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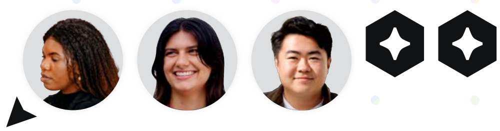
2026



The State of Teams

CMO Executive Insights

Executive summary

> "Objectives will need to shift as AI scales up the organization, but I don't know how."
>
> Vice President of Marketing, Fortune 500 healthcare company

Marketing stands out in its embrace of AI

94% of marketers use AI at work, more than the 85% of employees overall. 29% of marketers describe their AI cultures as "celebrated"—where use is open and tips are widely shared—compared to 13% of employees overall.

AI adoption without strategy risks a "magic switch" trap

Despite marketing's enthusiasm for AI, 63% of marketers think their management views AI as a "magic switch"—the highest among all functions and well above 45% of employees overall.

Marketing's AI ROI is elusive as a fragmentation tax looms

A mere 3% of marketing executives are sure they have clear org-wide AI ROI, and 51% say their AI objectives are unclear. With a persistent focus on individual productivity and efficiency outcomes, the Fortune 500 is paying an estimated $161B annual fragmentation tax as speed outpaces alignment.

Top marketers close the gap by redesigning work for human-AI collaboration

53% of marketers say their processes and workflows aren't optimized for AI, and 54% say their data and knowledge foundations are insufficient. The top 14% of teams cut their tax with the right context, workflows, and culture for this new era.

Enterprise AI that overlooks teams curbs ROI

AI is transforming work, with adoption surging in a few short years. Marketers rival even technology professionals in their adoption.

94%

of marketers use AI at work, compared to **85%** of all knowledge workers

But even for marketers ahead of the curve, AI's impacts are narrowly focused on increasing the speed and outputs of individual tasks–not the collaborative workflows where 80% of work happens.[1]

89%

of marketing executives say AI increases speed, but **only 34%** say it improves collaboration

Only 25%

of marketing executives focus AI at the team level

This persistent focus on output over value means many marketing leaders remain in the dark when it comes to articulating what they want out of AI in the first place.

Only 3%

of marketing executives are sure they have clear examples of AI ROI

51%

of marketing executives say their organization's AI objectives are unclear

> "Right now, AI allows people to work faster and more efficiently. We're not on the ROI curve where we can get broader value."
>
> Vice President of Marketing,
> Fortune 500 healthcare company

[1] Source: Cross, R., Rebele, R., & Grant, A. (2016). "Collaborative Overload." Harvard Business Review.

The AI fragmentation tax

Today's default approach to AI brings chaos, not coordination

65%

of marketers haven't embedded AI into their daily workflows, despite high topline adoption

86%

of marketers lack time or capacity to coordinate, with everyone in execution mode

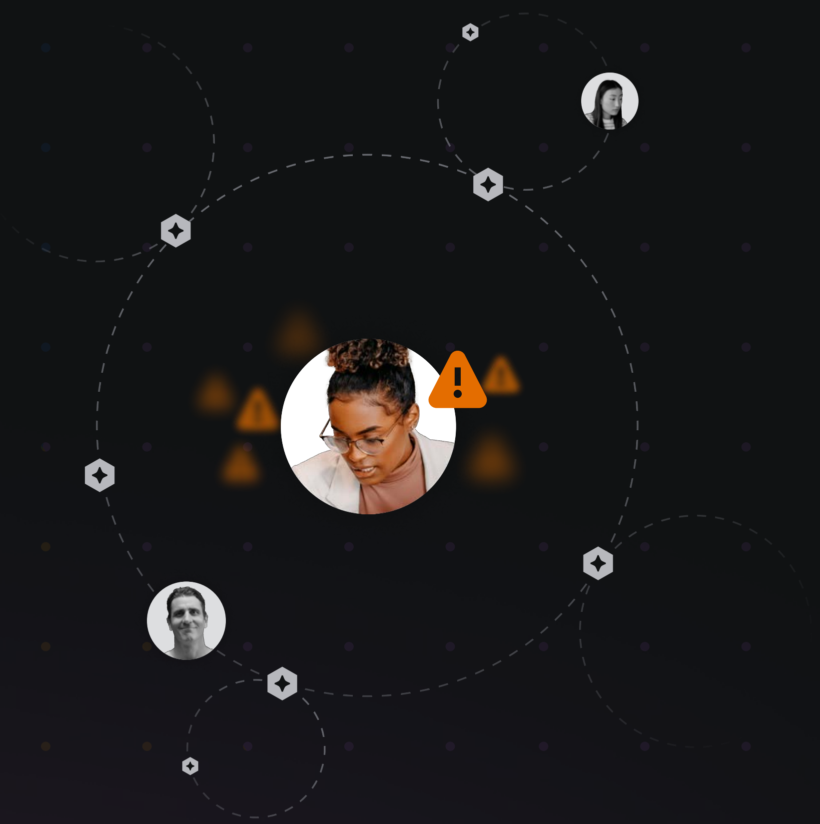
85%

of marketers have unclear or conflicting goals and priorities across teams

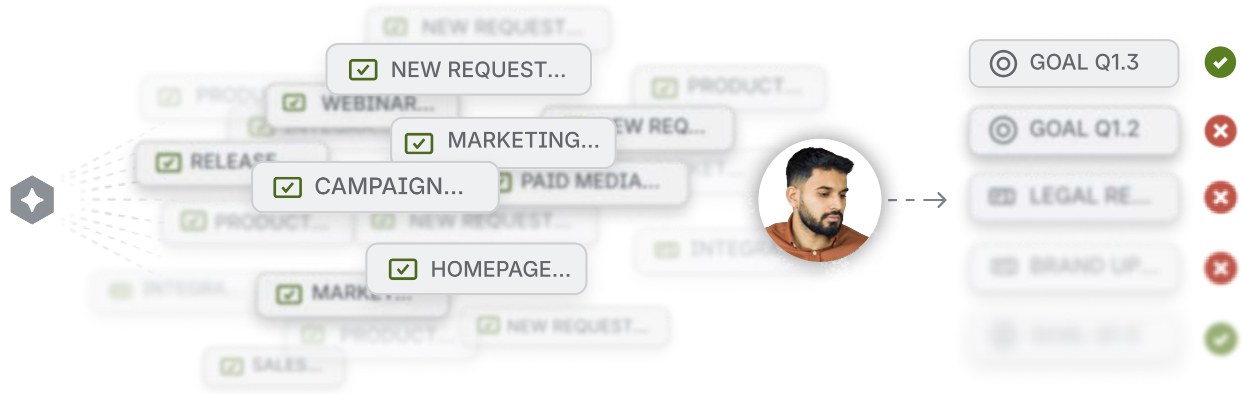
Focusing on individual speed often comes at the expense of alignment

The AI fragmentation tax, or how much collaboration friction teams experience as they adopt AI, costs the Fortune 500 an estimated $161 billion through misaligned priorities, poor coordination, and other pain points.

> "There's a risk of people working in silos with AI. Knowing how interdependent our functions are, I'm worried about that model."
>
> Vice President of Marketing,
> Fortune 500 healthcare company



Scenario: The fragmentation tax in Marketing



The cost of non-strategic implementation:

With AI, a campaign manager drafts a launch brief in minutes. A legal review agent flags compliance issues, a brand agent polishes tone, and a content agent generates landing page copy variants. Meanwhile, an operations lead spins up workflows for assets, approvals, and regional localization, an analytics lead sets up a dashboard, and a sales enablement manager pulls talking points. Individual tasks fly.

But in the background, coordination frays. Legal and brand guidance diverge across drafts. Regional sales teams circulate outdated one-pagers while the CMS hosts newer positioning. Web changes stall because privacy notes and product claims live in separate trackers. AI has accelerated creation, but alignment lags with no shared checklist, service-level agreements, or single source of truth across people and agents.

The result: Launch timelines slip, guidance to customers and sellers conflicts, execution varies by region, and audit trails have dead ends. Teams speed ahead in siloed productivity mirages while the broader go-to-market motion pays a growing fragmentation tax in cycle time, brand consistency, and risk.

> “When everyone understands how their work contributes to the larger goal, collaboration becomes much more natural and effective.”
>
> Global Head of Marketing,
> Fortune 500 consumer goods company

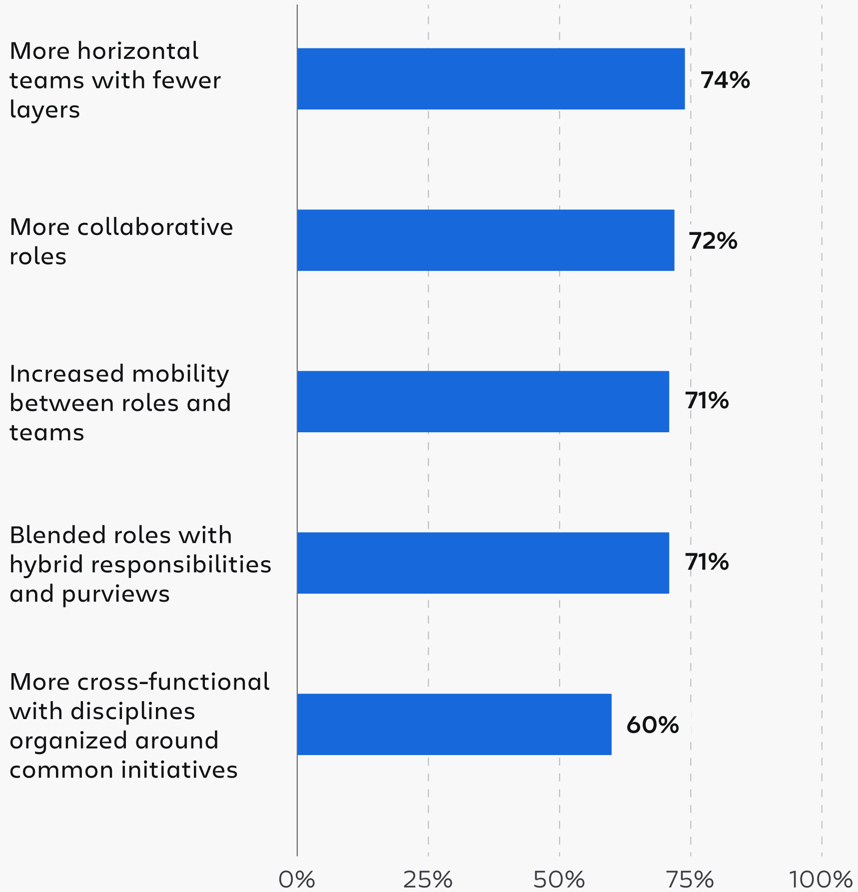
The growing risk of fragmented AI

The individually-oriented approach to enterprise AI is creating schisms within and across teams

Ironically, AI is quickly making coordination more essential, not less. This is especially true as teams are increasingly comprised of people and agents. If not addressed soon, the tax will grow.

> "We have aspirations for AI to be a teammate."
>
> Vice President of Growth Marketing, Fortune 500 financial services company

How marketing executives expect AI to reshape roles and teams:



62%

of marketing executives say AI is widening performance and opportunity gaps across teams

Key capability gaps hold back AI transformation

AI needs holistic strategies that account for technology, processes, *and* people

Only 28% of marketers think their companies' AI implementations balance technology and human elements

63% of marketers think their management views AI as “magic switch”

Work cultures need overhauls to empower people for the AI era

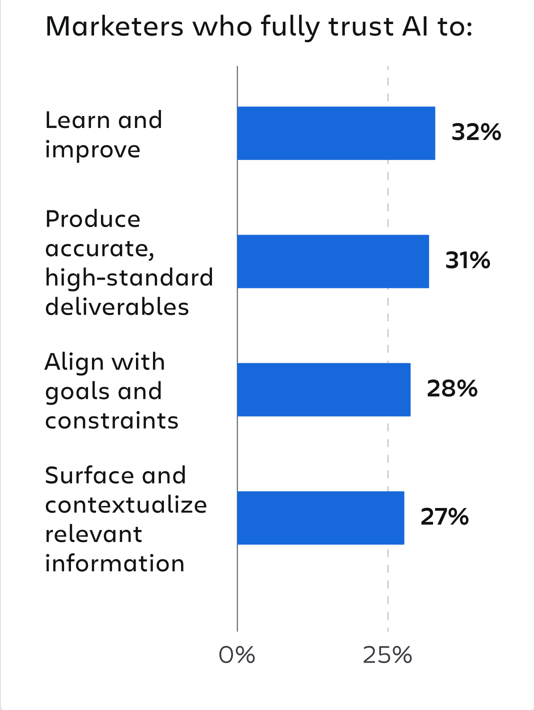
Only 29% of marketers say their companies have “celebrated” AI cultures where people demo use and highlight wins

60% of marketers don’t have extensive AI learning and skill development opportunities

61% of marketers don’t have extensive AI experimentation opportunities

> "I don't think the fundamentals of good teamwork have changed. I think how we do it has changed.”
>
> Vice President of Growth Marketing, Fortune 500 financial services company

Companies need trusted, shared context to underpin AI



54% of marketers say their companies' data and knowledge foundations aren’t optimized for AI

Teams need new ways of working built for human-AI collaboration

53% of marketers say their processes and workflows aren’t optimized for AI

Only 18% of marketers view AI as a collaborative teammate; **56%** view it as a simple tool or personal assistant

How AI coordination pillars cut the tax

The teams whose productivity and coordination benefit from AI look beyond the technology itself, focusing their implementations on three AI coordination pillars:

1. Context

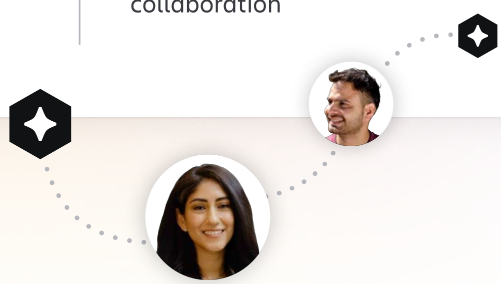
Documenting clear, shared goals across teams and grounding work in trusted data accessible to people and agents

2. Workflows

Designing clear paths for how work flows and progresses across teams of people and agents

3. Culture

Enabling people through continuous learning and experimentation that fosters innovative human-AI collaboration



Teams with all three pillars cut their fragmentation tax by 46% and increase their collaborative velocity—the extent to which they get both speed and alignment with AI.

These teams are up to:

- **5.6x more likely** to say AI helps them better plan and prioritize work
- **9.4x more likely** to say AI increases collaboration
- **7.3x more likely** to say their data and knowledge foundations are optimized for AI

> “A product has multiple components, but they don’t mean anything on their own. We need to connect them together.”
>
> Global Head of Marketing,
> Fortune 500 consumer goods company

CMO action checklist

Orchestrated AI-human collaboration across people and agents is a quickly becoming a “must-have” for end-to-end marketing execution. Here are some steps CMOs can take to make sure they drive speed *and* alignment.

☑ Unify your GTM source of truth

Centralize briefs, brand guidelines, and performance data into a single hub. Connect this to your CRM, CMS, and other systems so both humans and agents operate from a shared, real-time context.

☑ Orchestrate end-to-end workflows

Shift from task-based AI to full-workstream coordination. Redesign handoffs between brand, legal, sales, and other collaborators to ensure AI accelerates execution without creating bottlenecks.

☑ Institutionalize AI leadership

Move beyond experimentation by modeling AI use in your own workflows. Create "safe-to-fail" spaces for team pilots and fund continuous L&D to maintain your department's head start on AI transformation.

About the research

This report is based on research conducted by Atlassian's Teamwork Lab, a group of scientists dedicated to developing best practices for modern teams. Their findings guide the design of Atlassian's products and practices.

Double-blind survey data was collected in January and February 2026.

Survey: 12,035 knowledge workers, including 1,012 in marketing

- Work across the U.S., U.K., Australia, India, Germany, and France
- Top industries represented:
  - Technology (16%)
  - Manufacturing and industrial (13%)
  - Public sector and education (12%)
  - Financial services (11%)
  - Consumer & retail (10%)

Survey: 172 Fortune 1000 executives, including 65 in marketing

- VP level or higher
- Top industries represented:
  - Financial services (28%)
  - Consumer & retail (23%)
  - Technology (16%)
  - Manufacturing and industrial (9%)
  - Healthcare & pharmaceuticals (9%)

Interviews: 25 Fortune 500 executives, including 6 in marketing

Read the full report:

atlassian.com/blog/state-of-teams-2026

ATLASSIAN

About us

Atlassian unleashes the potential of every team

A recognized leader in software development, work management, and enterprise service management software, Atlassian enables enterprises to connect their business and technology teams with an AI-powered system of work that unlocks productivity at scale. Atlassian's collaboration software powers over 80% of the Fortune 500 and 350,000+ customers worldwide–including NASA, Rivian, Deutsche Bank, United Airlines, and Bosch–who rely on our solutions to drive work forward.

Learn more about our products, including Rovo, Jira, Confluence, and Jira Service Management, at atlassian.com.

Want to learn more?

Domino's unifies 130,000+ employees on Atlassian Cloud

Read more at: atlassian.com/customers/dominos

Sprout Social saves $180,000 annually with Teamwork Collection

Read more at: atlassian.com/customers/sprout

Delivery Hero centralizes 40k employees on one System of Work

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