



The New Rules For Building Material Growth

**8 Shifts Reshaping How Building Materials Brands Earn Trust,
Influence Specifications and Create Demand in 2027**



THE NEW RULES FOR GROWTH

Trust → Discoverability → Self-Service + Expertise → Buying Network → Demand Creation → Brand + Performance → Enterprise Alignment → Continuous Learning

Executive Summary (TL;DR)

Building materials growth is being reshaped by changes in how products are discovered, evaluated, specified and purchased.

Architects, contractors, engineers, owners and distributors can research more independently, compare information across multiple sources and use AI to help identify and assess possible solutions. At the same time, technical expertise remains critical when project requirements, applications and risks become more complex.

This creates a more distributed path to growth. A manufacturer must earn trust through credible

technical evidence, remain visible across the specification ecosystem and give every project stakeholder the information needed to move the decision forward.

The marketing operating model is changing too. Brand and demand generation are converging. Marketing must connect more closely with product, technical, sales and channel teams. Annual campaign cycles are giving way to continuous learning and investment decisions.

The implication is clear: manufacturers can't rely on brand awareness, sales relationships or product performance alone. Growth increasingly depends on connecting all three across the full path from discovery to specification, purchase, installation and advocacy.

The Eight Shifts

→Shifts in Buyer Decision Making

- 1. Trust Must Be Demonstrated, Not Declared**
Claims create interest. Proof creates belief.
- 2. Discovery Now Happens Everywhere**
Be visible wherever buyers discover, compare and validate.
- 3. Self-Service Raises the Value of Human Expertise**
Let customers access information themselves. Use people where judgment matters.
- 4. Buying Decisions Are Influenced by Hidden Buyers**
Influence the full buying group, not just the person in the CRM.

→Shifts in the Marketing Operating Model

- 5. Marketing Must Create Demand & Capture It**
Compete for today's buyers while shaping tomorrow's.
- 6. Brand and Performance Must Work as One Growth System**
Build preference and convert demand as one connected system.
- 7. Marketing Has Become an Enterprise Growth Function**
Connect the functions, data and decisions that shape customer and commercial growth.
- 8. Growth Is Managed Continuously, Not Through Annual Campaigns**
Read signals, test assumptions and move resources as the evidence changes.

What This Means

Building materials growth now depends on being technically credible, discoverable across the specification ecosystem and useful throughout a complex, multi-stakeholder decision.

The manufacturers that outperform will be the ones that connect brand, product evidence, technical expertise, sales and channel execution into one system that makes them easier to find, specify and choose.

Growth in building materials didn't suddenly get harder. The rules underpinning how products are discovered, specified and chosen changed.

Many of the marketing practices that drove growth over the past decade were built for a different environment.

An environment where the buying journey was more visible. Search led to websites. Marketing generated leads and sales converted them. Brands had more control over their story. Annual plans could remain relevant for longer and the path from marketing activity to business result was easier to see.

Those assumptions are less true today.

Architects, engineers, contractors, owners and distributors move between technical documentation, manufacturer websites, search, AI, specification platforms, professional peers and representatives. They can make meaningful progress without contacting a manufacturer, while multiple stakeholders can influence, approve, purchase, substitute or reject the product.

At the same time, building-materials marketers are being asked to do more than generate awareness and leads. They must help create category demand, support specification, equip sales and channel partners, connect customer insight to the organization and show how marketing contributes to commercial growth.

The risk is that manufacturers keep optimizing a model built around assumptions that no longer hold.

A company can have a strong product, an experienced sales team and a full marketing calendar and still be missing the environments where consideration is being formed.

This requires a different growth model.

This guide identifies **eight shifts reshaping building materials growth heading into 2027**, the evidence behind them and what marketing leaders should do in response.

As you read, use each shift as a pressure test:

Which assumptions behind your current growth strategy are no longer true?

And what would you do differently if you stopped planning around them?



SHIFT 1: Trust Must Be Demonstrated, Not Declared

THE OLD RULE

Develop a compelling brand message and communicate it consistently.

THE NEW REALITY

Buyers can check what you say against what everyone else says about you.

They read reviews. Look for customer experiences. Seek expert opinions. Check industry publications, communities, Reddit and YouTube. And increasingly, they ask AI assistants to research and compare brands for them.

That means a strong brand claim can get attention, but evidence increasingly determines whether the claim is believed.

Edelman found that 57% of consumers say unpaid voices or independent organizations have the greatest impact on their willingness to trust a brand. Just 20% say the same about what a brand says about itself. Source: [Edelman, 2026 Trust Barometer Special Report: Brand Growth in an Insular World](#)

That changes the job of marketing.

Brands still need a clear and distinctive point of view. But what the brand says is increasingly just the beginning of the trust equation.

Buyers want to know: Can you prove it?



THE EVIDENCE BEHIND THE SHIFT

i) Trust is increasingly built outside the brand

80% of consumers trust customers like themselves to provide accurate brand information.

68% trust customer reviews.

58% trust a brand's CEO.

Source: [Edelman, 2025 Trust Barometer Special Report: Brand Trust, From We to Me](#)

The same pattern carries into complex B2B decisions.

Edelman and LinkedIn found that 64% of hidden decision-makers and 65% of target decision-makers consider expertise-led thought leadership more trustworthy than marketing materials and product sheets when assessing a company's capabilities. Source: [Edelman + LinkedIn, 2025 B2B Thought Leadership Impact Report](#)

Buyers have access to more information, more independent voices and better tools for evaluating what companies tell them. They don't have to take your word for it.

ii) Trust has commercial value

The IPA analyzed 812 for-profit campaigns and compared campaigns that generated very large increases in brand trust with its overall campaign benchmark.

The strongest trust-building campaigns were:

 **41% more likely** to report at least one very large business effect.

 **39% more likely** to report very large customer-acquisition effects.

 **46% more likely** to report very large profit effects.

 **83% more likely** to report reduced price sensitivity.

Source: [IPA, Trust-Building Advertising Works, January 2026](#)



These results show a strong relationship between building trust and the outcomes growth leaders care about.

Trust reduces uncertainty. And reducing uncertainty makes it easier for people to choose, pay and stay.

iii) AI is raising the stakes

AI assistants don't simply repeat what a company says about itself. They draw from a wider information environment that can include publishers, customer reviews, communities, experts, reference sources and earned media.

[Muck Rack's analysis of more than one million links cited by leading LLMs](#) found that the vast majority came from non-paid sources, with earned media playing a significant role in the sources AI used.

Research from Hard Numbers and Onclusive found an even more direct relationship between external authority and AI recommendations. Brands in the top 10% for earned-media influence were recommended by LLMs 80% of the time, compared with less than 50% for brands in the bottom 10%. Source: [Hard Numbers + Onclusive, Recommendations in the Age of AI](#)

You are no longer building trust only with people. You are building the information environment machines use to explain, compare and recommend your brand.

FROM BRAND CLAIM TO MARKET PROOF

"Our product delivers superior long-term performance."

VISIBLE PROOF

TECHNICAL
TESTING

DOCUMENTED
APPLICATIONS

CERTIFICATIONS AND
COMPLIANCE

PROJECT
EXAMPLES

WARRANTY
INFORMATION

INSTALLATION
GUIDANCE

CUSTOMER REVIEWS



EXTERNAL VALIDATION

OWNERS CAN ASSESS LIFECYCLE VALUE

ARCHITECTS CAN VERIFY IT

AI CAN FIND
CONSISTENT EVIDENCE

DISTRIBUTORS CAN SUPPORT
THE RECOMMENDATION

CONTRACTORS CAN INSTALL
WITH CONFIDENCE



TRUST



COMMERCIAL OUTCOME

STRONGER CONVERSION

GREATER PRICING RESILIENCE

FEWER OBJECTIONS

REDUCED SUBSTITUTION RISK

LOWER PERCEIVED RISK

GREATER SPECIFICATION CONSIDERATION

HIGHER LIKELIHOOD OF RECOMMENDATION

JK TAKE

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR BUILDING MATERIALS GROWTH

In building materials, trust is built through technical confidence.

Architects, specifiers, engineers, contractors, distributors and owners need to know that a product will perform as promised, meet project requirements and stand up to scrutiny throughout the specification and construction process. A strong brand claim may earn attention, but it won't win the specification on its own.

AIA's research found that architecture professionals typically consult four to five sources when seeking technical product support. Eighty-six percent contact manufacturer representatives, 85% visit manufacturer websites, 82% review manufacturer-provided technical information and 68% conduct independent online searches.

That means the brand story, technical documentation, representative guidance and information found elsewhere must reinforce one another. If performance claims are inconsistent, difficult to verify or unsupported by accessible evidence, confidence can erode before the manufacturer knows it was being considered.

The growth question becomes:

Can every important product claim withstand technical, professional and independent scrutiny?

In this market, proof is more than a marketing asset. It helps reduce specification risk, gives channel partners and representatives a stronger case to carry forward, and makes it easier for project stakeholders to defend their choice.

WHAT BUILDING MATERIALS MARKETING LEADERS SHOULD DO NOW

Build a Specification Trust System.

Start with the claims that matter most to product selection, such as performance, durability, compliance, sustainability, ease of installation, availability or lifecycle value.

For each claim, connect the marketing message to credible proof:

- Technical data and testing
- Certifications and code compliance
- Warranty information
- Documented applications and project examples
- Installation guidance
- Expert commentary
- Customer, contractor and specifier experiences

Make that proof easy to find and consistent across the manufacturer website, product documentation, specification platforms, distributors, sales representatives and third-party sources.

Then pressure-test what appears when an architect, contractor or owner searches for the product category, compares manufacturers or asks an AI assistant for a recommendation. The story the market can verify matters as much as the story the brand tells.

Pressure Test

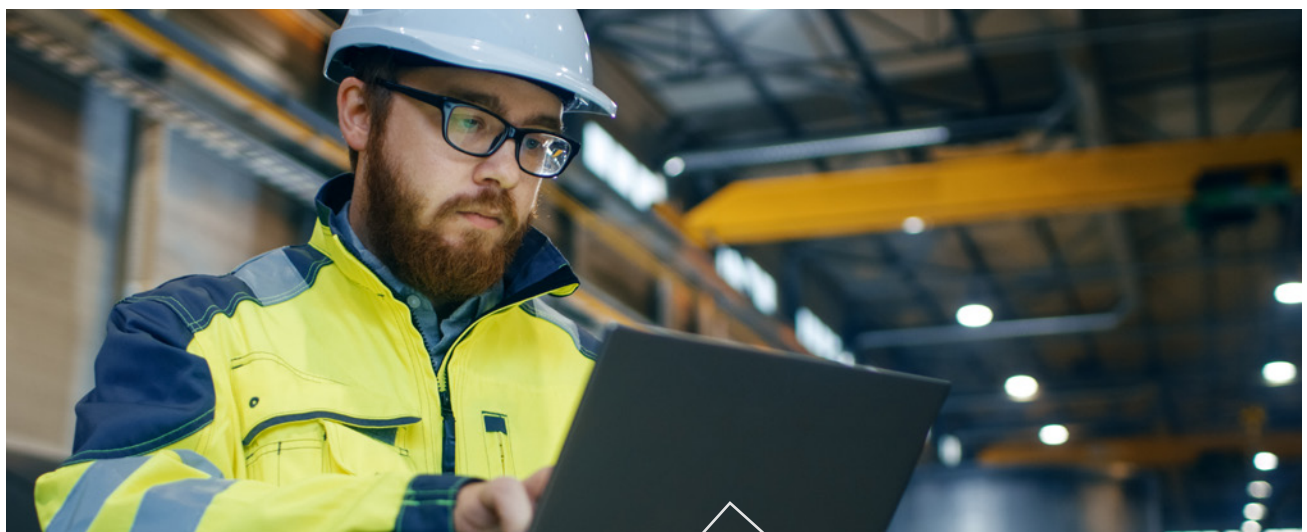
Choose five claims your organization regularly makes about its products or capabilities.

Ask:

1. Which claims depend mainly on our own marketing language?
2. Can specifiers and contractors find credible technical proof without contacting us?
3. Is the evidence consistent across our website, documentation, representatives and channel partners?
4. Which missing proof creates the greatest risk of being excluded or substituted?

The New Rule

If a product claim matters to the specification, make it easy to verify.



PRESSURE TEST

PRESSURE TEST YOUR TRUST EVIDENCE

Choose five claims your organization regularly makes about its brand, products or capabilities.

Claim we make	Can buyers independently verify it?	What proof exists?	What does AI find?	Where is the trust gap?
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

Then ask:

- 1. Which claims rely too heavily on our own marketing?**
Where would an independent buyer struggle to find credible support?
- 2. Where is our strongest proof missing or hard to discover?**
What customer evidence, expertise or third-party validation exists but is not visible enough?
- 3. What would we need to strengthen first?**
Which trust gap is most likely to affect consideration, conversion or recommendation?

THE NEW RULE

If trust matters to the decision, give buyers something they can verify.

SHIFT 2: Discovery Now Happens Everywhere

THE OLD RULE

Win search, drive people to the website and convert the traffic.

THE NEW REALITY

The path to your brand no longer starts with your website.

Buyers discover and evaluate companies across search engines, AI assistants, video, social, marketplaces, reviews, communities and industry sources. And they move between them.

By the time someone arrives at your website, they may already have encountered your category, your competitors and opinions about your brand in half a dozen other places.

The question is no longer simply:

Can customers find us when they search?

It's: **Do we show up wherever they discover, research, compare and validate their options?**



THE EVIDENCE BEHIND THE SHIFT

i) Discovery is becoming fragmented

BCG found that consumers may now encounter **more than 15 touchpoints during the buying journey, compared with roughly five a decade ago.**

Source: [Agentic AI Will Make the CMO's Role More Consequential](#)

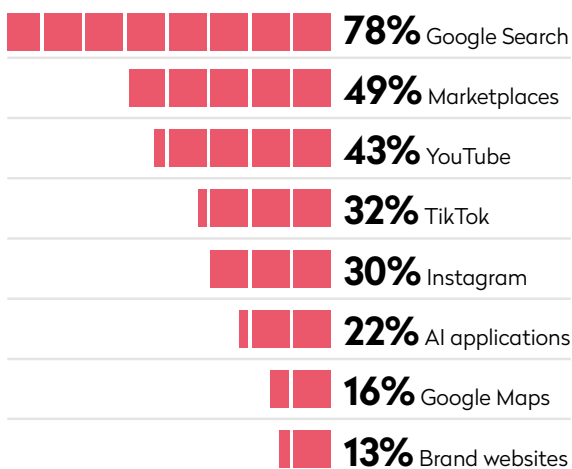
That means much of the consideration set is still being formed during discovery, comparison and evaluation.



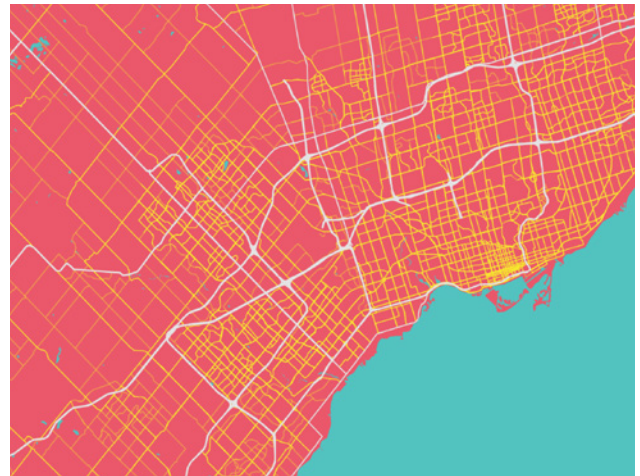
If your brand is missing from the environments where consideration is formed, you may be excluded before you know the buyer exists.

ii) The website is one destination in a much bigger journey

Merkle's research shows how widely discovery has spread, with consumers' first-choice ranked as:



Source: [Merkle, Consumers, Commerce, and AI, Spring 2026](#)



Websites still matter, but buyers rarely rely on one source.

Discovery has become a process of accumulation. One search result. One review. One video. One Reddit thread. One AI answer. One expert opinion. Together, these encounters shape the consideration set.

iii) AI discovery is fragmented too

AI adds another layer to the discovery ecosystem.

Semrush analyzed more than 126 million U.S. AI search prompts across 22 industries and four AI platforms. It found that AI systems draw from a distributed mix of brand content, customer reviews, community discussions, independent publishers, retailers, reference platforms and industry sources.

Visibility also varies significantly by platform. Only 36 brands maintained top-100 visibility across all four AI platforms during every month studied. Source: [Semrush, 2026 AI Visibility Index](#)

No single platform represents the whole discovery environment anymore.

FROM SEARCH RANKING TO DISCOVERY ECOSYSTEM



JK TAKE

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR BUILDING MATERIALS GROWTH

A building product doesn't enter consideration through one channel.

Architects and other professionals move among manufacturer websites, technical documentation, independent search, specification platforms, representatives, consultants and professional peers. AIA found that architecture professionals typically use four to five sources when seeking technical product support.

This means a strong website is necessary, but it isn't enough.

A manufacturer may have excellent product information and still lose consideration if that information is missing, outdated or inconsistent on the platforms, distributor

sites and external sources buyers use. Product visibility also needs to extend beyond the exact brand or product name. Manufacturers must be discoverable when buyers search by application, performance requirement, project challenge or desired outcome.

AI adds another layer. It can summarize and compare information from across the ecosystem before a buyer reaches an owned channel. If a manufacturer's technical information is difficult to interpret, inconsistent across sources or absent from influential environments, it becomes harder for both buyers and machines to understand when the product should be considered.

The growth question becomes:

Where are products being discovered, evaluated and shortlisted, and are we represented accurately in those places?

The risk isn't simply losing website traffic. It's never entering the specification or consideration set.

WHAT BUILDING MATERIALS MARKETING LEADERS SHOULD DO NOW

Build a Search Everywhere Strategy

Understand where architects, contractors, specifiers, distributors and owners discover, research, compare and validate building products, then manage visibility across that ecosystem.

1. Map your discovery ecosystem

Start with the customer, not the channel plan.

Map where buyers and specifiers:

- Discover the problem
- Learn about possible products and solutions
- Compare alternatives
- Validate their shortlist

Then identify the environments they use across search and AI, specification platforms, manufacturer and distributor websites, video and social, reviews and professional communities, and industry or expert sources.

The objective is to understand **where consideration and specification decisions are actually being formed**, rather than assuming it starts with Google or your website.

Book a free AI Visibility Snapshot

2. Find your visibility gaps

Search for your product category, applications and priority building challenges across the environments your customers use, then compare what they find.

Where are you consistently visible? Where do competitors dominate? Where are you missing entirely? Which third-party sources repeatedly influence the results?

Your biggest discovery gap may have nothing to do with your Google ranking.

3. Build for the ecosystem, not just the channel

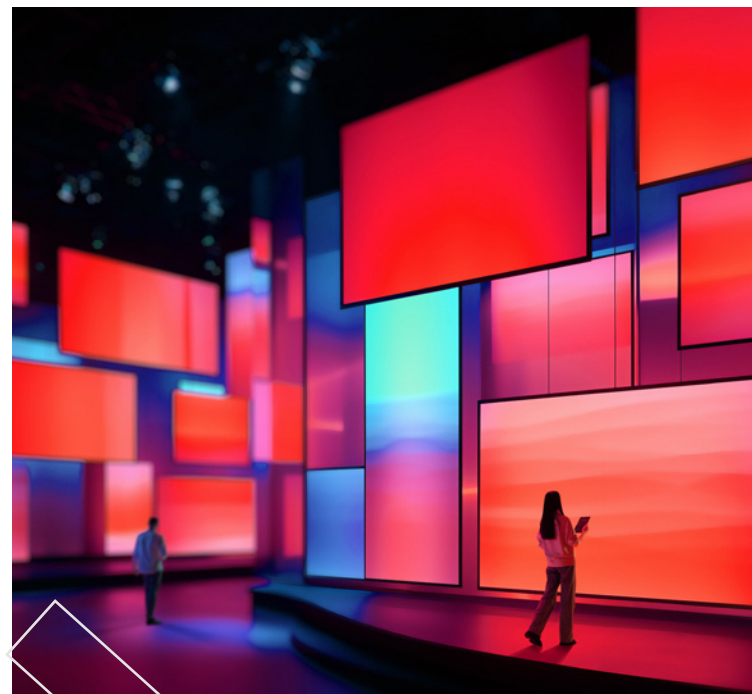
Publishing the same content everywhere is not a Search Everywhere strategy.

Different environments support different customer needs. Search may answer a technical question. Video can demonstrate how a product is installed or performs. Specification platforms support product evaluation. Professional communities provide practical opinions. AI assistants synthesize multiple sources into recommendations.

Build content for the behaviour of each platform and strengthen the external sources you do not control, including distributor information, expert commentary, partner content and industry coverage.

Then measure visibility, not just traffic.

Traffic tells you who reached you. Visibility tells you whether your product had the opportunity to be considered and specified.



PRESSURE TEST

PRESSURE TEST YOUR DISCOVERY ECOSYSTEM

Choose one priority customer journey and map where buyers could reasonably discover, research, compare and validate options.

Discovery environment	Are we visible?	Are competitors visible?	What does the customer find?	What is the opportunity?
Google/Search				
AI assistants				
YouTube/Video				
Social				
Reviews				
Reddit/Communities				
Marketplaces				
Industry/Expert sources				
Our website				

Then ask:

1. Where are we consistently absent?

Which discovery environments matter to customers but currently underrepresent our brand?

2. Where are competitors stronger?

Which brands repeatedly appear while we do not?

3. Which gap matters most?

Where could improving visibility materially increase our chance of entering consideration?

THE NEW RULE

If customers can discover your category there,
your brand needs a strategy for being found there.

THE NEW RULES FOR GROWTH

Trust → Discoverability → Self-Service + Expertise → Buying Network → Demand Creation → Brand + Performance → Enterprise Alignment → Continuous Learning

SHIFT 3: Self-Service Raises the Value of Human Expertise

THE OLD RULE

Capture a lead early and move the prospect into a sales-led process.

THE NEW REALITY

Customers can do more without you.

Customers can do more without you.

They can research a problem, understand their options, compare solutions, read reviews, watch demonstrations, calculate costs and investigate potential providers before speaking to anyone.

AI is accelerating that independence. Customers can now ask specific questions, summarize complex information, and compare alternatives in seconds.

Greater self-service doesn't eliminate the need for people, but it does change what customers need from them.

Customers need less help accessing information. When they choose to engage a person, they expect something harder to get from a search result, website or AI assistant:

Judgment. Interpretation. Context. Reassurance. Expertise.

Self-service raises the bar for human interaction.



THE EVIDENCE BEHIND THE SHIFT

i) Self-service is now a core part of the buying journey

Gartner found that 70% of B2B buyers preferred a completely digital self-service buying experience and 67% preferred an experience without a sales representative. Buyers also used an average of seven information sources during a recent purchase.

Source: [Gartner, B2B Buying Journey](#)

McKinsey found that B2B buyers now use an average of 10 channels across the purchasing journey, moving between in-person, remote and digital self-service interactions.

Source: [McKinsey & Company, The surprising economics of B2B growth](#)

Self-service is no longer an alternative to the buying journey. It is part of it.

ii) AI is making self-service more capable

Customers now have tools that can help them quickly turn an unfamiliar category into something they understand.

AI can summarize reviews, explain technical differences, compare alternatives against specific criteria and identify questions or trade-offs a buyer should consider.

Adobe found that AI-referred traffic to U.S. retail sites increased 393% year over year during the first three months of 2026. AI-referred visitors converted 42% better than non-AI traffic, and 39% of consumers using AI for online shopping said it made them more confident in a purchase.

Source: [Adobe report, U.S. retailers see surge in AI traffic](#)

These results don't prove that AI caused stronger conversion but they do point to an important change in the journey. Customers arrive at a brand having already done significant work. They know more, have better questions and may be further along in their decision.



iii) Human expertise becomes more valuable when the decision gets harder

Customers may prefer independence while gathering information, but that changes as uncertainty increases.

Gartner found that 69% of B2B buyers want sales representatives to validate AI-generated insights, particularly when selecting suppliers, building internal support and finalizing a purchase. Source: [Gartner Newsroom](#).

A buyer may not need more information or a salesperson to explain product features they can find online. And they may not need someone to walk through a standard implementation process. But,

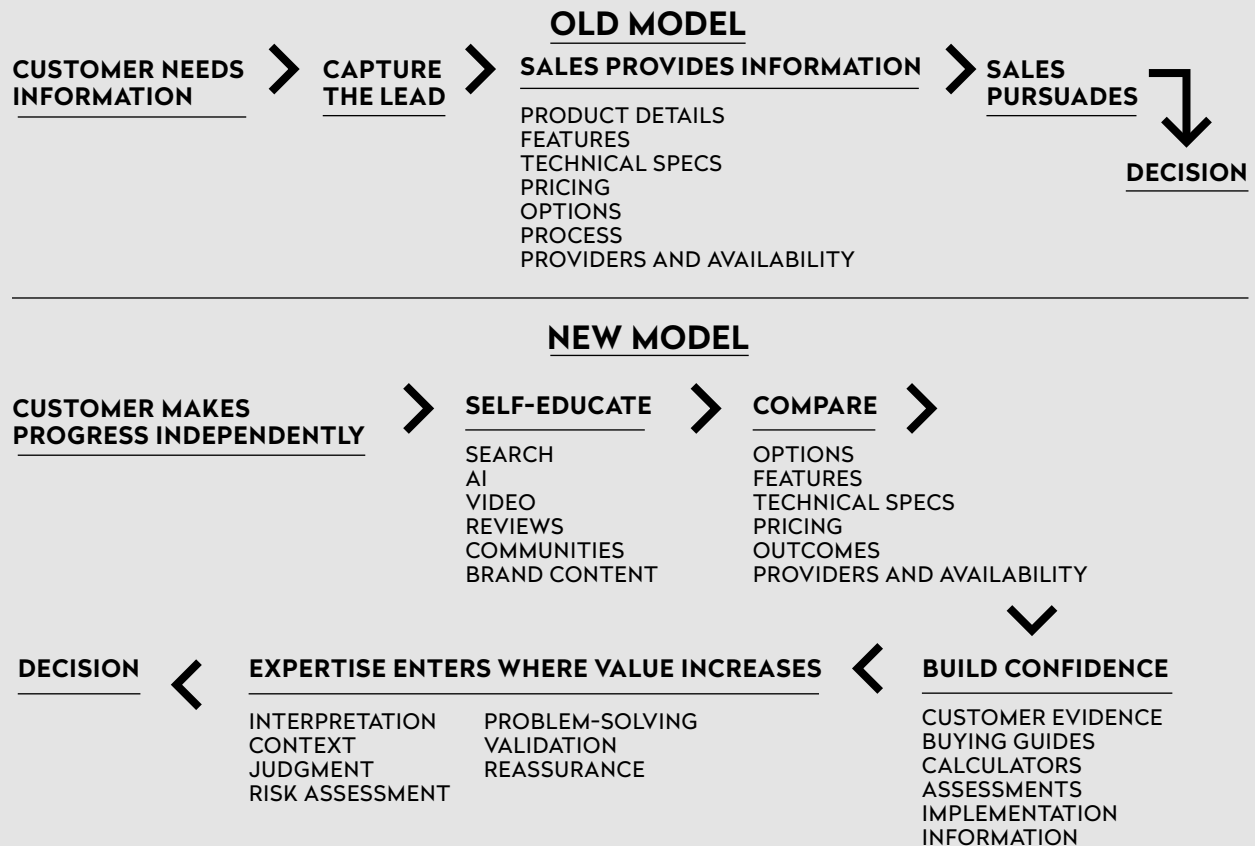
They may need an expert to tell them which features actually matter for their situation.

They may need someone who can identify the risks specific to their organization.

They may need confidence that they are interpreting the information correctly.

As information becomes easier to access, judgment becomes more valuable.

FROM INFORMATION GATEKEEPER TO EXPERT GUIDE



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WHAT THIS MEANS FOR BUILDING MATERIALS GROWTH

Building-materials buyers and influencers increasingly want to make meaningful progress before speaking with a manufacturer.

Architects, specifiers, contractors and owners can research applications, compare products, review technical information and explore possible solutions independently. AIA found that 74% of architecture professionals were optimistic about AI's ability to support product research.

But independent research hasn't eliminated the need for manufacturer expertise. Eighty-six percent of architecture professionals still contact manufacturer representatives when seeking technical product support.

The role of the representative is changing. Buyers don't need a person simply to retrieve information that should already be available online. They need expertise when the

decision involves technical interpretation, application-specific judgment, risk, compliance or competing project requirements.

That makes self-service information and human expertise complementary.

Digital experiences should answer repeatable questions at scale. Technical experts should help buyers understand how the product applies to a particular project and where trade-offs or risks need closer consideration.

The growth questions become:

How far can a project stakeholder progress without us?

AND

Where would access to a knowledgeable person materially improve the specification or product decision?

**Let digital experiences handle information at scale.
Use human expertise where judgment creates value.**

WHAT BUILDING MATERIALS MARKETING LEADERS SHOULD DO NOW

Build a self-service specification journey supported by accessible experts.

Design the journey around what architects, contractors, specifiers, distributors and owners need to accomplish, then decide where self-service works and where expertise matters.

1. Remove unnecessary information friction

Choose a priority product or specification journey and identify the questions customers need answered before they can move forward:

- What problem are they solving?
- What product or system options exist?
- What will it cost and what value should they expect?
- What are the performance, compliance, installation and project risks?

Then ask: **Can a customer get a useful answer without talking to us?**

Audit where you force human interaction through gated technical resources, forms, quote requests or sales calls for basic product information.

Some product and application decisions genuinely require a conversation. Basic information usually does not.

Free your representatives and technical experts from explaining what customers could reasonably discover themselves.



2. Build decision support, not just content

Customers and specifiers need more than information. They need help applying it to their project or application.

Create tools such as:

Product selection and comparison guides

- Calculators
- Technical assessments
- Specification resources
- Installation and implementation guidance

Then make your expertise discoverable through expert perspectives, original research, technical guidance and useful decision frameworks.

The goal is to help customers move from **"I understand my options"** to **"I understand which product or system makes sense for this project."**

3. Redesign human interaction around judgment

At every point where customers interact with sales, technical support, customer service or a manufacturer representative, ask:

What can this person add that the customer could not get from our website, search or AI?

The answer should increasingly involve interpretation, application expertise, judgment, recommendation and risk assessment.

If your people spend most of their time explaining basic product information, the journey needs redesigning.

Give customers the basics. Prepare your people for the harder questions.

PRESSURE TEST

PRESSURE TEST YOUR SELF-SERVICE + EXPERTISE JOURNEY

Choose one priority customer journey and map what customers need to learn, compare, validate and decide before they are ready to buy.

Customer need	Can they do it independently?	What do we provide today?	Where is the friction?	Where would expertise add value?
Understand the problem				
Explore products/solutions				
Compare options				
Understand cost/value				
Validate credibility				
Understand Installation				
Assess risk				
Make the decision				

Then ask:

1. Where are we forcing interaction too early?

What information are we withholding because it serves our process rather than the customer?

2. Where does uncertainty increase?

At what points does the decision become complex, risky or difficult to interpret?

3. Where would an expert materially improve the decision?

These are the moments where human interaction should be easiest to access.

THE NEW RULE

Let customers handle the information. Bring in people for the judgment.

SHIFT 4: Buying Decisions Are Influenced by Hidden Buyers

THE OLD RULE

Identify the decision-maker and persuade that person.

THE NEW REALITY

The person talking to sales is rarely making the decision alone.

Behind most significant Building Materials purchases is a wider network of stakeholders assessing value, risk, feasibility and organizational fit. Users care about usability. Technical teams care about integration and risk. Finance wants a credible return. Executives and procurement want confidence that the decision is sound.

Many of these people may never attend a meeting, complete a form or appear in the CRM. But they can still shape requirements, influence the shortlist, introduce objections, delay approval or stop the purchase.

The visible buyer may lead the process, but an invisible network is often shaping the outcome.

The question is no longer simply: How do we persuade the buyer?

It is: **How do we help the entire decision network reach enough confidence to move forward?**



THE EVIDENCE BEHIND THE SHIFT

i) Buying decisions involve more people than most organizations realize

The image of a single Building Materials decision-maker no longer reflects how most significant purchases happen.

Forrester found that 73% of purchases involve three or more departments. The average buying decision includes 13 people inside the buyer's organization and another nine external participants. That is potentially 22 people influencing one purchase.

Source: [Forrester, Three Realities About B2B Buying Networks, 2026.](#)

Different stakeholders evaluate the same purchase against different criteria. As the network grows, a single message, business case or relationship becomes less likely to carry the decision.

ii) Much of the decision is made before sales can see it

According to 6sense, 80% of buying groups make major decisions (including defining purchase requirements and, frequently, selecting a preferred vendor) before engaging with sellers. Source: [6sense, Meet the B2B Buying Group: Who's at the Table and What They Do, 2025.](#)

By the time a recognizable buyer enters the sales process, the group may already have defined the problem, agreed on key requirements and formed a shortlist.

The sales conversation may begin in the middle of the buying journey while the CRM treats it as the beginning. This creates a visibility problem.



iii) Internal alignment determines whether the purchase moves forward

Hidden decision-makers can carry as much influence as the buyers marketing and sales typically target, yet 71% report relatively little or no interaction with sales. More than half use thought leadership to evaluate potential vendors.

At the same time, Gartner found that 74% of B2B buyer teams experience unhealthy conflict during the decision process. Source: [Gartner Newsroom, Edelman and LinkedIn, 2025 B2B Thought Leadership Impact Report.](#)

A strong champion can still lose the decision if finance lacks a credible business case, technical teams see unresolved risk or the broader group cannot agree on the path forward.



FROM INDIVIDUAL PERSUASION TO NETWORK ALIGNMENT

OLD MODEL

IDENTIFY THE DECISION-MAKER



CAPTURE THE LEAD

FORM FILL
QUOTE REQUEST
SALES INQUIRY
RESPONSE



PERSUADE THE CONTACT

PRODUCT MESSAGE
SALES PRESENTATION
PROPOSAL
FOLLOW-UP



CLOSE THE DEAL

NEW MODEL

MAP THE DECISION NETWORK

ARCHITECT OR SPECIFIER
ENGINEER OR CONSULTANT
OWNER OR DEVELOPER
GENERAL CONTRACTOR
SUBCONTRACTOR OR INSTALLER
DISTRIBUTOR OR DEALER
PROCUREMENT
FACILITY OR OPERATIONS TEAM
FINANCE
HOME OWNER



UNDERSTAND DIFFERENT PRIORITIES

OUTCOMES
RISKS
REQUIREMENTS
OBJECTIONS
EVIDENCE NEEDS



BUILD PROOF THAT TRAVELS

CUSTOMER OUTCOMES
BUSINESS CASES
ROI TOOLS
TECHNICAL GUIDANCE
IMPLEMENTATION PLANS
EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES



DECISION



CREATE INTERNAL ALIGNMENT

SHARED UNDERSTANDING
REDUCED UNCERTAINTY
GREATER CONFIDENCE
CLEAR PATH FORWARD



EQUIP THE CHAMPION

SHAREABLE LANGUAGE
STAKEHOLDER-SPECIFIC EVIDENCE
ANSWERS TO LIKELY OBJECTIONS
A CREDIBLE CASE FOR CHANGE

JK TAKE

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR BUILDING MATERIALS GROWTH

There is rarely one building-materials buyer.

Architects may influence the design intent. Engineers assess performance. Owners consider risk, value and long-term outcomes. Contractors evaluate constructability and installation. Distributors influence access and availability. Code officials, consultants, procurement teams and facility managers may also affect what is approved, purchased, substituted or retained.

Many of these people will never enter the manufacturer's CRM. They may research independently, encounter different information and evaluate the same product against very different criteria.

A product can be preferred by one stakeholder and blocked by another.

This makes consistency critical. Every audience should receive a version of the value proposition that answers its questions without fragmenting the core product story.

The strongest building-materials marketing also gives the visible champion credible information to carry into conversations the manufacturer will never attend.

The growth question becomes:

Where are specifications, purchases or product preferences being weakened because one stakeholder lacks the confidence to support the decision?

WHAT BUILDING MATERIALS MARKETING LEADERS SHOULD DO NOW

Build for the Entire Decision Network

Separate the work designed to capture existing product and project demand from the work designed to create future demand.

Then fund and measure both deliberately.

1. Map the real buying network

Choose a priority product, specification or purchase decision and identify everyone who can support, shape, delay, substitute or block it.

Look beyond the formal decision-maker. Consider:

- Architects, specifiers and engineers
- Contractors, installers and other product users
- Owners, developers and facility teams
- Distributors and channel partners
- Financial and technical approvers
- Procurement, legal or compliance

Ask sales and manufacturer representatives which stakeholders tend to appear late. Ask customer and technical teams who becomes involved during specification, installation or project delivery. Review lost opportunities and substitutions to identify objections that were not anticipated.

The objective is to understand **how the decision actually happens**, not how the funnel assumes it happens.



2. Understand what each stakeholder needs to believe

Different stakeholders are evaluating different aspects of the same product or system decision.

For each role, identify:

- What outcome matters most?
- What risk are they trying to avoid?
- What evidence will they trust?
- What objection could block their support?

Then translate one consistent case for change into the evidence each stakeholder needs.

Do not fragment the story. Make the same value proposition useful from different perspectives.

3. Build proof that travels and equip the champion

Most project and buying conversations happen without you.

Create evidence that is easy to find, understand and share, such as:

- Project outcomes and case studies
- Lifecycle value or cost-of-inaction tools
- Technical, compliance and installation guidance
- Executive summaries and product-selection criteria

Then give architects, representatives, contractors, distributors and other champions the language and evidence to answer four questions:

Why change? Why now? Why this approach? Why us?

If the value of your product depends on someone from your organization presenting it, the case may not survive the specification and purchasing process.

Give the champion a case they can carry.

PRESSURE TEST

PRESSURE TEST YOUR INVISIBLE BUYING NETWORK

Choose one important purchase decision your organization needs to influence. Map everyone who can support, shape, delay or block it.

Stakeholder	Outcome they want	Risk they want to avoid	Proof they need	Where is the gap?
Architect or specifier				
Engineer or consultant				
Owner or developer				
General contractor				
Subcontractor or installer				
Distributor or dealer				
Procurement				
Facility or operations team				
Finance				
Home Owner				

Then ask:

1. Who is invisible to us?

Which stakeholders can materially influence the outcome without entering the CRM or speaking with our team?

2. Where is the proof weakest?

Which stakeholder has an important question our current marketing cannot answer credibly?

3. Where does alignment break down?

Which late-stage objection, approval requirement or competing priority should have been addressed earlier?

THE NEW RULE

Don't market to a decision-maker. Help the decision network reach a decision.

SHIFT 5: Marketing Must Create Demand & Capture It

THE OLD RULE

Find people who are ready to buy and convert them efficiently.

THE NEW REALITY

Most of your future customers aren't looking for you yet.

They may have the problem you solve, but it isn't a priority. They may be living with an inefficient workaround. They may see the category differently. Or they may simply have no reason to act right now.

Demand capture works when buyers already know what they need and enter the market looking for a solution but that represents only a fraction of the growth opportunity.

LinkedIn's B2B Institute has helped popularize the commercial implication: if marketing focuses primarily on people who are ready to buy now, it competes for a small existing pool of demand while underinvesting in the much larger group that will buy later.

Source: [LinkedIn B2B Institute, The 95-5 Rule](#)

And the economics of relying heavily on demand capture are getting harder.

Paid search, paid social and other performance channels make existing demand easier to reach, but they also make it easier for competitors to bid for the same customer.

Growth can't depend entirely on winning the auction at the bottom of the funnel.

Marketing also has to influence what future buyers understand, value and prioritize before they enter the market. So the question changes from: **How do we capture more demand?** To: **What are we doing to create the demand we want to capture next?**



THE EVIDENCE BEHIND THE SHIFT

i) Most future customers aren't buying today

Research from the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute found that in many B2B categories, approximately 5% of potential buyers are actively in-market at any given time. The other 95% are future buyers. Source: [Ehrenberg-Bass Institute, Advertising Effectiveness and the 95:5 Rule](#)

The exact ratio varies by category and purchase cycle. The principle matters more than the number.

Marketing built entirely around immediate conversion systematically undervalues the future market. Some of the most valuable marketing work therefore happens before there is a lead, search query or buying signal to capture.

ii) Future buyers can be influenced before they are ready to act

Demand creation starts by helping people see something differently.

A problem they've underestimated.

An opportunity they haven't considered.

A cost they've normalized.

A change in the market they need to understand.

A better way to approach an existing challenge.

Thought leadership can play a significant role in that process.

Edelman and LinkedIn found that **73% of decision-makers said an organization's thought leadership was a more trustworthy basis for assessing its capabilities than its marketing materials and product sheets.**

And **75% of decision-makers said a piece of thought leadership had led them to research a product or service they had not previously considered.**

Source: [Edelman + LinkedIn, B2B Thought Leadership Impact Report](#)

That is the opportunity. Good marketing can cause someone to investigate something they weren't previously considering.



iii) AI is making generic content easier to produce and easier to ignore

AI has made it faster and cheaper to create articles, emails, social posts, summaries and other marketing assets. But greater production capacity doesn't automatically create greater influence.

Bynder found that 50% of consumers could identify copy they believed was AI-generated, and 52% said they became less engaged when they suspected content was AI-generated. Source: [Bynder, Consumer Study](#)

The risk is clear.

If everyone can produce more competent content at lower cost, competent content becomes less differentiated.

What becomes more valuable is harder to copy:

Original evidence. Distinctive thinking. Real expertise. New problem framing.

FROM DEMAND CAPTURE TO DEMAND CREATION

OLD GROWTH MODEL



NEW GROWTH MODEL



JK TAKE

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR BUILDING MATERIALS GROWTH

Building-materials marketing often begins too close to the product and too late in the decision process.

By the time someone searches for a specific product category, downloads a technical document or requests a quote, much of the opportunity has already been defined. The project need, design approach, material preference and potential supplier set may already be taking shape.

Demand creation means influencing the thinking that happens earlier.

Manufacturers can help architects, contractors, owners and channel partners understand emerging risks and opportunities before a formal product search begins. These could include changing codes, labour

shortages, installation efficiency, resilience, embodied carbon, prefabrication, lifecycle performance or new construction methods.

The opportunity is to become associated with an important industry issue before buyers have reduced it to a product requirement.

When customers eventually enter the market, they may already understand the problem through your perspective, recognize your expertise and see your category or product as part of the solution.

The growth question becomes:

What are we helping the industry understand today that could shape tomorrow's specifications and purchases?

WHAT BUILDING MATERIALS MARKETING LEADERS SHOULD DO NOW

Build a Demand Creation Engine

Separate the work designed to capture existing product and project demand from the work designed to create future demand.

Then fund and measure both deliberately.

1. Find the problem behind the problem

Most building-materials marketing starts too close to the product. Step back and ask:

- What project or industry problem have customers learned to tolerate?
- What cost, risk or consequence is hidden?
- What change in technology, regulation, building standards, behaviour or competition is altering the equation?
- What are architects, contractors, owners or distributors solving poorly today?

Demand creation starts by making an important problem or opportunity harder to ignore.

2. Build a distinctive point of view and proof

Information is abundant. A useful perspective backed by credible evidence is scarcer.

Decide what your organization believes that is genuinely useful to the building industry.

What do customers routinely misunderstand?
What conventional wisdom do you challenge?
What change in sustainability, labour, construction methods, performance requirements or regulation do customers need to prepare for?

Then support the point of view with evidence competitors cannot easily copy:

- Original research
- Customer, product or project data
- Technical and industry expertise
- Proprietary frameworks or tools

The goal is to give future buyers and specifiers a better way to understand something that matters and a reason to remember who helped them see it.

3. Invest in future buyers and measure whether you are shaping demand

Not every marketing investment needs to produce a lead, quote request or specification today.

Create content and experiences that help future buyers recognize the issue, understand its cost, see what is changing and build the case for action.

Then look for signals that your thinking is entering the market:

- Branded and category search
- Engagement among priority audiences
- Earned and AI visibility
- Familiarity and consideration

Specification and sales conversations referencing your point of view

Connect those signals to commercial performance over time.

If demand creation is measured only by immediate conversion, it will systematically be underfunded.



PRESSURE TEST

PRESSURE TEST YOUR DEMAND CREATION STRATEGY

Choose one priority market, customer segment or growth opportunity and start with the dominant assumption customers currently hold.

Question	Your answer
What does the market currently believe?	
What important problem or opportunity is being overlooked?	
What do we believe customers need to understand differently?	
What evidence supports our point of view?	
What can we say or prove that competitors cannot easily copy?	
What action do we want future buyers to take or consider?	

Then ask:

1. Are we creating a new perspective or answering an existing question?

If most of our content answers questions customers are already asking, are we primarily capturing demand rather than creating it?

2. Is our point of view distinctive and credible?

What evidence makes the idea memorable, believable and difficult for competitors to copy?

3. Are we investing enough in future buyers?

How much of our marketing budget and effort is aimed at people who aren't ready to buy today?

THE NEW RULE

Don't wait for customers to enter the market. Give them a reason to enter it.

THE NEW RULES FOR GROWTH

Trust → Discoverability → Self-Service + Expertise → Buying Network → Demand Creation → **Brand + Performance** → Enterprise Alignment → Continuous Learning

SHIFT 6: Brand and Performance Must Work as One Growth System

THE OLD RULE

Build the brand and drive performance as separate marketing jobs.

THE NEW REALITY

The line between brand and performance has become increasingly artificial.

Customers experience one company across a connected journey. They see an ad. Search the brand. Ask AI. Read reviews. Watch a video. Visit the website. Leave. See another ad. Ask a colleague. Return through search. Compare alternatives. Buy.

Every interaction can shape what they think about the brand and what they do next.

Yet many marketing organizations still manage these interactions through separate teams, budgets, agencies, objectives and measurement systems. One side creates long-term brand value while the other is expected to produce immediate results.

That separation makes it harder to see how growth actually happens.

The question is no longer whether brand or performance matters more. It's: **Are they making each other more effective?**



THE EVIDENCE BEHIND THE SHIFT

i) Performance marketing works better when people already know you

Nielsen has repeatedly found that brand-building activity contributes to both short- and long-term sales effects, while sustained investment helps maintain future demand.

Source: [Nielsen, Focusing on the entire marketing funnel](#)

Research from the IPA has consistently shown that marketing effectiveness requires both long-term brand building and shorter-term activation. Campaigns combining both effects were significantly more likely to produce large business effects than those focused primarily on one or the other. Source: [IPA, The Long and the Short of It](#)

Brand helps create the conditions for future demand. Performance helps capture and convert it. Stronger growth comes from connecting the two.



ii) Optimizing only for what converts today can weaken what drives growth tomorrow

Digital marketing gave marketers extraordinary visibility into immediate behaviour.

Metrics such as clicks, leads, conversions, cost per acquisition and ROAS are useful because they tell us what happened close to the transaction. But proximity to the transaction can make a channel look more responsible for the sale than it actually was.

- A branded search click may get the conversion, but what caused the customer to search the brand?
- A retargeting ad may get the final click, but what created the original interest?
- An affiliate may receive the attribution, but what made the customer trust the company enough to buy?

Research from Analytic Partners has found that brands increasing marketing investment during periods of economic pressure can gain disproportionately when competitors pull back, while excessive short-term cuts can weaken future growth. Source: [Analytic Partners, Newsroom](#)

Managing marketing entirely through short-term attribution rewards what happens nearest the sale and can systematically undervalue what made the sale possible.

iii) Brand creates a multiplier effect across the growth system

Brand investment improves the economics of the broader marketing system.

A familiar, trusted and distinctive brand can improve advertising response, conversion and direct or branded search. It can reduce reliance on paid acquisition, support premium pricing, increase retention and make sales conversations easier.

WARC describes this as a multiplier effect. Brands that build future demand while capturing existing demand tend to produce stronger long-term growth than those that overcorrect toward short-term performance. Source: [WARC, The Multiplier Effect](#)

Brand strength therefore changes the economics of performance. The same media investment can produce very different results depending on how familiar, trusted and relevant the brand already is.

FROM TWO MARKETING PROGRAMS TO ONE GROWTH SYSTEM

OLD MODEL

BRAND

AWARENESS
REACH
REPUTATION
CREATIVE
LONG-TERM METRICS

SEPARATE TEAM
SEPARATE BUDGET
SEPARATE MEASUREMENT



PERFORMANCE

CLICKS
LEADS
CONVERSIONS
ROAS
SHORT-TERM METRICS

SEPARATE TEAM
SEPARATE BUDGET
SEPARATE MEASUREMENT

NEW MODEL

CREATE FUTURE DEMAND

DISTINCTIVE BRAND
BROAD REACH
CATEGORY RELEVANCE

EMOTION
MEMORY
TRUST



BUILD PREFERENCE

FAMILIARITY
EVIDENCE
EXPERTISE

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE
MENTAL AVAILABILITY



CAPTURE EXISTING DEMAND

SEARCH
PAID MEDIA
AI DISCOVERY

CONTENT
RETAIL
SALES



EVERY PART
STRENGTHENS THE NEXT.

FUTURE GROWTH

REPEAT PURCHASE
RECOMMENDATION
BRAND STRENGTH
LOWER ACQUISITION FRICTION



CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

PRODUCT
SERVICE

RETENTION
ADVOCACY



CONVERT

DIGITAL EXPERIENCE
OFFERS
SALES

COMMERCE
RETARGETING

JK TAKE

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR BUILDING MATERIALS GROWTH

Brand and demand generation play different roles, but both influence the same commercial outcome.

Performance activity can capture existing interest through product searches, specification downloads, sample requests, distributor activity and sales inquiries. Brand investment builds the familiarity, credibility and preference that make those actions more likely and more valuable.

In building materials, the connection can be difficult to see because the path from awareness to revenue is often long and indirect. An architect may encounter a manufacturer months before specifying it. A contractor may influence a substitution. A distributor may fulfil the purchase. The final transaction may not reveal every interaction that created confidence along the way.

Over-relying on immediate lead or media measures can shift investment toward the bottom of the journey while undervaluing the brand, education and technical credibility that created the opportunity.

The opposite is also true. Awareness without clear product pathways, specification resources or channel support may fail to become commercial demand.

The growth question isn't whether to fund brand or performance.

It is whether brand is making demand easier to capture, and whether demand signals are making the brand more relevant

When managed as one system, the effects can compound:

Brand strengthens acquisition and specification. Acquisition creates customers. Customer experience creates proof and advocacy. Proof strengthens the brand, making the next customer easier to acquire.

The goal is to improve the productivity of the whole growth system, not decide whether the next dollar belongs to "brand" or "performance."

WHAT BUILDING MATERIALS MARKETING LEADERS SHOULD DO NOW

Build One Integrated Growth System

Manage brand and performance against different jobs, but one commercial outcome.

1. Define the roles and invest across time horizons

Be clear about what each part of the system is expected to do.

Brand should help:

- Create future demand
- Build familiarity and mental availability
- Strengthen distinctiveness
- Build trust and preference among buyers and specifiers

Performance should help:

- Capture existing product and project demand
- Convert intent
- Generate qualified leads, specification activity or sales opportunities
- Re-engage interested buyers and project stakeholders

Then plan investment across three horizons:

NOW: Capture and convert existing demand.

NEXT: Build preference among people approaching a product, specification or project decision.

LATER: Create memory, relevance and demand among future buyers and specifiers.

Different jobs. Different time horizons. One growth system.



2. Measure value beyond the final click

Last-click attribution tells you what happened near the conversion. It does not tell you everything that caused the specification, inquiry or sale.

Complement attribution with broader measures such as:

- Incrementality testing
- Marketing mix modelling
- Brand tracking
- Customer, specifier and channel research
- Customer lifetime value
- Specification and sales pipeline signals

Then look for the connections between brand and performance:

- Brand familiarity → product consideration
- Trust → lead and specification quality
- Distinctive creative → media performance
- Customer and project experience → advocacy and acquisition

Instead of asking, “**Which channel got the lead or sale?**” ask: “**What investment caused growth that would not otherwise have happened?**”

3. Make creative work across the system

Brand and performance creative should feel like the same company.

Distinctive brand assets should travel into performance channels. Performance insights should sharpen brand creative. Technical proof, project examples and customer evidence should strengthen both.

Adapt strong ideas to the job of each channel without losing the consistency that builds memory.

Consistency creates memory. Relevance creates response. The growth system needs both.

PRESSURE TEST

PRESSURE TEST YOUR GROWTH SYSTEM

Map your current marketing investment against the job it is actually doing.

Marketing activity	Creates future demand	Builds preference	Captures demand	Converts demand	How do we measure it?
Brand advertising					
Paid search					
Paid social					
Content					
SEO / AI visibility					
Earned media					
CRM / email					
Sales enablement					
Customer marketing					

Then ask:

1. Are we overinvested in capturing demand that already exists?

How much of our budget is competing for customers who are already close to buying?

2. What is creating the next customer?

Which investments are building familiarity, relevance and preference among future buyers?

3. Are we optimizing the whole system or individual metrics?

Where might attribution, team structures or channel KPIs be causing us to undervalue what actually drives growth?

THE NEW RULE

Stop choosing between brand and performance. Make them compound.

SHIFT 7: Marketing Has Become an Enterprise Growth Function

THE OLD RULE

Marketing owns communications, campaigns and lead generation.

THE NEW REALITY

Marketing is increasingly being held accountable for growth, not simply marketing performance such as awareness, engagement, leads or return on media spend.

Its mandate now extends beyond the marketing department to revenue, customer acquisition, conversion, retention, customer value and market growth.

Marketing can create demand, but many functions determine whether that demand becomes sustainable growth. Sales influences conversion. Product and customer experience influence whether the promise is delivered. Service and customer success influence retention. Finance shapes investment decisions. Technology and AI increasingly connect data, decisions and interactions across the journey.

Marketing's contribution to growth therefore depends on its ability to connect the functions shaping the customer and commercial outcome.

The question is no longer simply: **How well is marketing performing?**

It is: **How well is the organization working together to create growth?**



THE EVIDENCE BEHIND THE SHIFT

i) Marketing leaders are being held accountable for commercial outcomes

Russell Reynolds Associates analyzed CMO job specifications and found that 100% referenced revenue growth, while 85% identified a connection to revenue growth as a core CMO competency.

Source: [Russell Reynolds Associates, The Rules Have Changed: CEOs, Here's How to Land a High-Impact Marketing Officer](#), December 9, 2025.

Traditional marketing measures still matter, but marketers also need to show how marketing activity contributes to a business outcome.

ii) The marketing mandate now crosses traditional functional boundaries

Russell Reynolds also found that 95% of CMO job specifications required both brand and performance expertise, with the senior marketing remit expanding across sales, product, finance and technology. Source: [Russell Reynolds Associates, The Rules Have Changed: CEOs, Here's How to Land a High-Impact Marketing Officer](#).

This reflects the broader reality:

Positioning affects sales conversations.
Customer insight affects product priorities.
The brand promise affects customer experience.
Retention affects the economic value of acquisition.

Marketing cannot optimize these connections through campaigns alone.



iii) Alignment improves growth and retention

Forrester found that organizations with highly aligned marketing, digital and customer experience teams achieve 1.6 times faster revenue growth and 1.4 times better customer retention than their peers. Source: [Forrester, Align Budget Planning to Accelerate Performance in 2025](#).

When teams operate with different definitions of the customer, disconnected data and competing measures, value leaks from the journey.

When they align around shared outcomes, each function can strengthen the next.

FROM DEPARTMENTAL MARKETING TO ENTERPRISE GROWTH

OLD MODEL

MARKETING

BUILD AWARENESS
RUN CAMPAIGNS
GENERATE LEADS



HAND OFF TO SALES



SALES

CONVERT OPPORTUNITIES
CLOSE DEALS



HAND OFF TO SERVICE



CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

ONBOARD
SUPPORT
RETAIN

SEPARATE TEAMS
SEPARATE DATA
SEPARATE BUDGETS
SEPARATE MEASURES
SEPARATE DEFINITIONS OF SUCCESS

NEW MODEL

SHARED CUSTOMER + BUSINESS OUTCOME

ACQUISITION
CONVERSION
REVENUE
RETENTION
CUSTOMER VALUE



ONE CONNECTED JOURNEY

DISCOVERY
RESEARCH AND EVALUATION
SPECIFICATION
APPROVAL AND PRODUCT
SELECTION
PROCUREMENT AND AVAILABILITY
PURCHASE
INSTALLATION AND PROJECT SUPPORT
EXPERIENCE
REPEAT SPECIFICATION
EXPANSION AND ADVOCACY



CONNECTED GROWTH FUNCTIONS

MARKETING
SALES
PRODUCT
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE
CUSTOMER SUCCESS
SERVICE
FINANCE
TECHNOLOGY AND AI



SHARED SIGNALS

CUSTOMER NEEDS
MARKET BEHAVIOUR
DEMAND
CONVERSION
EXPERIENCE
RETENTION
COMMERCIAL
PERFORMANCE



COORDINATED DECISIONS

PRIORITIES
INVESTMENT
EXPERIENCE IMPROVEMENTS
EXPERIMENTS
RESOURCE ALLOCATION



SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

JK TAKE

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR BUILDING MATERIALS GROWTH

Building-materials growth doesn't belong to marketing alone.

Marketing can create awareness and demand, but product teams shape the offer. Technical teams provide the evidence. Representatives influence the specification. Sales converts opportunities. Distributors affect availability and fulfilment. Customer service and installation support influence whether the brand promise is delivered.

A break anywhere in that system can weaken growth.

Marketing may create strong demand for a product that isn't available through the right distributors. A compelling sustainability message may not be supported by usable documentation. Representatives may receive leads without enough context. Product insights from contractors may never reach marketing or product development.

Each function can hit its own target while the customer encounters a disconnected experience.

Marketing's expanded role is to help connect these functions around the full path from market need to specification, purchase, installation and advocacy.

The growth question becomes:

Where is customer or commercial value being lost between marketing, product, technical, sales and the channel?

Cross-functional alignment improves the productivity of investments already being made. Shared customer understanding creates consistency. Connected data reveals friction. Common measures make trade-offs visible. Clear ownership allows the organization to act faster.

Marketing does not become solely responsible for enterprise growth.

It becomes responsible for helping the enterprise organize around it.



WHAT BUILDING MATERIALS MARKETING LEADERS SHOULD DO NOW

Build an Enterprise Growth Operating Model

Connect the functions that shape product discovery, specification, acquisition, customer experience, retention and channel growth around shared outcomes.

1. Start with a shared outcome and map the full journey

Cross-functional alignment becomes vague when it begins with a general instruction to collaborate.

Start with one specific customer and business outcome, such as:

- Improve specification or sales conversion
- Increase revenue from existing customers or distributors
- Reduce product substitutions
- Enter a priority market or construction segment
- Increase adoption of a priority product



Then map the customer journey across the functions that influence that result.

Identify where ownership changes, information gets lost, friction appears or performance declines.

The goal is to give teams one shared problem to solve.

2. Replace handoffs with shared ownership and measures

Important growth outcomes rarely belong to one function.

Marketing and sales may jointly influence opportunity quality and conversion. Marketing, product and technical teams may jointly determine whether the product promise is supported by credible evidence. Sales, customer service and channel teams may jointly influence adoption, availability and retention.

Define:

- Who owns the outcome
- Which functions contribute
- Which measures are shared
- Who can act when performance changes

Local metrics still matter. But if one function can hit its target while the overall customer or commercial result gets worse, the measurement system is encouraging the wrong behaviour.

3. Create a cross-functional decision rhythm

Alignment requires more than shared dashboards.

Bring marketing, sales, product, technical, customer service and channel teams together regularly to review customer, specification and commercial signals, identify friction, make decisions and assign clear ownership.

Technology and AI can connect data and surface patterns faster. But the value comes from what happens next.

Shared evidence only creates growth when it leads to coordinated action.

PRESSURE TEST

PRESSURE TEST YOUR ENTERPRISE GROWTH ALIGNMENT

Choose one priority customer or commercial outcome and map the functions that influence it.

Journey stage	Primary owner	Contributing functions	Shared measure	Where does value leak?	Who can act?
Discovery					
Research and evaluation					
Specification					
Approval and product selection					
Procurement and availability					
Purchase					
Installation and project support					
Experience					
Repeat specification					
Expansion and advocacy					

Then ask:

1. Where is ownership unclear?

Which important customer or commercial outcomes are falling between functions?

2. Are teams optimizing the same result?

Can one function achieve its target while the overall customer or commercial outcome gets worse?

3. Where does value leak from the system?

Which gap in data, ownership, handoffs or decision-making is having the greatest impact on growth?

THE NEW RULE

Marketing does not own growth alone. It must help the enterprise organize around it.

SHIFT 8:

Growth Is Managed Continuously, Not Through Annual Campaigns

THE OLD RULE

Set an annual plan, launch campaigns and evaluate performance at predetermined intervals.

THE NEW REALITY

The assumptions behind an annual plan can change long before the year ends.

*Customer behaviour shifts. Competitors move.
Market conditions change. New channels emerge.
Costs increase. Technology improves and AI creates
new capabilities.*

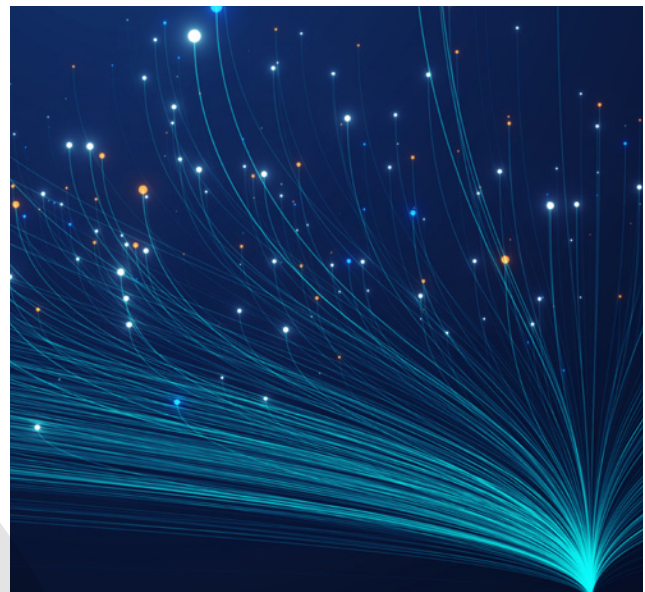
A campaign that looked relevant six months ago may be solving yesterday's problem, yet many organizations keep executing because the budget is approved, the calendar is set and the activity has already been committed.

The problem is not annual planning itself. The problem is treating the plan as fixed after the evidence changes.

Growth now depends less on predicting the entire year correctly and more on detecting meaningful signals, learning quickly and changing the route when needed.

The question is no longer simply: **Are we executing the plan?**

It is: **Are we learning fast enough to know when the plan should change?**



THE EVIDENCE BEHIND THE SHIFT

i) AI is shortening the time between insight and action

PwC reports that AI-enabled marketing can accelerate time-to-market, insight delivery and compliance review cycles by 70% to 90%. It also reports improvements of 10% to 30% in creative effectiveness, consumer relevance and decision accuracy.

Source: PwC, *AI in Marketing: From Efficiency to Growth Value*, April 20, 2026.

The implication goes beyond faster content production. AI can help organizations identify patterns sooner, interpret evidence faster and move from signal to action in days rather than weeks.



Speed alone is not the advantage.

The advantage is shortening the distance between learning and decision.

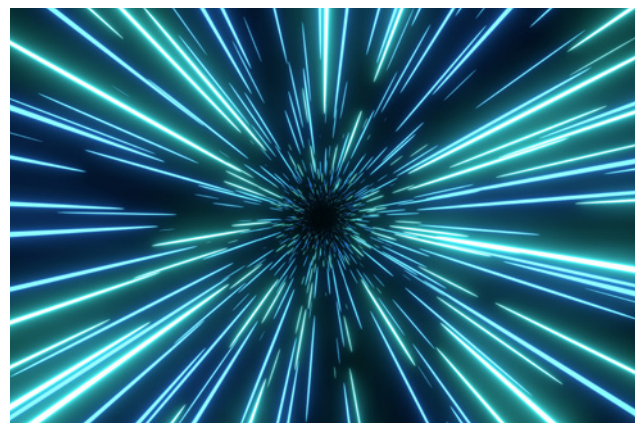
ii) Investment decisions are moving beyond the annual lock

PwC has seen organizations move from 12-month planning locks to resource-reallocation cycles of less than six weeks. Source: [PwC, AI in Marketing: From Efficiency to Growth Value, April 20, 2026.](#)

An annual budget reflects the organization's best judgment at one moment in time. But assumptions about demand, channel performance, customer behaviour and market conditions will not all remain accurate for 12 months.

Shorter decision cycles allow leaders to protect the long-term strategy while changing the investments used to deliver it.

The budget becomes a portfolio of choices, not a list of annual commitments.



iii) Faster learning is associated with stronger commercial performance

Bain found that leading marketing organizations use experimentation as part of how they manage growth.

The same marketing leaders achieved six times higher median revenue growth while spending only 1.5 times more on marketing, equivalent to roughly four times higher marketing ROI. Source: [Bain & Company, AI Raises the Stakes in Marketing, Opening Gap Between Leaders and Laggards.](#)

Faster learners make their marketing investment more productive. They turn evidence into decisions while slower competitors continue executing assumptions formed months earlier.

FROM ANNUAL PLAN TO CONTINUOUS GROWTH LOOP

OLD MODEL

ANNUAL ASSUMPTIONS

CUSTOMER BEHAVIOUR
MARKET CONDITIONS
CHANNEL PERFORMANCE
COMMERCIAL PRIORITIES



ANNUAL BUDGET LOCK

FIXED ALLOCATIONS
FIXED CAMPAIGNS
FIXED CALENDAR



EXECUTE THE PLAN

LAUNCH
REPORT
OPTIMIZE WITHIN CHANNELS



PERIODIC REVIEW

MONTHLY REPORTS
QUARTERLY REVIEWS
YEAR-END RESULTS



BUILD NEXT YEAR'S PLAN

NEW MODEL

SIGNAL

WHAT IS CHANGING?



HYPOTHESIS

WHAT DO WE BELIEVE IS CAUSING IT?



EXPERIMENT

WHAT IS THE SMALLEST USEFUL TEST?



EVIDENCE

WHAT DID WE LEARN?



DECISION

SCALE
ADAPT
CONTINUE TESTING
STOP



REALLOCATE

PEOPLE
BUDGET
TECHNOLOGY
ATTENTION



SCALE THE LEARNING

ACROSS CHANNELS
ACROSS JOURNEYS
ACROSS TEAMS
ACROSS THE ORGANIZATION



MONITOR THE NEXT SIGNAL

JK TAKE

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR BUILDING MATERIALS GROWTH

Annual planning remains important, but building materials markets don't wait for the next planning cycle.

Codes change. Construction activity shifts by region and segment. Competitors adjust pricing or introduce new products. Distributor priorities move. Input costs change. Customer questions evolve. New project types and construction methods gain traction.

Every annual plan is built on assumptions:

- This audience will respond.
- This message will create demand.
- This channel will remain efficient.
- This customer problem will remain important.

Some assumptions will hold. Others will weaken or become wrong as the year unfolds.

The growth problem begins when building materials organizations continue funding an assumption after the evidence has changed.

Campaigns keep running because they are on the calendar. Budgets stay in underperforming channels because moving them is difficult. Low-value activity survives because stopping it feels like admitting the plan was wrong.

Continuous growth management treats the plan differently.

Strategy provides direction.

The plan represents the current best route.

Evidence determines what happens next.

That distinction matters commercially.

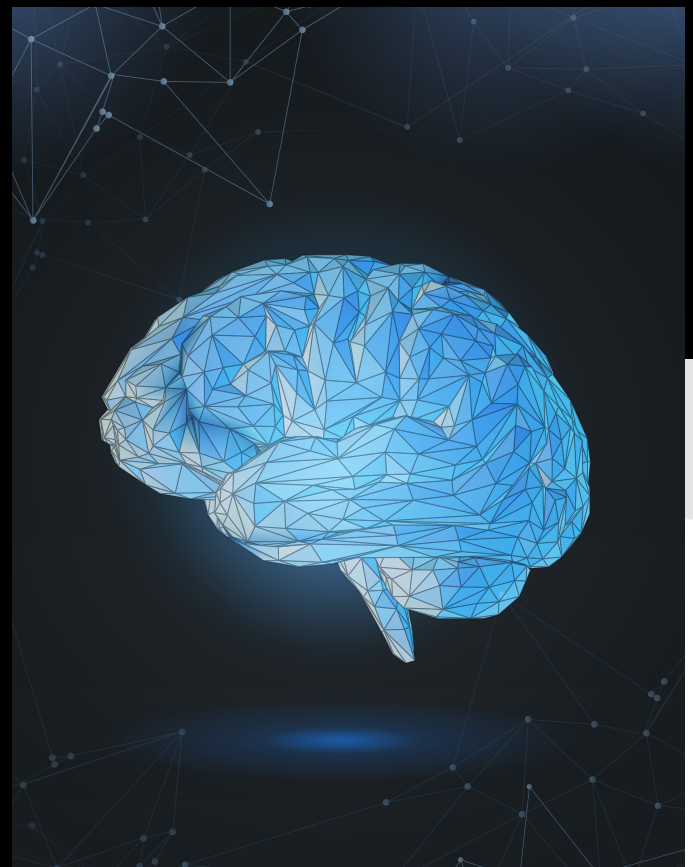
Faster learning only creates value when it changes decisions. An experiment trapped inside one campaign has limited impact. Learning becomes more valuable when it changes creative, audience strategy, customer experience, media investment or resource allocation across the organization.

The growth question becomes:

How quickly can we turn evidence into a better decision?

Building materials organizations that learn faster can compound that advantage. They run more useful experiments, generate more evidence, make better choices and redirect resources sooner.

Growth does not require a perfect annual plan. It requires a system that gets smarter as the year unfolds.



WHAT BUILDING MATERIALS MARKETING LEADERS SHOULD DO NOW

Build a Continuous Growth Operating System

Create a repeatable process for detecting meaningful signals, testing assumptions, making decisions and reallocating resources.

1. Build a signal-to-hypothesis system

Start by identifying the signals that could materially affect customer or commercial performance.

Focus on areas such as:

- Customer, project and specification demand
- Conversion and acquisition economics
- Brand, product and market signals
- Distributor and channel performance
- Competitive, regulatory or technology change

Do not add data to the dashboard simply because it exists.

For each important signal, define:

- What level of change matters?
- Who monitors it?
- Who needs to know?
- What decision might it trigger?

Then turn meaningful signals into hypotheses.

A signal tells you **what** is happening. A hypothesis makes your belief about **why** it is happening visible and testable.

2. Build a portfolio of experiments around important growth questions

Do not treat experimentation as a collection of isolated campaign optimizations.

Connect experiments to the organization's most important growth assumptions and prioritize them by potential value and uncertainty.

Ask:

What do we most need to learn about our customers, products, specifications, markets or channels?

Then run the smallest credible test that can improve the decision.

The goal is not more experiments.

It is better evidence about what matters most.

3. Shorten decision cycles and move resources with the evidence

Create regular opportunities to review evidence and rebalance the growth portfolio.

Protect long-term investments that need time. Maintain funding for exploration. Scale what the evidence supports. Repair or stop activity that no longer creates enough value.

Most importantly, clarify who has authority to act.

If a useful customer, specification or channel insight still requires months of approvals before anything changes, faster technology has not created a faster growth system.

Then make sure learning travels beyond the original experiment.

Evidence creates commercial value when it changes what the organization does next

PRESSURE TEST

PRESSURE TEST YOUR CONTINUOUS GROWTH LOOP

Choose one current growth assumption, problem or investment and move it through the continuous growth loop.

Step	Question	Your answer	Owner	Decision date
Signal	What customer, market or performance change are we responding to?			
Hypothesis	What do we believe is causing it?			
Experiment	What is the smallest useful test we can run?			
Evidence	What result would support or disprove the hypothesis?			
Decision	Will we scale, adapt, test again or stop?			
Scale	Where else should the learning be applied?			

Then ask:

1. Have we made the assumption visible and testable?

Can the team clearly state what it believes and what evidence would prove or disprove it?

2. Can we act when the evidence changes?

Is there a clear decision owner with authority to change activity or move resources within days or weeks?

3. What are we willing to stop?

Which investment continues primarily because it was included in the plan rather than because current evidence still supports it?

THE NEW RULE

Stop treating the annual plan as a promise.

Build a growth system that learns and adapts all year.

Are You Ready to Unlock the New Rules For Growth?

The biggest risk heading into 2027 isn't that building-materials marketers are doing the wrong things. It's that they are doing the right things for a specification and purchasing journey that no longer exists.

Products are now discovered across a wider ecosystem. Architects and contractors can complete more research independently. AI is changing how options are identified and compared. Multiple visible and invisible stakeholders influence what gets specified, purchased, installed or substituted.

Yet many manufacturers are still planning around a simpler model. They focus on the website while discovery happens elsewhere. They create product content without connecting it to the full specification journey. They capture existing demand without doing enough to shape future demand. They measure channel activity without seeing how brand, technical credibility, sales and distribution work together.

The eight shifts in this guide point to one conclusion:

The advantage will go to organizations that recognize what has changed, identify what matters most to their growth and move before their competitors do.

Your Next Move

You don't need eight new initiatives.

You need to know **which shifts matter most to your growth and where to move first.**

Start with three questions:

1. Which shift is already having the greatest impact on our growth?
2. Where are our current assumptions, capabilities or investments furthest behind the new reality?
3. What is the one move we could make now that would put us in a stronger position for 2027?

The rules have changed. The question now is how quickly your growth model changes with them.

Pressure-Test Your Marketing for 2027

Knowing the rules have changed is one thing. Knowing where your marketing is keeping pace, where gaps are emerging and where the greatest opportunities lie is another.

That's what a Jan Kelley Marketing Audit is designed to uncover.

We'll review your current marketing against the eight New Rules of Growth and identify:

- Where your current approach may be out of step with changing buyer behaviour
- Where gaps may be limiting your ability to build trust, create demand and drive growth
- Where your marketing investment could be working harder
- The priority opportunities to strengthen your marketing heading into 2027

Start with a Marketing Audit from Jan Kelley.

Find out where your growth model needs to change before the market decides for you.

