years, and what GRAIL believes it takes to get there first.

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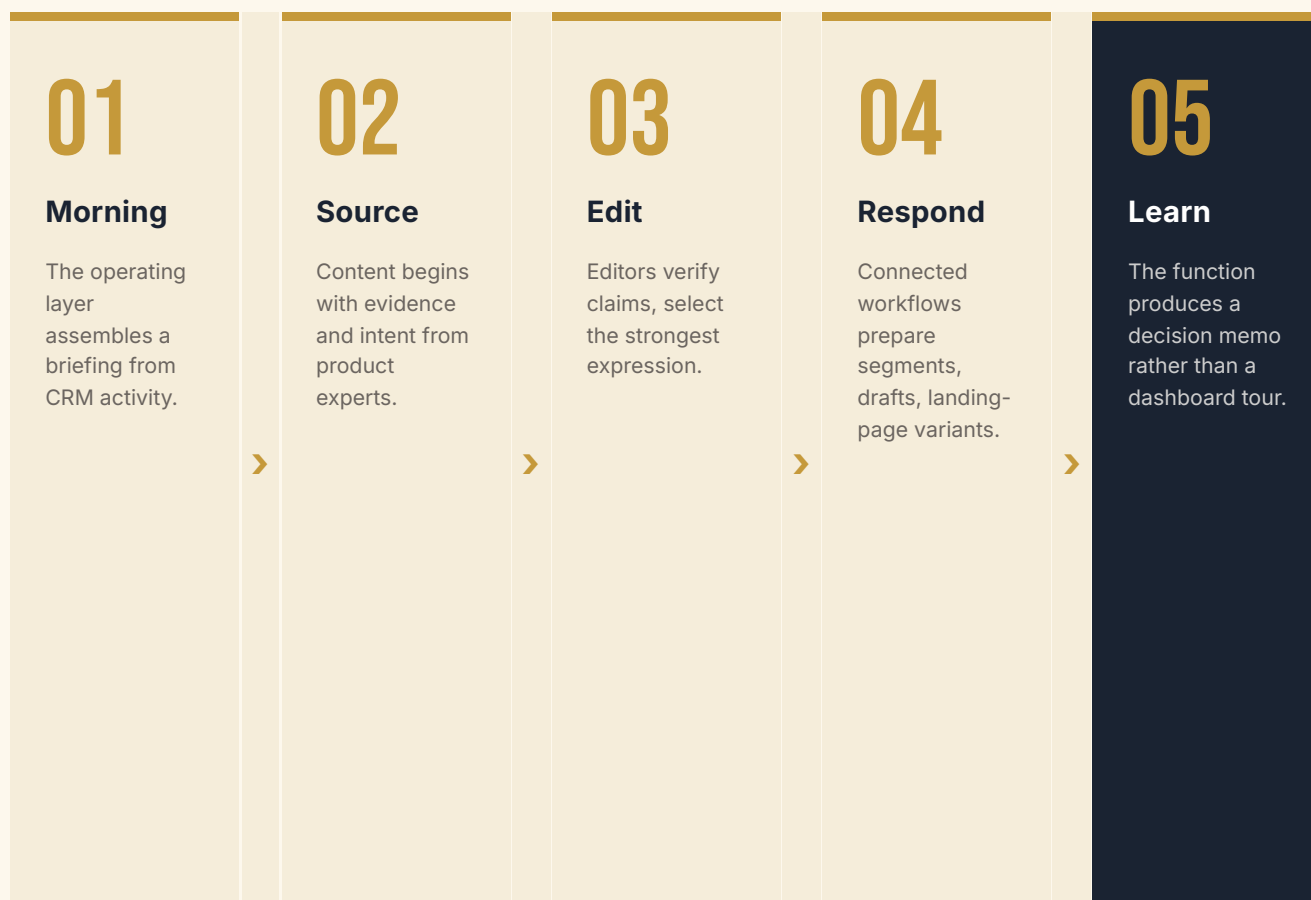
- 01 Where will your newly freed marketing hours go, if not customers?
- 02 What evidence does your next campaign have before anyone writes it?
- 03 Who owns your customer data when the agency changes?

WHAT DOES AN AI-AUGMENTED MARKETING DEPARTMENT LOOK LIKE?

Where a marketing and communications function is heading in the next two to three years, and what GRAIL believes it takes to get there first.

Marketing has been organised around the production and movement of assets. That constraint is disappearing. **The change that matters is that the function becomes a continuous sensing and response system, with people setting the point of view and agents preparing the work around it.** Judgment stays with the person. Attention moves toward customers, evidence and decisions.

THE MARKETER'S 2028 DAY



People choose what matters. The operating layer prepares the response.

GRAIL's view, from building AI-augmented work inside organisations. A position, not a survey.

Production absorbs the *function*.

A typical Nordic mid-market marketing and communications function has 4 to 15 employees. Multibrand or international companies may have 15 to 25. The team usually includes a CMO or marketing director, a brand or communications lead, one or two content specialists, a demand-generation or digital marketer, a marketing operations specialist, and sometimes events or internal communications. Creative, media, PR, web development and production often sit in two to four agencies.

The function sits between company strategy, customers, sales and the public market. It drives demand, conversion, retention and pricing power. Stronger functions connect marketing activity to sales progression, customer behaviour, pricing and retention. Weaker ones remain centred on impressions, posts and email opens.

Eight processes

01	Positioning, messaging and brand governance	05	Website management, SEO and answer visibility
02	External content production	06	Events and field marketing
03	Campaign planning, execution and agency management	07	Internal communications
04	Lead generation and nurturing with sales	08	Analytics, attribution and budget allocation

Information is scattered across the CRM, marketing automation, the CMS, GA4, Search Console, advertising platforms, document stores, agency folders and spreadsheets. Brand judgment, customer nuance and the reasons behind past decisions remain disproportionately in people's heads or agency relationships.

Production has been the organising constraint. Drafting, translation, resizing, versioning, tagging, research synthesis and first-pass reporting consume attention that could go to the market.

Dubé and Xu's three randomised Wine Access experiments found that model-written and human-edited copy took at most ten minutes to prepare and check, compared with about three hours for a writer. Human fact-checking stayed in the process. Pew's March 2025 browsing study found conventional-result clicks on 8 percent of Google visits containing an AI summary, versus 15 percent without one. Different changes, the same demand: the function must rethink both production and discovery.

Marketing becomes a *response system*.

The operating model shifts along two linked dimensions.

Production stops organising the work. People set the point of view, supply evidence, choose ideas and edit. Governed agents draft, translate, resize, tag and adapt the working material. The released capacity goes into named-account research, local-language variants, continuous experimentation, reuse of expert knowledge and faster support for sales. Publishing more generic content is not the prize.

Periodic campaigns give way to continuous sensing and response. Customer behaviour, sales conversations, website activity, search visibility, service issues, market news and campaign results are reviewed together. Work starts when signals change, not only when the annual calendar says it should.

Discovery changes with the operating model. Owned content serves buyers and the systems that summarise information for them. Useful original content, sound SEO, crawlability and accurate structured data remain the foundation. Direct relationships through opted-in email, events, communities, customer programmes and proprietary research matter more when platforms can provide visibility without traffic.

An AI-augmented marketing department does not wait for the next campaign cycle. The function sees a change, assembles the evidence, prepares a response and puts the consequential choice in front of a person.

WHERE IT IS WEAKEST category position, distinctive codes, major brand work, executive statements, crisis communication, regulated claims and novel creative concepts. These depend on accountable human judgment, and should.

A day, a week, a *month*.

A function that invests heavily still has recognisable marketers, communicators, agencies and systems in 2028. Its cadence and attention are different.

The day

MORNING

The operating layer assembles a briefing from CRM activity, website behaviour, campaign performance, sales-call summaries, customer-service themes, media signals and approved market sources.

Exceptions come first: new interest from a valuable account, a campaign moving outside its expected range, an outdated product claim, a competitor entering an important answer, or an internal announcement waiting for approval.

SOURCE AND EDIT

Content begins with evidence and intent from product experts, executives, salespeople or customer teams. A workflow develops draft narratives and channel variants under encoded brand rules. Editors verify claims, select the strongest expression and decide what should be published. Routine translations and low-risk adaptations move after sampled quality checks.

RESPOND

Connected workflows prepare segments, drafts, landing-page variants, tracking plans and performance summaries. A marketer approves audiences, claims, publication and material budget changes. Tagging, task creation, draft metadata and pausing an asset that breaches a preset rule can run within defined limits.

THE WEEK Marketing and sales review named accounts, buying signals, content needs and nurture recommendations together. The discovery review covers conventional search, available visibility inside generated answers, conversational referrals and manual tests of important buyer questions. The campaign review treats work as an experiment portfolio, with agreed hypotheses, audiences, claims, stop conditions and spend limits.

THE MONTH The function produces a decision memo rather than a dashboard tour. It explains what changed, what caused it with stated confidence, which experiments support the conclusion, what sales is seeing and how the budget should move. Platform attribution remains an operational signal. Incrementality tests and marketing-mix models inform allocation.

Continuous attention to market signals, governed adaptation across channels, and evidence behind every material choice.

What runs, and what stays with the *person*.

PROCESS	WHAT THE AGENT DOES	WHAT STAYS WITH THE PERSON
Positioning, messaging and brand governance	Compares approved strategy, customer evidence, competitor claims and past decisions; checks drafts against explicit verbal, visual and factual rules	Category position, distinctive codes, acceptable risks and approval of exceptions
External content production	Turns approved source material into a modular content set; prepares channel variants, formatting, tagging, transcription and routine localisation	Source selection, fact-checking, editorial judgment and final publication
Campaign planning, execution and agency management	Develops the brief, work breakdown, variants, QA checklist and measurement plan; brings agency outputs into the same flow	The idea, audience promise, budget and final release
Lead generation and nurturing with sales	Assembles buying-group context and recommends the next useful content or action from behaviour, deal stage and consent	High-value outreach, relevance judgment and sales feedback
Website, SEO and answer visibility	Monitors buyer questions, citations, search, referrals, content gaps and technical health; proposes inventories, links and stale-content updates	Original research, clear expert answers and editorial priorities
Events and field marketing	Prepares audience briefs, speaker packs, invitations, follow-up drafts and post-event content	Relationships, live facilitation, sensitive invitations and sales handoff
Internal communications	Converts approved decisions into audience-specific drafts, FAQs, manager talking points and translations	Meaning, political sensitivity and leadership accountability for the message
Analytics, attribution and allocation	Validates data, explains movement, identifies anomalies, proposes hypotheses and prepares scenarios	Experiment design, challenge to causal claims and material budget reallocation

Give the right-hand column particular attention. It holds the point of view, the evidence standard, the relationship and the accountable decision. The left-hand column exists to give those judgments more of the week.

Four stages, mapped to *The Access Ladder.*

The sequence follows business value and action risk, mapped in order to The Access Ladder.

- 01 Documents only**
Build approved context from brand standards, product facts, customer evidence, strategy, claims and disclosure guidance, and strong examples. Marketers approve agent drafts.
- 02 Read access**
Connect CRM and marketing automation for customer history, consent, campaign exposure, deal outcomes and sales notes. Add CMS, GA4, Search Console and performance data for read-only briefs and recommendations.
- 03 Read and act with approval**
Allow CMS staging writes, CRM tasks, draft campaigns, metadata and reversible tagging, subject to marketer approval. Publication, audience changes, sends, deletion, pricing claims and material spend retain named approval.
- 04 Bounded autonomous action**
Allow low-impact tagging, task creation, draft metadata and rule-based pausing within limits. Each workflow needs minimum permissions, an evaluation set, owner and revocation path. People retain sensitive communication, final publication and consequential allocation.

The connector landscape in September 2026

SharePoint and OneDrive	Microsoft Graph offers mature read-write access. SharePoint MCP remains preview, so production should use Graph or another governed connector.
HubSpot	Governed CRM reads and writes inherit user permissions. Marketing email writes create drafts. Conventional APIs remain more deterministic for campaigns, workflows and email operations.
Salesforce	Hosted MCP servers are generally available for Enterprise Edition and above. Data, queries and approved actions inherit object, field and sharing permissions. Marketing Cloud Engagement also has one.
Microsoft Dataverse and Business Central	Dataverse supports queries and row operations. Business Central is read-only by default, with administrator-controlled actions. Order, customer, product and margin context can reach marketing without making ERP a campaign tool.
Upsales, Lime CRM and SuperOffice	Upsales offers a first-party read-only connector. Lime CRM and SuperOffice offer APIs and webhooks, but no documented first-party MCP server as of September 2, 2026.
Contentful and WordPress	Contentful access can be restricted by space, environment and tool. WordPress.com disables writes by default. Self-hosted WordPress may need a managed plugin or custom layer.
Google Analytics and Search Console	Production APIs provide performance reads, with Analytics read-only. Search Console returns top rows, not a guaranteed complete dataset, and does not document cross-platform citation measurement.

A warehouse is necessary for one customer identity across CRM, web, ERP, service and media, and for historical snapshots, margin-aware attribution and consistent experiment data. Workflows receive governed features and aggregates.

Six things we believe about the responsive *marketer*.

Six beliefs follow from the structural shift already underway. They are about how marketing and communications should work when production is no longer the organising constraint.

01 **Production is the floor. Response quality is the ceiling.**

Faster drafting and adaptation matter, but they do not make the market care. The return sits in noticing the right change, choosing a useful point of view and responding with evidence before the moment passes.

02 **Released capacity must move toward the customer.**

Generic volume only increases noise and review work. Put the capacity into named-account research, local language, expert knowledge, owned audiences, experiments and direct support for sales.

03 **Content starts with evidence, not a prompt.**

Product experts, executives, salespeople and customer teams supply the source material. Agents can develop narratives and variants, but editors choose the claim, verify it and decide whether it deserves publication.

04 **The campaign calendar becomes an experiment portfolio.**

The team sets hypotheses, audiences, claims, stop conditions and spend limits. The operating layer prepares the variants and reads the signals, while marketers decide what the evidence means and where the next test belongs.

05 **Visibility without traffic changes the asset.**

Content now speaks to buyers and to the systems that summarise for them. Original knowledge, clear expert answers and a direct opted-in audience become more valuable than chasing a technical trick on any single discovery surface.

06 **The CMO owns the operating architecture.**

Customer context, brand rules, consent, connector permissions and run quality cannot be left between vendors or agencies. Marketing leadership must own how evidence enters, how work moves and which decisions keep a named person.

Publishing more is not the proposition behind these six beliefs. They describe a function that senses continuously, responds deliberately and keeps judgment accountable.

Roles, rhythm, and where it *fails*.

The content writer becomes an editor, interviewer and source validator. The campaign manager becomes a workflow owner. The digital marketer becomes an experiment designer. The brand lead turns tacit judgment into rules, examples and exception decisions. Marketing operations owns data definitions, consent propagation, connector permissions and run quality. The CMO owns customer context and operating architecture, not only the budget and calendar.

The practical skills are plain: frame a useful brief, evaluate evidence, edit generated work, understand data permissions and design tests that can disprove a favoured idea. Technique with prompts has limited value without those disciplines. Agencies remain important, but their work moves toward original ideas, research, specialist craft and independent challenge.

The rhythm

FIRST BOUNDED LOOP

One document-based drafting and review workflow

THEN CONNECTED CADENCE

Campaign work linked to approved context, CRM and performance data

AS THE MODEL SETTLES

Permissions, evaluation samples, revised roles and employee consultation

AT OPERATING MATURITY

Continuous sensing, exception handling and accountable action across the function

The sequence reflects controlled sources, connection work, permission design, evaluation and role change. Capability arrives through a new operating rhythm, not through access to a model alone.

WHERE IT FAILS Generic content volume. No controlled source of truth. Brand rules that remain vague. Agency ownership of core prompts and data. Isolated tools with no workflow owner. Weak evaluation samples. Personalisation without valid permissions. Review work left on top of the old process. Production targets that rise whenever capacity is released.

Involve the people whose work changes while the workflow is still being designed. Their source knowledge, editorial judgment and understanding of exceptions are what turn a drafting tool into a way of working.

HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT THIS?

Twelve questions for the marketing *leader*.

- 1 Your team could turn one approved expert interview into edited channel content, giving specialists more time with customers. Which recurring source conversation should feed that system first?
- 2 Your brand rules could check every draft before a person sees it. Which five rules currently live only in your senior people's heads?
- 3 Your website could answer complex buyer questions from approved product information and hand qualified visitors to sales. Which questions make good prospects leave your site today?
- 4 Your team could test the questions buyers ask ChatGPT and Google's generated answers each week, while your strongest research serves both buyers and answer systems. Which category questions should you monitor, and what does your company know that cannot be copied from the public web?
- 5 Your opted-in email audience could reduce dependence on changing search and social platforms. What direct audience could you build that no platform controls?
- 6 Your sales team could receive an account brief and tailored supporting material before every important meeting. Which 20 accounts justify that level of preparation?
- 7 Your nurture programme could choose content from actual account behaviour while respecting consent and contact limits. Where are good prospects receiving the same message as everyone else?
- 8 Your campaign workflow could prepare briefs, variants, tracking and draft system entries before the weekly review. Which approval currently causes the longest delay?
- 9 Your event follow-up could reflect what each attendee discussed rather than sending one generic message. What valuable context disappears after your events?
- 10 Your internal announcements could produce manager notes, employee FAQs and local-language versions from one approved decision. Which announcement repeatedly creates avoidable questions?
- 11 Your monthly report could explain what changed and recommend decisions instead of reciting channel metrics. Which marketing number does your management team no longer trust?
- 12 Your agency work could shift from routine adaptation toward ideas, research and specialist craft while connected systems prepare campaign and website drafts. Which work should your team supervise directly, and which publication, audience and spending actions must always carry your signature?

These are the questions the programme is built to answer with the people who run the function, using their own customers, content and decisions rather than an abstract model.