Marketing Solutions
Information in Action

VOICE OF THE BUYER:

THE GREAT DISCONNECT

How tech marketers lost touch with buyers—
and how to close the gap

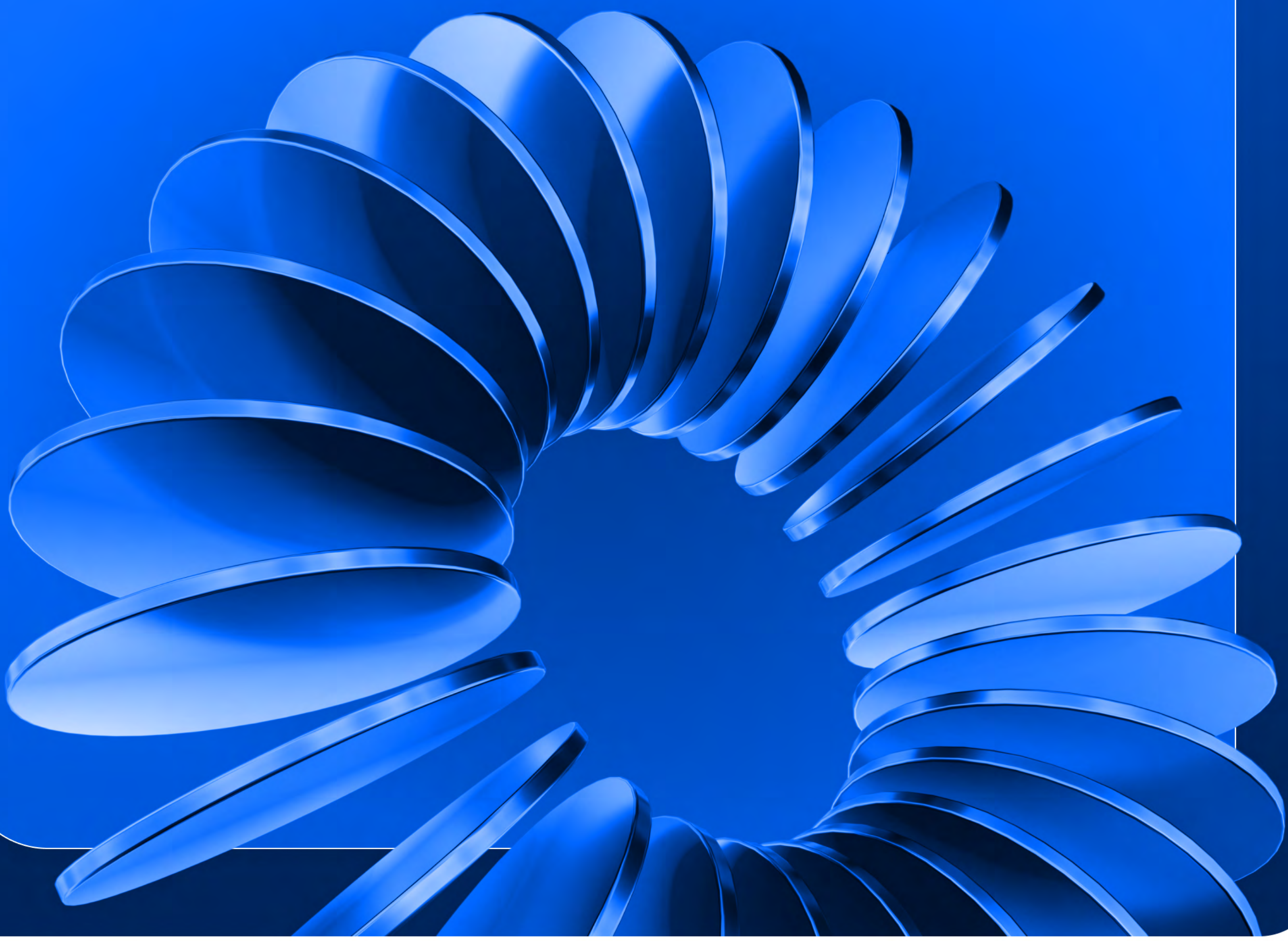


TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the research	04
Lost in translation	05
A house divided	06
The messy middle	08
The AI and trust paradox	09
Restoring connection	11
Acknowledgments	12

Tech marketing has never been louder. But our research finds the signal is getting lost in the noise.

A perception gap between what marketers say and what buyers actually want to hear means campaigns are often shouting into the void instead of building trust.

Meanwhile, AI is here—and it's creating workslop, turning up the volume on the shouting.

So what's a marketer to do?

Last year, our inaugural Voice of the Buyer report captured the perspective of the buyer: how they evaluate vendors, where they see value, and what drives their decision-making.

This year, we turned our lens toward the marketers. We wanted to know: Are they speaking the language of their buyers? Where do they see the biggest threats and opportunities? Is AI strengthening or eroding buyer trust?

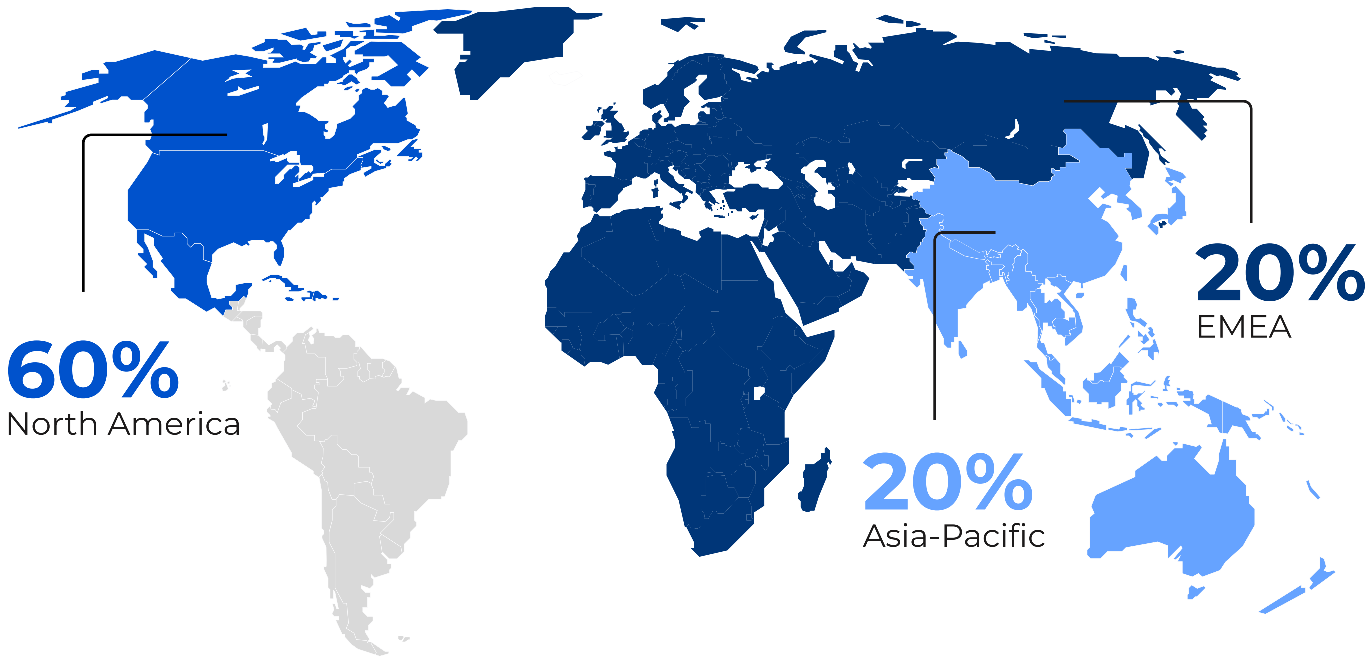
Together, the two surveys offer a two-way mirror of the buyer-marketer relationship. There's a clear disconnect. Marketers are focused on the future, while buyers are solving for today. Marketers lead with innovation; buyers listen for proof points. And as AI upends the traditional buyer journey, trust has become more fragile than ever.

In the pages that follow, we explore where the conversation between marketers and buyers is breaking down—and how it can be rebuilt. Each section unpacks a different layer of the gap: how messages miss the mark, how internal alignment falters, how AI is reshaping the messy middle, and how AI and technology itself could become the bridge back to trust.

The findings point to a single imperative for tech marketers in 2026: rebuild connection—by leading with coherence, credibility, and a human touch that cuts through the noise.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

The findings in this report are based on a global quantitative survey of **600 senior marketing professionals** conducted between August and September 2025.



Respondents represented organizations with annual marketing budgets exceeding **$200,000**, spanning major technology sectors such as cloud computing, cybersecurity, enterprise software, data and analytics, and AI solutions. Of the sample, 70% of respondents were marketing executives (C-suite and VP), and 30% were marketing directors and managers.

This report builds on TechInformed's 2024 Voice of the Buyer research, which captured the perspectives of **2,000 enterprise technology decision-makers** across the globe.

Sectors included in this study


Cloud computing


Cybersecurity


Enterprise software


Data and analytics


AI solutions

LOST IN TRANSLATION

> *Marketers are speaking the language of what's next, while buyers are speaking the language of what works.*

The central question animating our research was simple: Are marketers and buyers on the same page?

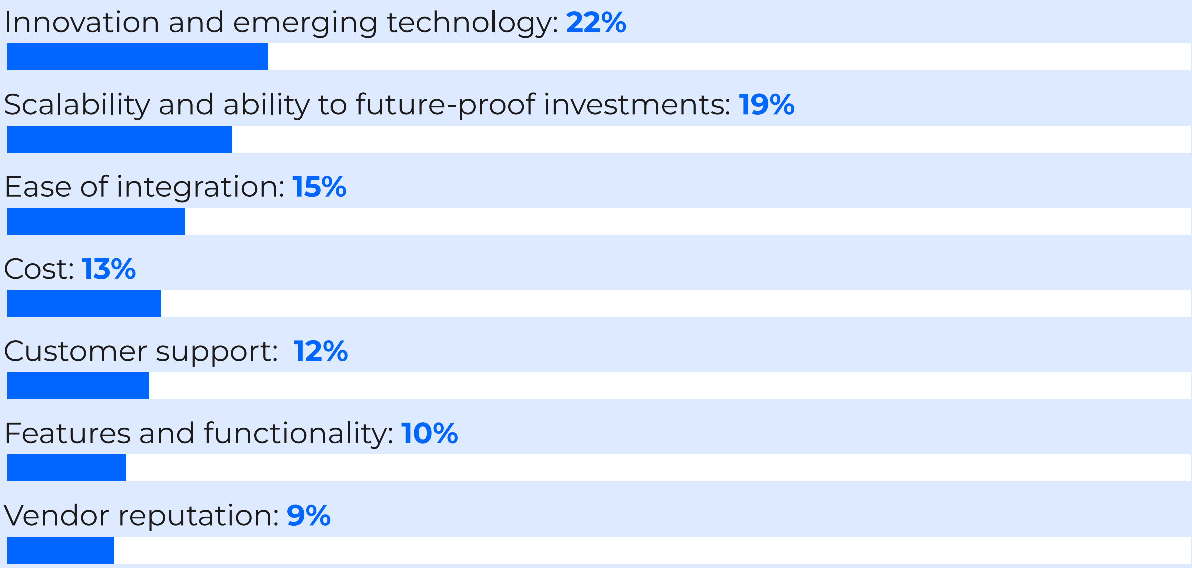
Bad news, folks.

Let's unpack it: we asked tech marketers what's most important to them when selling their solutions, and we asked buyers what's important to them when purchasing them.

Marketers are focused on standing out. They're selling a vision of the future: what's new, what's shiny, what's on the cutting edge. When asked what they emphasize most in their messaging, marketers ranked innovation (22%) and scalability (19%) at the top of the list (Exhibit 1).

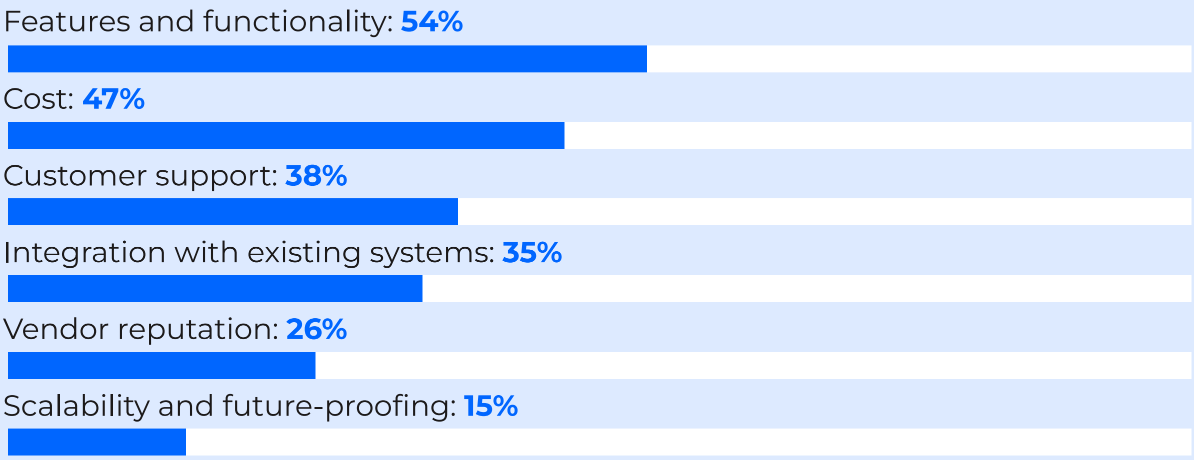
Exhibit 1: Marketers aren't meeting buyers where they are

Marketers: What factors do you emphasize most when marketing your tech solutions?



TechInformed Voice of the Marketer Survey, n = 600, fielded October 2025

Buyers: Which factors is most important to you when selecting a technology product?



TechInformed Voice of the Buyer Survey, n = 2,000, fielded October 2024

Buyers, on the other hand, want pragmatic solutions for today's problems. They care most about features and functionality (54%), cost (47%), customer support (38%), and integration with their existing systems (35%). Only 15% said that scalability and future-proofing investments were among their top priorities.

But far from rejecting innovation, buyers are filtering it through a reality shaped by budget cycles, legacy systems, and short-term performance targets. They see the vision, but they still need to deliver short-term, demonstrable impact.

This difference in focus is more than just a messaging mismatch—it's a credibility gap. Marketers are speaking the language of what's next, while buyers are speaking the language of what works. And the bigger the gap grows, the easier it becomes for even well-crafted campaigns to miss their mark.

Rather than scale back their ambition, marketers need to translate it better. The most compelling campaigns connect the vision of tomorrow with the immediate imperatives of the buyer, showing how new capabilities improve performance, reduce costs, or make teams more effective. That translation builds trust. Without it, "innovation" risks becoming just another buzzword that gets lost in the noise.

How marketers can close the gap

Anchor ambition in evidence. Pair innovation claims with tangible outcomes, such as deployment speed, cost reduction, or measurable efficiency gains.

Reframe ROI. Don't treat ROI as a long-term promise. Demonstrate how forward-looking capabilities can deliver returns today.

Speak your buyers' language. Connect the future vision to present-tense value to show how your solutions solve immediate buyer needs.

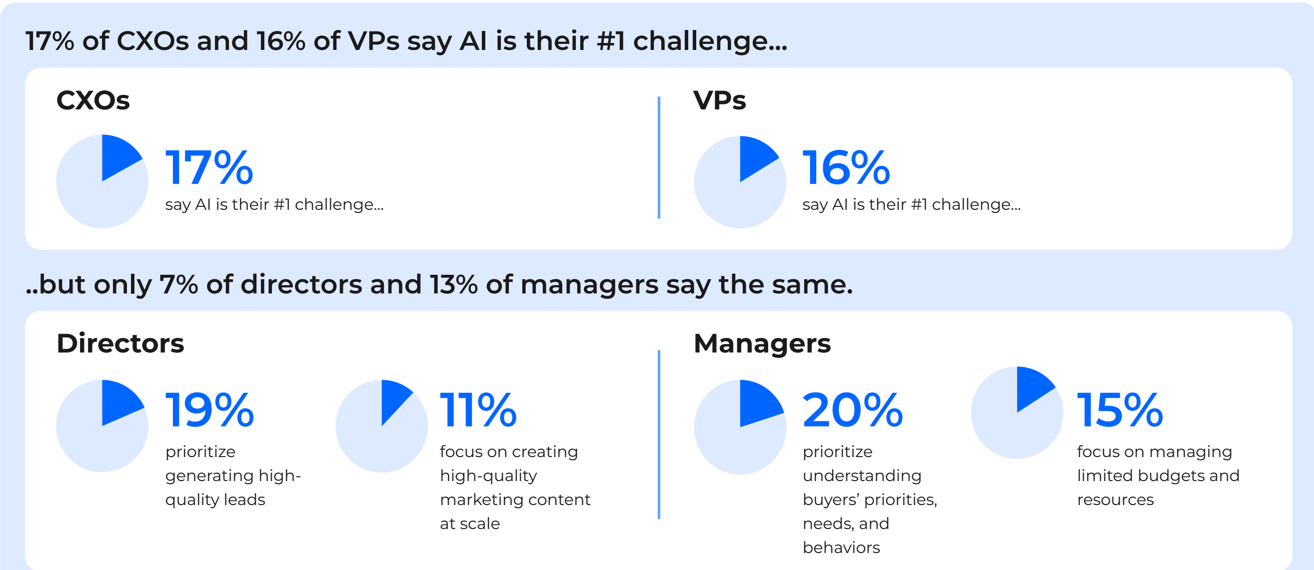
A HOUSE DIVIDED

The disconnect between buyers and marketers has a quieter echo within marketing teams themselves. Leaders are staring at the strategic threat on the horizon, while their teams are wrestling with the daily grind of reaching audiences, hitting targets, and meeting budgets.

Nearly one in five C-level marketing leaders (17%) said keeping pace with AI is their biggest challenge— more than double the rate of directors (7%) who said the same. This disconnect speaks to an existential challenge around how well critical knowledge about AI is flowing between executive vision and day-to-day implementation.

Because further down the org chart, priorities shift. For directors and managers, AI fades out of view. Their focus is on execution: generating leads, creating high-quality content at scale, managing limited budgets, and understanding their buyers (Exhibit 2).

Exhibit 2: Marketing teams struggle to align their priorities



TechInformed Voice of the Marketer Survey, n = 600, fielded October 2025

The result is often a breakdown in translation between vision and delivery. When strategy becomes disconnected from day-to-day realities, progress grinds to a halt.

This tension has always existed. What's different today is the unrelenting pace of change. Channels evolve, cycles shorten, and technology rewrites the rules every week. In this environment, even small misalignments can have large ripple effects—slowing decisions and leaving teams unsure of how their work fits into the bigger picture.

The real work for marketing leaders is to make that tension productive—by linking strategy and execution through shared context, shared goals, and shared accountability. Those that bridge strategic intent with operational execution will move faster, adapt more quickly, and speak to their buyers with true clarity and purpose.

How marketers can close the gap

Create shared markers of success. Link strategic goals (for example, around AI adoption or brand leadership) to tangible outcomes and metrics.

Bring practitioners into planning. Give those closest to the buyer a voice in setting priorities and evaluating the strategic direction of the team.

Connect goals to ground truths. Base strategic decisions on evidence-based buyer data and campaign insights, not just assumptions from the top.

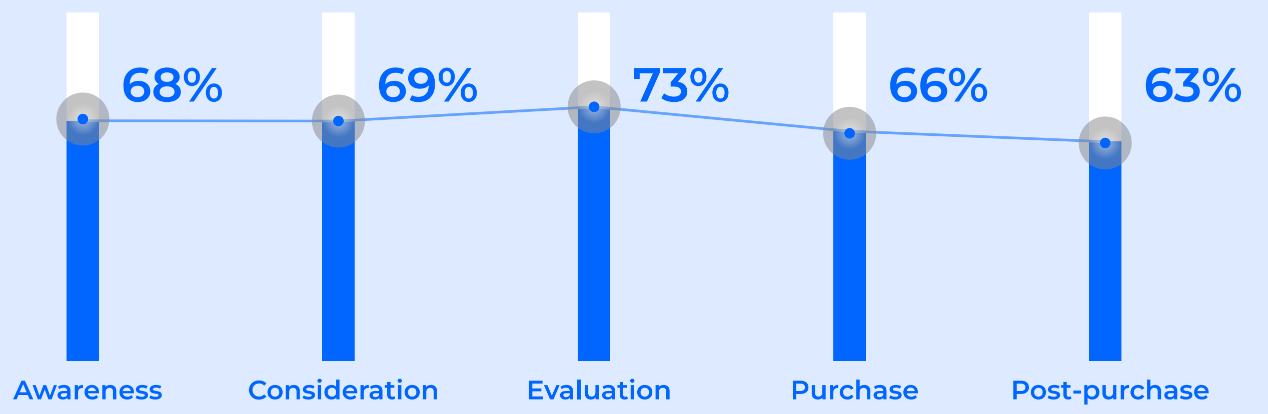
THE MESSY MIDDLE

AI is reshaping how technology purchases happen—not only at the top of the funnel, where awareness is built, but in the long, complex stretch between discovery and decision. It's here, in the "messy middle," that buyers compare options, test claims, and decide which brands make the shortlist. And according to our findings, it's also where AI's influence is now strongest (Exhibit 3).

Exhibit 3: Evaluation is new battleground for AI influence

To what extent is AI influencing each stage of the buyer journey?

% rating each stage as "very significantly" or "significantly"



Note: The above pattern holds true across job levels, company size, marketing budgets, and most geographies, with some exceptions.

TechInformed Voice of the Buyer Survey, n = 2,000, fielded October 2024

TechInformed Voice of the Marketer Survey, n = 600, fielded October 2025

When asked where AI exerts the greatest impact on the buyer journey, marketers point to the evaluation stage (73%), slightly above consideration (69%) and awareness (68%).

Yet many marketing strategies remain top-heavy, with energy and budgets allocated toward brand awareness and lead generation. This leaves fewer resources to support the middle of the journey, where content needs to inform, reassure, and differentiate.

Standing out in this space doesn't mean saying more; it means saying what matters. As buyers increasingly rely on AI-powered research tools and engines to filter information, buyers are looking for proof points that can be validated quickly—such as independent reviews, clear comparisons, and transparent pricing. They now expect the same precision from AI-generated summaries as they do from a seasoned salesperson.

The marketers adapting the fastest are fine-tuning their content for the evaluation phase. They ensure their data is structured, verifiable, and consistent across channels. And they are creating assets, such as case studies, demos, and side-by-side comparisons, that help buyers self-educate and evaluate with confidence.

The messy middle is where buyers decide what—and whom—they trust. For marketers, it has become the new battleground for influence.

How marketers can close the gap

Design for generative engine optimization (GEO). Structure your site and content metadata so that information is easy for AI and search engines to surface and summarize.

Target evaluation and validation. Build proof-driven assets (case studies, ROI calculators, and benchmarks) that answer buyers' questions.

Lead with evidence, not aspiration. Use measurable results, third-party data, and customer outcomes to build credibility around your claims.

Keep it consistent. Ensure that facts, numbers, and positioning align across every channel, so AI outputs reinforce your story.

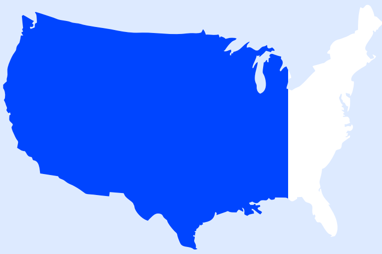
THE AI AND TRUST PARADOX

Trust has become harder to earn and easier to lose. Two-thirds of marketers say building trust with buyers is more difficult now than it was two years ago (Exhibit 4). Within the constant noise of AI-generated content and always-on communication, genuine human connection feels both fragile and more valuable than ever.

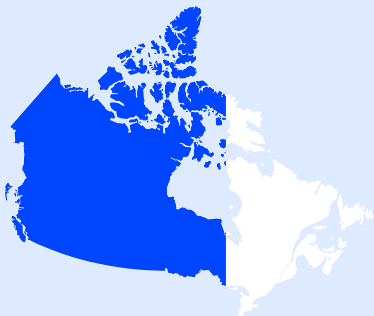
Exhibit 4: Perceptions of buyer trust vary widely by market

Building and maintaining trust with buyers is harder today than it was 2 years ago

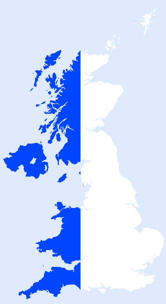
(% who agree or strongly agree)



US: **80%**



Canada: **60%**



UK: **40%**

Overall:

67%

TechInformed Voice of the Marketer Survey, n = 600, fielded October 2025

And yet, the same share (67%) say they believe that the growing influence of AI in the buyer journey will increase buyer trust. Herein lies the paradox: The very technology often blamed for eroding authenticity is now seen as a critical tool for rebuilding it. Marketers are betting on a complex system to solve a fundamentally human challenge. The question is: how?

Our findings suggest cautious optimism. Most marketers believe AI can be a bridge to trust, but only if it's used to clarify rather than conceal. When asked what builds buyer confidence, marketers emphasized data transparency (17%), pricing transparency (16%), human connection (16%), and independent validation (15%) (Exhibit 5). When used well, technology can amplify those signals of trust—but only to the extent that it improves transparency, enables validation, and is paired with human connection.

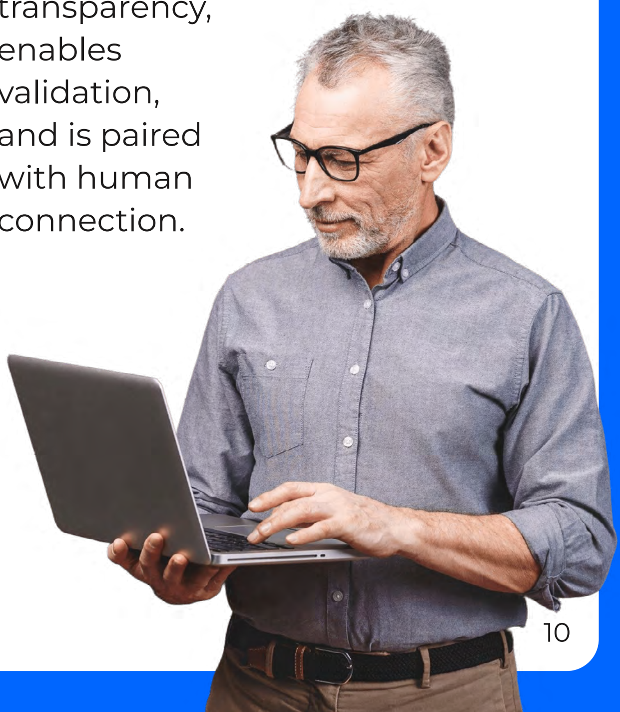
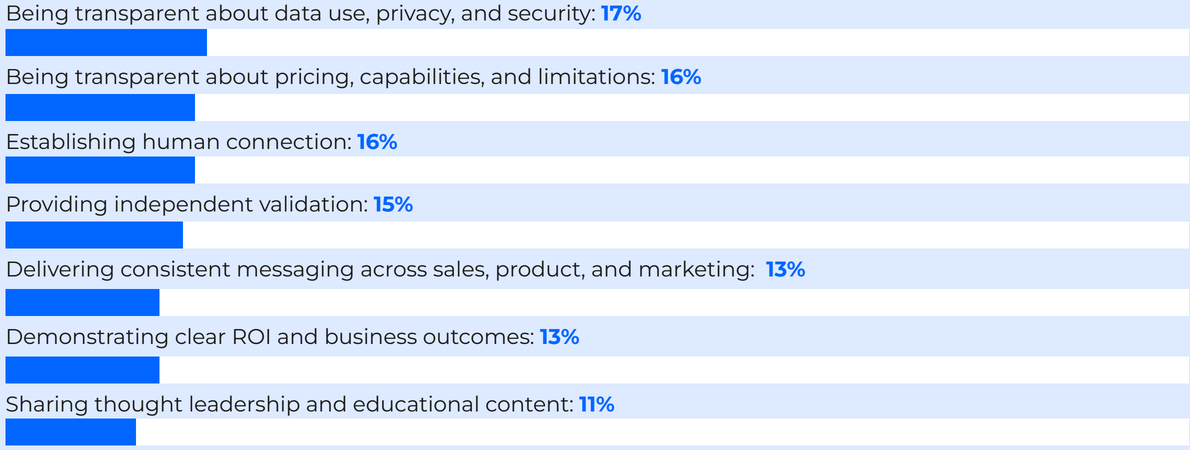


Exhibit 5: Marketers agree that trust is built on transparency and connection

When it comes to building trust with potential buyers, which factor matters most in your experience?



TechInformed Voice of the Marketer Survey, n = 600, fielded October 2025

How marketers can close the gap

Lead with transparency. Disclose how data and AI are used in content creation, targeting, and analysis.

Humanize automation. Pair AI-driven personalization with clear human touchpoints that convey accountability and empathy.

Highlight human authorship and accountability. Name real experts or authors alongside AI-assisted content to signal credibility.

Measure trust as an outcome. Track repeat engagement, testimonial volume, or brand favorability to understand whether transparency efforts are working.

CONCLUSION: RESTORING CONNECTION

As AI reshapes how messages are created and consumed, the fundamentals of marketing remain the same: know your audience, meet them where they are, and earn their trust.

The gaps revealed in our research—between marketers and buyers, vision and execution, promise and proof, people and technology—point to a single challenge: connection.

The future of marketing will be defined by how well marketers bridge these divides.

Somewhere along the way, many marketers have lost sight of those basics. **Returning to them isn't a one-off exercise. It's a relentless practice of listening, adapting, and staying in step with what buyers actually want.**

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