

Editorial: *Customer Trust, Marketing Identity Stack, AI System's Conclusions' Provability, and Impactful Transformation*



As customer trust has become a key differentiator, a holistic approach is necessary to ensure its building and maintaining so as to both meet the modern consumers' evolving expectations, and remain relevant within the shifting market dynamics (Chahal, 2024). There is a direct connection between consumer trust (the three dimensions being very well-known: ability, benevolence, and integrity) and brand identity, trust being built by consistent identity across touchpoints, and being an outcome of that consistency over time (Västilä, 2026). And as also highlighted by this last point of view, brands must avoid both competence failures, and integrity failures.

As recently revealed by the new EMARKETER report (made possible by LiveRamp) “Identity Is the New Battleground For AI-Era Marketing” (Feger, 2026): “Customer behavior has become increasingly difficult to stitch together... For marketers making 2027 investment decisions, customer data unification has become foundational. AI can only act on the information it receives... Until brands can build a consistent view of the customer, adding more signals or more AI tools will do little to improve the customer experience... The question for marketing leaders is whether their identity stack is built for what comes next... agentic AI requires something different: a durable customer foundation that can connect data across systems and give AI a consistent view of the customer.” According to Daniella Harkins, Senior Vice President, Product GTM LiveRamp: “Every AI model, recommendation, and personalization runs on data, and identity is critical for giving marketers the ability to accurately connect this data across the ecosystem. Without identity bringing fragmentation into a coherent whole, AI

can't deliver on its promise. Authenticated, deterministic identity provides an accurate, unified view of consumers on their journeys, offering the strongest possible basis for marketing."

One of the key takeaways recently underlined by the AI Search Growth Platform Omnibound (Sarah, 2026) – which aggregated data multiple relevant sources to compile the most rigorously sourced brand consistency statistics available for 2026 – was as follows: "AI systems treat **brand consistency across independent sources** as a reliability signal — inconsistent brand messaging directly reduces AI citation probability ([Impact.com](#), *Global State of Affiliate Marketing 2025*; [AirOps citation research](#), 2026)." On the other hand, Henrique and Santos Jr. (2024) highlighted, among other aspects, that trust calibration in AI is still waiting to be investigated so as to ensure the optimal results for a human-machine team (how to predict and achieve correct levels of trust), questions such as if xAI [N.A., Explainable Artificial Intelligence – methods and techniques making ML models' results and decisions understandable to humans] can always improve trust remaining without definitive answers.

As AI becomes more influential in enterprise decision-making (the answers produced by AI becoming remarkably good), the questions asked to AI are growing in relevance (Philogène, 2026). Consequently, when making strategic decisions, the so-called "trust me" concept cannot be an acceptable citation, organizations' leaders needing to document the exact reasons, data, and assumptions that led to AI system's conclusions so as to obtain continuous provability by questioning, rejecting, or adapting these conclusions, acting on the right answers accordingly.

To augment human capabilities throughout an organization with the help of intelligent systems, the organization takes the strategic initiative to go on the path to become an AI-driven organization, ensuring AI adoption and integration, realizing the importance of transformation across processes, people, and platform (not only data infrastructure and tools, but also technical architecture), and focusing on reaching sufficient scale and impact (Databricks, 2025). As a fundamental shift in businesses' way of operating and competing, AI transformation requires a predetermined length of time and sustained investment, as well as steadfast dedication from leadership and not forgetting that AI is central to organizational competitive strategy.

Of course, it is always a real challenge for business leaders to overcome the obstacles encountered while advancing on the chosen path. It is worth mentioning within this context that with regard to increasing AI utilization and scope (to ensure business value maximization) across all aspects of an organization's operations both change management and siloed ways of working were identified by very many global business leaders as major obstacles to scaling AI (Gast et al., 2026).

If Socrates said that "The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new," and Peter Drucker was of the opinion that "The greatest danger in times of turbulence is not the turbulence; it is to act with yesterday's logic," Jack Welch recommended thus: "Change before you have to." And since transformation is not a simple work, especially in today's business, in a very recent McKinsey Podcast it was underlined that: "The toughest transformation problems aren't always strategic or operational. They're human: the instinct to play it safe, protect what's ours, trust who we know, and wait for change to pass.

Individually, these behaviors can seem perfectly rational. Collectively, they can bring a transformation to a standstill” (Strovink et al., 2026). Speaking of AI transformation, the world-defining futurist, AI expert, and Hope Engineer™ Nikolas Badminton (2026) highlighted the following aspects: “Impactful transformation... begins with a vision of better futures and the conviction that we can build it together. That’s hope engineering... The cost of transformation is being wildly underestimated. This comes from two sides: the infrastructure and the wisdom side of things... those leaders that consider the need to build a ‘wisdom economy’ as imperative will see huge change in attitude and ability across their organizations.”

A point of view recently expressed in the online technology publication TechRadar (Florence, 2026) underlined that the next phase of AI will be defined by better AI agents, the challenge for organizations consisting in translating AI agents’ improved capabilities into meaningful business value. No wonder the conclusion was clear, namely that the winners of the next AI race will be “those that build trusted, well-governed agents capable of solving real operational problems.”

Let us also made reference to a significant conclusion recently drawn by Nielsen et al. (2026): “In the AI era, the illusion is not that transformation is coming... The illusion is that the threat will be visible in time: on a competitor dashboard, in reported margins, or in the form of an obvious new attacker. Companies that see through that illusion will build the moats that matter and capture the returns AI makes possible. Those that do not may discover too late that they were strengthening defenses around a business model that the battle had already moved beyond.”

And allow us to end by remembering that distribution is a real moat, and AI-driven distribution plays a significant role in optimizing phygital distribution networks.

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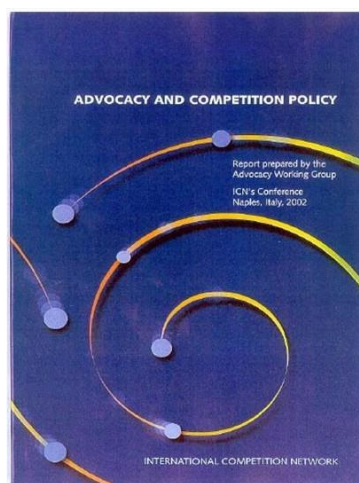
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Mrs. Deborah Platt Majoras, Chairman of Federal Trade Commission



March 27, 2007

First meeting, Bonn, Germany, May 19, 2003, of Deborah Platt Majoras (Assistant to the Attorney General, Department of Justice, US), Bärbel Dieckmann (Mayor of Bonn), and Theodor Purcărea (President of Romanian Competition Council)

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The Distribution of Fresh Products 2001



Representatives of Carrefour, Metro and Cora accepted Romanian Distribution Committee's invitation, participating on **March 13, 2001**, at the **Parliament Palace**, at the **International Symposium « The Distribution of Fresh Products »**, a real professional turning point, with corresponding effects. The symposium appeared as a turning moment and later, in the weekly journal "European Businesses", no.21/ 3-9 November 2004, which pointed out, within this context, the outline of the ECR Romania Association's structuring.

