



How African Marketers Are Using AI

Executive Summary

AI is starting to catch on with marketing teams across Africa. You can tell there's a clear move toward making it part of everyday work — but at the same time, there's still a big gap when it comes to knowledge and training. We surveyed marketers from countries like Nigeria, Zambia, and a few others, and it turns out almost everyone has tried out tools like ChatGPT, Gemini, or Jasper. They mostly use these tools for tasks like content creation, research, and design work.

A lot of them actually feel pretty good about using AI — most said it's had a very positive or at least somewhat positive impact on their job. Some even said it saves them over 10 hours every week, which is huge.

But here's the thing: while people are using AI more and more, a lot of the deeper tasks still get done manually — like strategy work, reporting, and analysis. And when it comes to skills like technical SEO, media buying, or even writing good prompts for AI, many people admitted they're still struggling. The common reasons? Not enough time, unclear learning paths, and not having the right resources.

Training is also a major gap. Most marketers said their companies haven't offered any AI-related training in the past year. When we asked what kind of support they'd actually find useful, people mentioned things like short courses, one-on-one mentorship, in-house workshops, or even self-paced guides they could do on their own time.

So, the interest is definitely there, but the support systems haven't caught up yet. There's a big opportunity here for marketing leaders and training platforms to step in and help close the gap with programs that are structured, relevant, and easy to access.

Overall, African marketers are excited about AI, but the reality is that most teams are still figuring things out. This report dives into how marketers are using AI, where they're still struggling, what's slowing things down, and what leaders — especially CMOs and training providers — can do to help their teams really make the most of it.



Methodology & Limitations

Our methodology combined qualitative and quantitative insights through a mixed-method online survey. The sample was collected using convenience sampling via LinkedIn posts, Slack communities, and marketing forums. As a result, while we heard from marketers across multiple countries, Nigeria was heavily represented in the final sample, accounting for 90 out of the 100 total respondents.

This introduces some geographic bias in the data, meaning the insights may not fully represent marketers in North Africa, Francophone Africa, or smaller regional economies. Still, Nigeria's outsized role in Africa's tech and marketing ecosystems makes it a valuable proxy for emerging patterns.

Despite this caveat, the data surfaces critical trends and opportunities that can inform decision-making for organizations and training institutions alike.



Background & Methodology

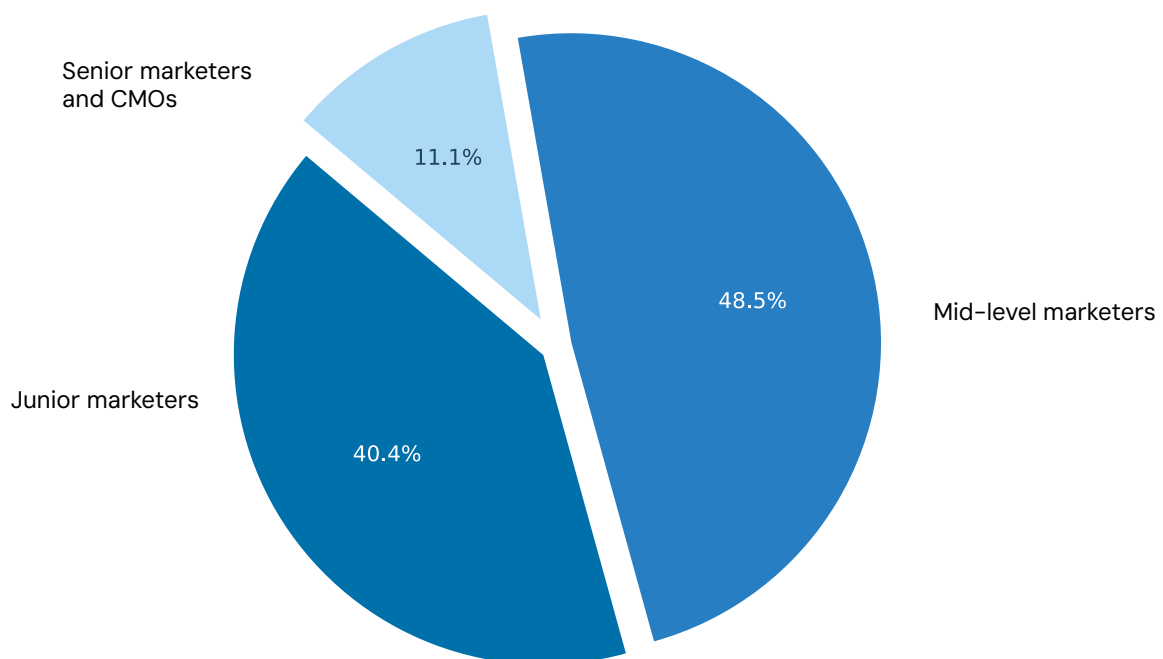
Over the past 18 months, there has been a surge in AI adoption within the marketing space — from writing and design to research and media buying. But how is this actually playing out on the ground in Africa? We set out to answer that question by surveying marketers at different levels of seniority across the continent.

The survey was conducted in June 2025 with 100 marketers from Nigeria, Zambia, Ghana, and other African countries. Most respondents work in small teams or are freelancers, where time-saving and performance-enhancing tools like AI can directly impact business success.

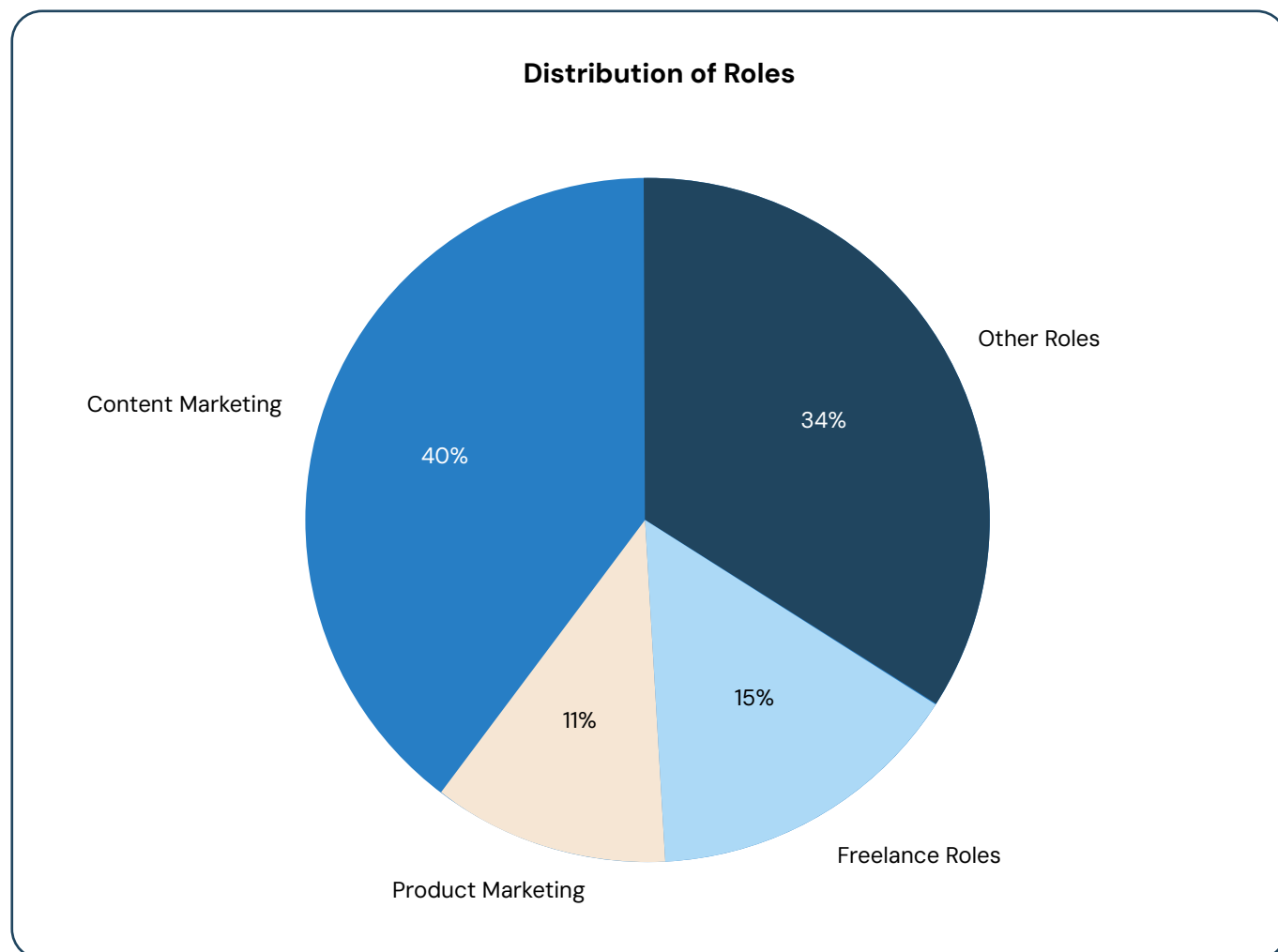
We asked respondents about their usage patterns, time savings, skills, and barriers. This report sheds light on the advantages AI offers, while also highlighting the gaps in knowledge, tooling, and training that hinder further adoption.

The 100 marketers surveyed for this report represent a broad cross-section of early-career to senior professionals, with a dominant skew toward junior and mid-level practitioners. 48% were mid-level marketers, followed by 40% junior marketers, including interns and associates. Senior marketers and CMOs made up 11% of the respondents. This makes the insights particularly valuable for organizations looking to support frontline marketing staff who are driving day-to-day AI usage.

Seniority levels of marketers surveyed (June 2025)



In terms of roles, content was a clear focus: 40% of the respondents work in content marketing, 11% in product marketing, and 15% in freelance roles. Other roles included social media managers, marketing managers, SEO specialists, and community managers.



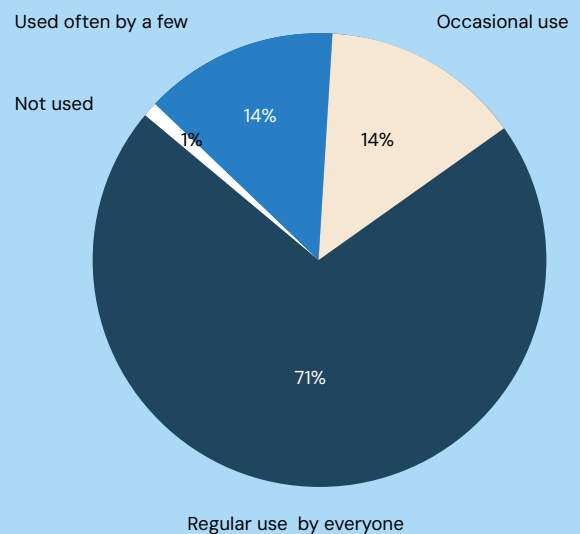
Geographically, Nigeria represented the largest portion of responses, followed by Zambia, Ghana, and other African markets.

This regional bias is an important context. While the findings offer valuable insights for African marketers more broadly, they are most representative of Nigeria's fast-growing marketing and tech scene.

Taken together, the data paints a picture of an energetic, early-career marketing workforce experimenting actively with AI to meet deadlines, scale content, and drive performance — often without formal guidance or training — and concentrated primarily in one of Africa's biggest tech hubs.

AI Adoption Landscape: Current State

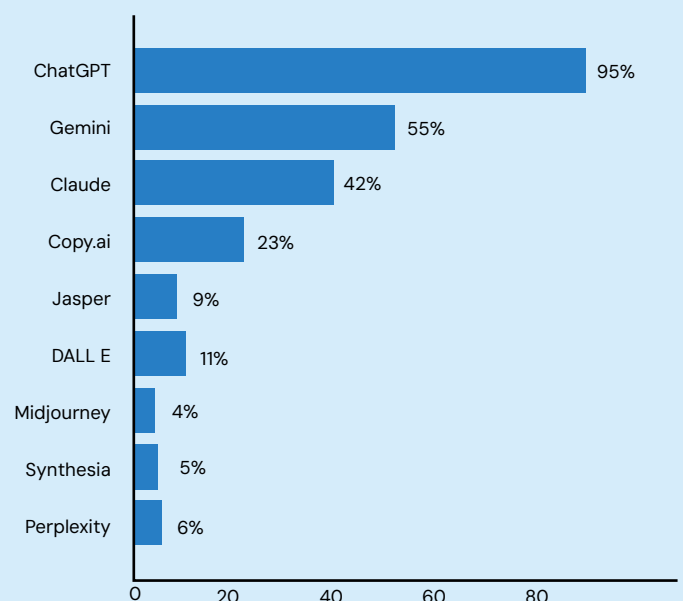
AI is now a significant tool in the workflows of African marketers. Among the 100 survey respondents, 71% said AI tools are already used regularly by everyone on their teams. Another 14% said usage was occasional, while a different 14% said only a few people used AI often. Only one respondent said AI wasn't being used at all.



AI usage among African marketers

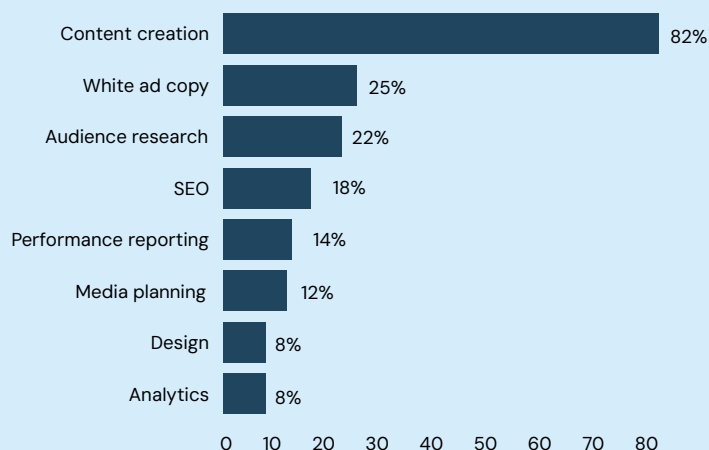
The dominance of regular, team-wide usage suggests that AI isn't a fringe tool for a few early adopters — it's foundational to how most marketing teams are now operating.

The most commonly used tools are large language models like ChatGPT, which 95% of respondents are using. Gemini came in next at 55%, and Claude at 42%. Beyond those, people also mentioned using writing tools like Copy.ai (23%) and Jasper (9%), image generation tools like DALL·E (11%) and Midjourney (4%), and even some video/avatar tools like Synthesia (5%) and research assistants like Perplexity (6%).



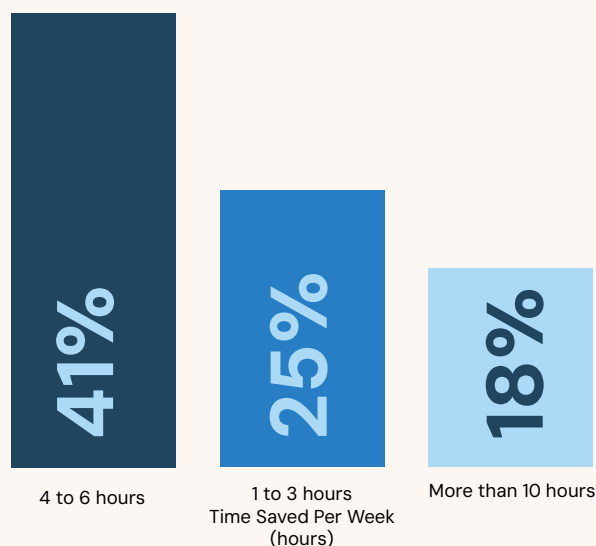
Most Used AI Tools Among Respondents

When it comes to what they're actually doing with AI, content creation was by far the biggest use case — 82% said that's where they use it the most. About 25% use it to write ad copy, 22% for audience research, 18% for SEO, and 14% for things like performance reporting. Other tasks include media planning (12%), design (8%), and analytics (8%).



AI Use Cases in Content Creation

We also asked how much time AI is saving them each week. 41% said they're saving 4 to 6 hours, 25% save 1 to 3 hours, and 18% said AI gives them back more than 10 hours a week. That's a pretty big deal — it's like gaining half a workday, or even more, every week to focus on other things.



Time Saved Per Week Using AI

The picture isn't just about big marketing teams either. Some survey respondents were freelancers (15%) or part of small agencies, and for them, AI is clearly filling in the gaps — whether it's a shortage of time or not enough hands on deck.

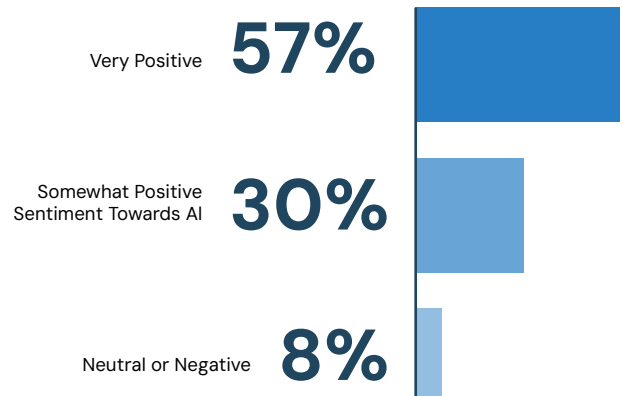
In real terms, that means the typical African marketer is using AI as more than just a sidekick but as a critical workflow partner. It's helping them write first drafts, dig up research, repurpose social posts, or even design visual content.

That said, using AI regularly doesn't always mean using it well. As we'll see in the next section, even with all this activity, there are still major skill gaps and a lot of uncertainty around how to move beyond the basics.

Perceptions, Promises & Pitfalls

African marketers are overwhelmingly optimistic about AI's potential, but their expectations aren't always matched by reality.

When we asked how they feel about AI's impact so far, 57% said it's been very positive, and another 30% called it somewhat positive. Only 8% felt neutral or had a negative view. The top benefits people mentioned: Faster work, easier brainstorming, smoother content creation, and feeling less burnt out overall.



African Marketers' Sentiment on AI's Impact

One person put it plainly: when asked what they still did manually, they said "Nothing really." Another highlighted optimized workflow, "AI gives me a good structure. I then put my voice in the work before sending it out." So for some, AI is clearly clicking.

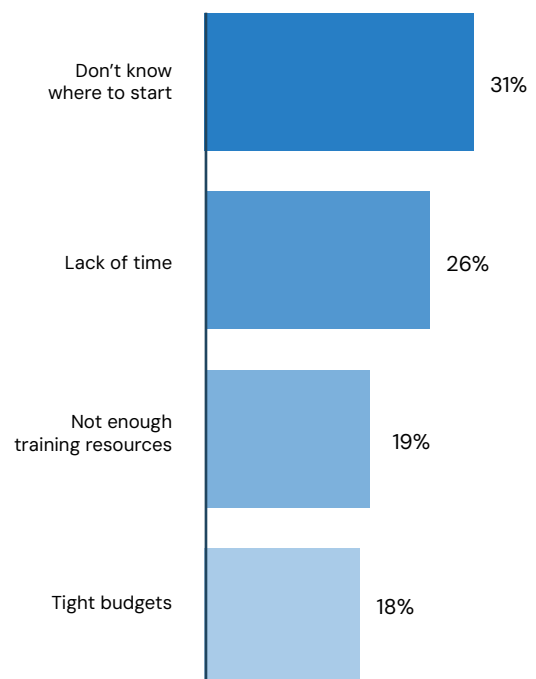
But not everyone's story was that smooth. A lot of marketers told us they're still stuck doing many things manually, especially the basics.

"A lot. Performance reporting especially "

"99% of my work is content writing. So nothing I do is completely automated. AI-assisted? Yes. But it's all manual."

"Every. Thing "

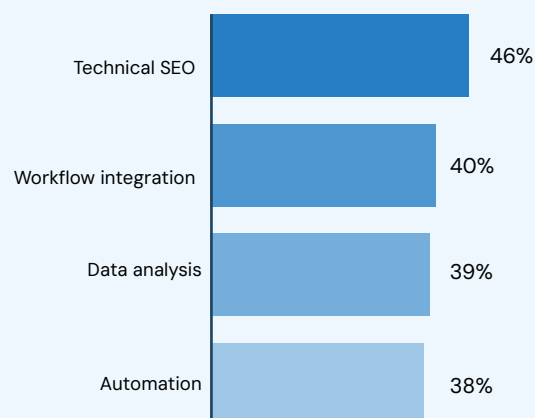
So what's holding people back? Several things, actually: 31% said they simply don't know where to start, 26% blamed lack of time, 19% said there just aren't enough training resources, and 18% pointed to tight budgets.



Why Marketers Aren't Fully Adopting AI

Even among those who are using AI regularly, there's a sense of hitting a wall. They're great at writing blog outlines or captions — but struggle to take things further into automation, data analysis, or more technical tasks.

- 46% feel least confident in technical SEO.
- 40% in workflow integration.
- 39% in data analysis.
- 38% in automation.



Areas Marketers Feel Least Confident in Using AI

So yes, marketers are eager. They're curious. They are trying, but they're navigating blind. Without clear guidelines, training, or benchmarks, AI use remains inconsistent. It works, but only up to a point.

What's really needed now is a bit of structure:

- Simple playbooks that show how to bring AI into daily tasks
- Clear examples of how each role can use it
- Easy-to-follow training that focuses on doing, not just theory

If you're leading a team, here's the key takeaway: your people want to use AI more. But they need support. The biggest risk isn't that they'll avoid AI — it's that they'll jump in without direction, and end up with results that's off-brand, inaccurate, or ineffective.

So how do you fix that? Start by seeing where AI is already being used. Then build on that foundation, with better tools, sharper prompts, and a bit of coaching.



Maturity Model: Where Teams Sit on the AI Curve

AI maturity among African marketers is uneven. While most teams have adopted the tools, few have developed the depth of skill or structured processes to fully capitalize on them. To help marketing leaders get a sense of where they stand, we've laid out a simple three-stage model: Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced. It's less about how many tools you're using, and more about how deeply AI is built into your everyday work.

1. Beginners:

These teams are curious, but things are still pretty loose. Most people have heard of tools like ChatGPT or Gemini, and maybe a few are testing them on their own. But there's no clear direction from leadership, no shared workflow, and no real structure around how to use AI.

What this looks like:

- No formal training or support from the company
- People aren't sure where to even begin
- AI is used mostly for brainstorming or plugging in basic prompts
- The results often need a lot of manual rework
- Confidence is low, and usage depends on personal interest

Main barrier: Awareness and skill gaps

Opportunity: Start with simple, guided sessions — like how to use AI for quick content ideas or summaries.

2. Intermediate

These teams are experimenting more actively. They're using AI across a few common areas like content creation, research, or design. People know which tools they like, and they're trying different prompts to get better results. But adoption still isn't even across the board, and the results vary a lot.

What this looks like:

- You'll see clearer use cases (e.g., blog drafts, ad copy, SEO work)
- Time-saving benefits are showing up, but not being tracked
- Skills range widely from person to person
- There's no real documentation or shared approach

Main barrier: No team-wide standards yet

Opportunity: Build shared templates, run live demos, and define approved use cases for roles like writers, designers, and strategists.

3. Advanced

These teams don't just use AI — they build it into how they work. They've defined where AI fits into their marketing process, from briefing and ideation to execution and review. They know when to rely on AI and when not to. They've built internal SOPs, upskilled their team, and optimized for speed without sacrificing quality.

Common signs:

- AI is used across multiple marketing functions
- Playbooks and workflows include AI by default
- Content quality is consistent, tone is on-brand
- Training is ongoing (not one-time)
- Leaders are tracking ROI or time savings explicitly

Main barrier: Keeping up with rapid changes in tools and best practices

Opportunity: Invest in advanced training, prompt libraries, and regular reviews of AI effectiveness across functions.

Here's a quick self-assessment to help readers place themselves:

Category	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
Team usage	Few individuals	Most of the team	All team members, coordinated
Tool diversity	1–2 tools	3–5 tools	Wide toolset, integrated workflows
Use case complexity	Ideation, captions	Content creation, SEO, ad copy	Automation, analytics, reporting
Training access	None	Informal peer-led	Structured, ongoing
Strategic alignment	Not defined	Emerging alignment	Linked to KPIs, supported by leadership

Most respondents in this study fall into the beginner or lower-Intermediate category. This aligns with reported barriers around time, training, and skill confidence. Only a few are building formalized AI processes or moving toward advanced workflows.

Understanding where your team currently sits on this curve is a crucial first step. From here, CMOs and team leads can design better training, choose tools more wisely, and make process tweaks that help the whole team work smarter — not harder — with AI.

Strategic Opportunities for CMOs

AI is already helping African marketers work faster and create better content. But the real opportunity isn't just about saving time. It's about helping teams go from scattered, one-off experiments to more structured, strategic use. CMOs play a big role in guiding this shift.

Match Your Investments to Where Your Team Is

Not every team needs fancy tools right out of the gate. If your team's just starting out, focus on easy-to-use tools like ChatGPT or Claude, along with simple guides for tasks like writing social posts or drafting blogs.

If your team's somewhere in the middle, start tightening up your workflows. Think toolkits for ad copy, keyword research, or even email automation. For more advanced teams, it's time to explore deeper stuff — like fully integrating AI into daily workflows, automating reports, and evaluating vendors for the long run.

Tackle the Most Urgent Skill Gaps

From the survey, here's where marketers said they feel least confident:

- Technical SEO (46%)
- Workflow integration (40%)
- Data analysis (39%)
- Automation (38%)
- Media buying and campaign reporting (29% and 20%)

But even basic skills — like writing effective prompts or knowing how to choose the right AI tool — are still hit or miss. There's a real need to build team knowledge around prompt writing, AI ethics, and understanding how these tools work under the hood.

Train for performance, not just awareness

Only 26% of marketers in this survey had received any kind of formal AI training. If you want your team to actually improve, the training has to be hands-on. That means short courses, how-to guides, real-life exercises, and some mentorship. Watching a video or attending a one-off webinar isn't going to cut it.

Focus on Change Management — Not Just the Tech

Beyond tools, AI adoption requires a cultural shift. Some people worry about job security. Others just don't feel confident yet. As a leader, you need to make upskilling normal, encourage experimentation, and be clear that AI is here to support people, not replace them.

Here are a few ways to manage that shift:

- Designating an internal AI lead or champion
- Hosting quarterly tool reviews and workflow audits
- Documenting preferred tools and use cases
- Run fun team challenges — like who can build the best AI prompt or improve a content piece using AI

Plan Your Rollout and Set Clear Boundaries

Rolling out AI across your team doesn't have to be all at once. You can break it down like this:

- Month 1: Take stock of how your team is already using AI and figure out where to scale
- Months 2–4: Train on core tools and write SOPs
- Months 5–6: Expand use to new channels (e.g. email, research)
- Month 7+: Review outcomes, test independent AI use, and monitor progress

Also, don't forget governance. CMOs should set clear guidelines around how AI is used — especially when it comes to sensitive data, client work, or automated reporting. It's a good time to start building an internal AI code of conduct.

Bottom line? If you treat AI like a quick fix, you'll only get small wins. But if you treat it like a team capability — something to be developed and nurtured — you'll build a smarter, faster, more confident marketing team that's ready for whatever's next.

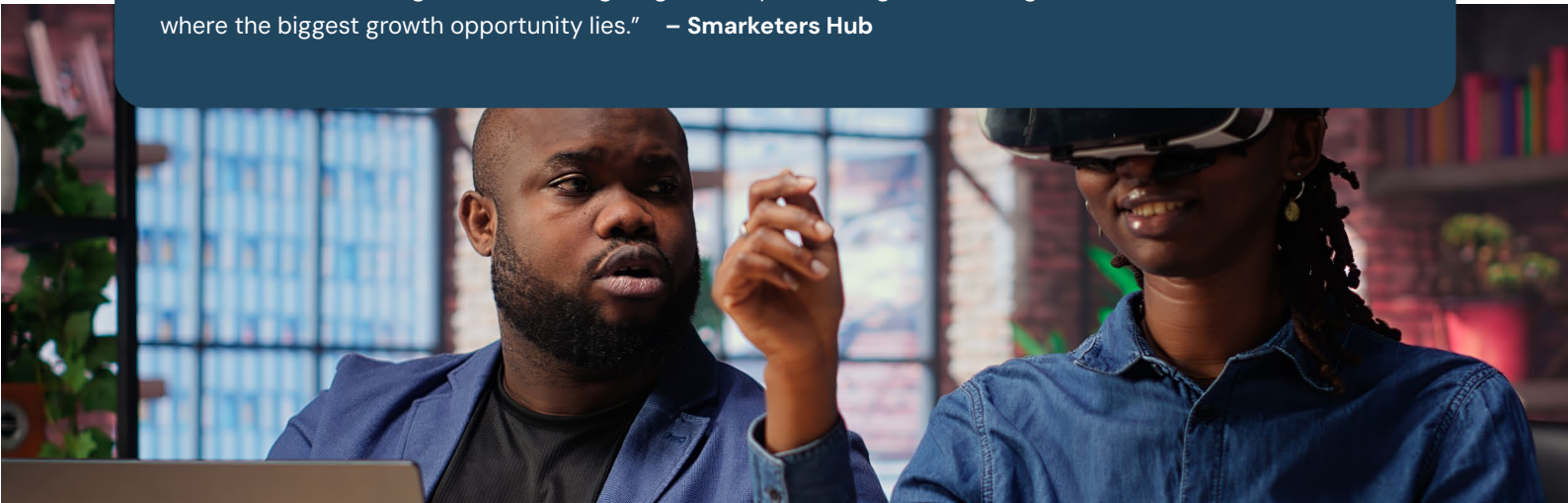


Strategic Opportunities for Trainers

If CMOs are the ones buying into AI, then trainers are the ones who actually make it work. And right now, there's a big gap between how much marketers want to learn about AI and what's currently available to them.

Only 26% of the marketers we surveyed had received any formal AI training — yet 71% said their teams are already using AI tools regularly. That's a pretty clear signal: the demand is there, but the support isn't. It's a big opportunity for AI trainers, educators, and learning platforms to step in and make a real difference.

"One of the most consistent patterns we see in our community is that marketers want to learn. They're actively seeking ways to experiment with AI, even if it means figuring things out on their own. But here's the catch: most aren't just looking for generic tutorials. They want training that speaks directly to African markets, real examples in their industries, and guidance on navigating the unique challenges of working with limited local datasets. That's where the biggest growth opportunity lies." — **Smarketers Hub**

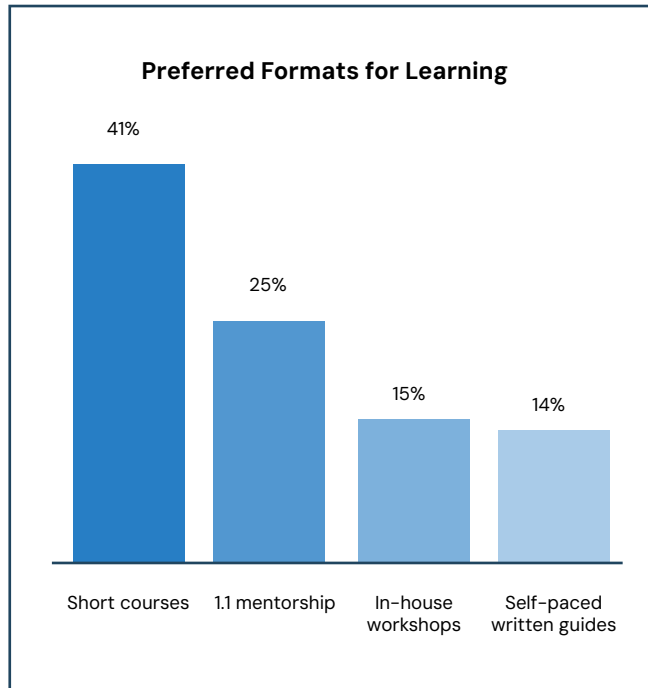


Who Needs the Training?

The audience is pretty straightforward: mostly junior and mid-level marketers. Together, they made up 88% of our sample. These folks are already using tools like ChatGPT, Gemini, and Copy.ai — they're not new to the tech. What they are missing is structure, strategy, and those next-level technical skills. They want to move beyond just writing posts to running full campaigns with AI in the mix.

How Do They Want to Learn?

This suggests that microlearning, personal feedback, and flexibility are more appealing than rigid, long-form curriculums. Training providers should focus on:



This suggests that microlearning, personal feedback, and flexibility are more appealing than rigid, long-form curriculums. Training providers should focus on:

- Real, applied exercises (like “prompting challenges”)
- Role-specific lessons (e.g. how an SEO specialist can use AI day-to-day)
- Guided walkthroughs (for example, “from brief to publish using ChatGPT”)

Even with all this interest. The barriers still exist:

- 31% don’t know where to start.
- 26% say time is the biggest obstacle.
- 18% say budget is an issue.
- 19% cite a lack of good training resources.

So if you’re building a program, keep it practical and easy to access:

- Offer free intro sessions or affordable trial options
- Break things into modular formats so learners can jump in when they can
- Use platforms they already like — like WhatsApp or Slack — to run group sessions or challenges
- Give access to real-time or on-demand support, even if it’s async

With 90% of respondents based in Nigeria and it being Africa’s most populous country, the country is a natural entry point for pilot programs. It has scale, an active digital economy, and high AI tool familiarity. Training providers can localize content, price for accessibility, and partner with agencies or communities already building in the space.

What Could Partnerships Look Like?

There are plenty of ways trainers can get started or scale up:

- Partner with tech companies to offer free API access or tool credits
- Add AI modules to existing marketing bootcamps
- Create white-label courses for agencies or in-house teams
- Co-host cohorts with Slack groups, accelerators, or coworking spaces

You don’t need to launch a full certification program right out of the gate. Start small — maybe by helping junior marketers get more out of the tools they’re already using. There’s hunger for this kind of support. The next step is making sure people can actually find and access it.

Closing Insights @ What's Next

Here's the big message for senior marketers:

AI isn't some distant future trend — it's already changing how marketing gets done across Africa. But without structured support, many teams will keep using it in shallow ways that don't fully tap into its potential.

In the next 12 months, we expect AI usage to deepen in three main ways:

1

Tool diversification

Marketers are getting more confident, and that means they'll start moving beyond just ChatGPT. Expect to see more use of tools like Claude, Gemini, Canva AI, and Perplexity — especially for research, SEO, design, and automation tasks.

2

Formal training

Companies will start building AI best practices into their training playbooks — from onboarding to performance reviews. Whether delivered internally or with the help of external trainers, learning will become more structured.

3

Team-level alignment

AI won't be something individuals just "try out" — it'll be integrated into how teams plan campaigns, analyze performance, and report results. Clearer rules and guidance will also emerge around what's okay to automate and what's not.

We also anticipate tighter regulation of AI — both from governments and from companies themselves. Things like data use, content transparency, and ethical AI practices will need to be formalized. CMOs should start laying the groundwork for this now.

"African marketing leaders have a chance to shape how AI is adopted rather than following global trends. If we set our own standards for ethics, transparency, and skills now, we'll future-proof our teams for the next decade."

– Smarketers Hub

From a tools perspective, keep an eye on:

- Platforms that embed AI directly into content calendars, email workflows, and ad campaign tools
- Low-code integrations that connect AI outputs to dashboards and reports
- AI features for media buying and customer segmentation

Want to go deeper?

Check out Smarketers Hub, a leading community brand for African marketing professionals. It offers leaders deeper insight into the evolving needs, skill gaps, and priorities shaping the continent's marketing talent. Beyond learning resources, the community serves as a pulse-check on the industry — connecting professionals, surfacing trends, and informing strategies that help teams adapt to shifts like AI adoption.

In the end, AI isn't just a tool anymore — it's becoming a foundational layer in the way marketing runs. The teams that embrace that mindset now will be the ones that thrive in 2025 and beyond.



About the authors



Mo Shehu, PhD

Mo Shehu is the CEO of Column, a UK-based B2B communications and research firm. He holds a PhD in Informatics and has worked across academia, media, tech, and public affairs over more than a decade—leading research, content strategy, and digital visibility projects for founders, startups, and institutions.

With experience spanning seven countries across three continents, he leads operations at Column, overseeing research and client strategy to turn insight into action. He lives in the UK.



Gideon Onunwa

Gideon Onunwa is a research contributor at Column and a trained data scientist with a background in biotechnology and bioinformatics. He has supported research projects spanning public policy, data analysis, and science communication. Gideon is passionate about helping organizations make evidence-based decisions through clear and accurate sourcing.

Gideon holds a BSc in Biochemistry and is certified by Google, DataCamp, and the National Institute of Management. He lives in Abuja, Nigeria.

About Column



Column is a content and research studio that helps founders, executives, and public leaders turn expertise into influence. Our work spans research reports, messaging development, campaign strategy, and thought leadership—all built to resonate with your audience and advance your goals. With a team that blends deep experience in writing, design, and media, we turn your ideas into clear, credible content that gets results. Whether you're looking to build authority, shape public discourse, or generate demand, Column is your partner in turning expertise into action.

Learn more at columncontent.com.

About Smarketers Hub



Smarketers Hub is where Africa's brightest marketing minds connect, learn, and grow.

Smarketers offers value-packed resources, access to career insights from leading marketers globally, community events, learning programs, networking opportunities, job opportunities, and more.

Learn more at smarketershub.com

References

Masuta, G. (2025, March 27). AI in marketing: Africa's challenges and opportunities. MTN Mobile Ads. <https://ads.mtn.com/ai-in-marketing-africas-challenges-and-opportunities/>

Federal Ministry of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy. (2024, January 31). Nigeria has a big market for the biggest tech companies in the world – Dr. 'Bosun Tijani. <https://fmcide.gov.ng/nigeria-has-the-biggest-market-for-the-biggest-tech-companies-in-the-world-dr-bosun-tijani/>

International Trade Administration. (2023, June 5). Nigeria – Market overview. U.S. Department of Commerce. <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/nigeria-market-overview>

Russell, M. (2025, April 14). AI will shape the future of marketing. Professional & Executive Development | Harvard DCE. <https://professional.dce.harvard.edu/blog/ai-will-shape-the-future-of-marketing/#The-Current-State-of-AI-in-Market>

Kalu, R. (2024, June 12). Harnessing AI marketing: A competitive edge for African organizations. BusinessDay. <https://businessday.ng/features/article/harnessing-ai-marketing-a-competitive-edge-for-african-organizations/>