

DIGITAL MARKETING

# Masterclass

*120 Minutes That Will Change How  
You Think About Digital Marketing*

**Download my talk slides  
from yesterday**



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# What We're Covering Today

Option B — 120 minutes total

01

## Trends & The AI Reality Check

20 min + 10 min Q&A

Platform shifts Q3 2025–Q1 2026. AI in marketing — the honest picture. Six things that changed everything.

02

## Building a Bulletproof Digital Strategy

40 min + 10 min Q&A

The fractured funnel. Four search personas. The behavioural science framework. Strategic framework, dos, don'ts and metrics.

03

## The Default Mapping Workshop

40 min — you do the work, I guide

Five-stage exercise. Individual mapping, peer challenge, strategic output. You leave with something usable on Monday.

ACT 01

# Trends & The AI Reality Check

# 2007.

Nokia held 40% of the world's mobile phone market.

They had the engineers. The factories. The brand.

They had the biggest R&D budget in the industry.

Their own internal research had already identified the touchscreen threat.

**They didn't act. Because everything was working.**

40%

global market share 2007

3%

global market share 2013

**They didn't lose because of a bad product. They lost because they had the wrong default.**

# Six things that changed everything.

*These are not predictions. These are confirmed shifts with data behind them.*

01 Google AI Overviews at scale

02 TikTok becomes a search engine

03 AI tools enter the mainstream

04 The death of third-party cookies

05 Meta's automation takeover

06 The measurement crisis

# Google is answering questions before anyone clicks.

**47%**

of all Google searches now trigger an AI Overview — up from 11% in early 2024. This has happened in under 18 months.

**-34%**

average drop in organic click-through rates on informational queries where AI Overviews appear. Some categories see 50%+ drops.

**65%**

of informational searches now end without a click to any website. The 'zero-click' era is here and it is accelerating.

**8.5bn**

searches per day on Google. Nearly 4 billion of those now receive an AI-generated answer at the top of the results page.

# For the first time ever — TikTok overtook Google for 18–24s.

*Q1 2026. Not a prediction. Confirmed data. n=4,000.*

**54.8%**

of 18–24s use TikTok  
as a regular search tool

**50.7%**

of 18–24s use Google  
as a regular search tool

**5**

avg search platforms used  
daily by 18–34s

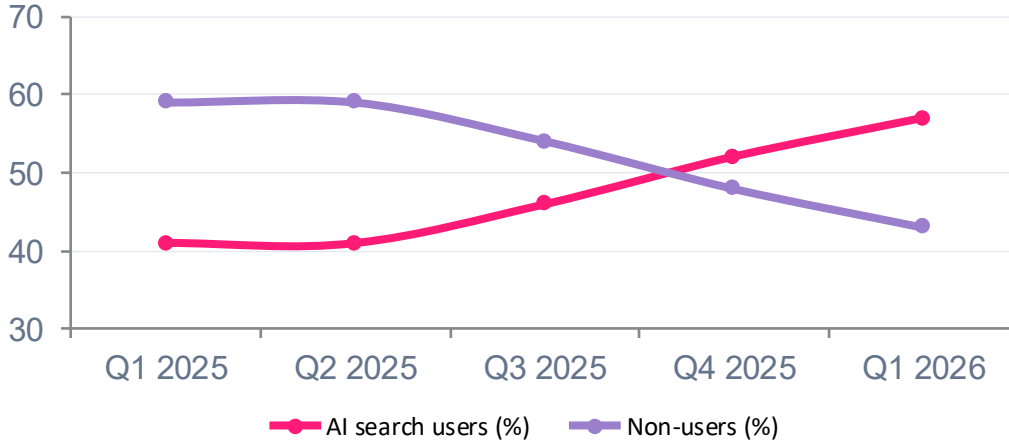
**2.1**

avg search platforms used  
daily by 65+

Gen Z doesn't use TikTok for entertainment and Google for search. TikTok IS their search engine.

# A quarter of the population now uses AI for search.

AI search adoption — 5 quarters (% UK adults)



**26.9%**

of UK adults use ChatGPT regularly — 4th most-used search tool overall

**52%**

now use AI search at least sometimes — the majority threshold crossed in Q4 2025

**72%**

of 65+ have never used any AI tool — the generation gap is stark and growing

**2x**

high-income users (£70k+) are twice as likely to use ChatGPT vs average earners

# The data collection model you've relied on for 20 years is gone.

## TIMELINE

2018

GDPR forces consent-based data collection across Europe

2021

Apple iOS 14.5 App Tracking Transparency — 96% of users opted out of ad tracking

2024

Google deprecated third-party cookies in Chrome — affecting 65% of global browser traffic

2025

Meta, Google and Amazon push brands toward first-party data ecosystems

NOW

**Brands without first-party data strategy are flying blind on attribution and retargeting**

# The algorithm knows your customer better than your media plan does.

## Advantage+ Shopping Campaigns

Fully automated: audience selection, creative testing, bidding. Brands using it see an average 32% lower cost per acquisition vs manual campaigns — the machine outperforms the human media planner.

## Advantage+ Audience

Replaces manual audience targeting with AI-driven signals. Instead of building audiences, you provide creative and first-party data signals. The algorithm finds the converters.

## AI-generated ad creative variations

Meta now generates image and copy variations automatically. Brands providing strong source creative and clear brand guidelines win. Weak inputs produce generic outputs.

## What this means for brand teams

- Manual audience targeting is becoming less effective — the algorithm outperforms hand-built audiences
- Creative quality is now the primary competitive lever in paid social
- Brand guidelines matter more — AI generates at scale from your source assets
- Conversions API is now essential to maintain any attribution visibility

# The metrics you're reporting are measuring the wrong things.

## WHAT YOU'RE MEASURING

- Organic sessions and pageviews
- Last-click conversions
- Platform ROAS in isolation
- Follower counts and post reach
- Email open rates
- Keyword rankings (position)

## WHAT ACTUALLY MATTERS

- Brand search volume growth
- Blended CAC across all channels
- AI citation frequency for your category
- Share of voice in social search
- First-party data asset growth
- Revenue influenced (not just attributed)

# Six trends. One conclusion.

## The single-channel, single-platform, single-funnel approach to digital marketing is over.

Every one of these six trends points to the same shift: your customers' journeys have fragmented across platforms, formats, and AI intermediaries.



### Search is no longer one channel

It's Google, TikTok, ChatGPT, YouTube, Reddit, and Instagram — simultaneously. Your customer uses all of them, at different stages, for different purposes.



### Attribution is broken and needs rebuilding

The old tracking model no longer reflects reality. Brands investing in blended measurement and brand tracking are pulling ahead.



### AI is a distributor, not just a tool

AI is now deciding what content reaches your customers. Being the source AI cites — in Google, in ChatGPT, in Gemini — is the new SEO.



### First-party data is your most valuable asset

Brands who built direct customer relationships — email lists, loyalty, CRM — are insulated from every algorithm change.

# Q&A

**Slot 1 — 10 minutes**

Questions on Trends, AI, and the Digital Landscape

ACT 02

# Building a Bulletproof Digital Strategy

# Before we build strategy, we need to understand behaviour.

*Strategy built on demographics will always be outperformed by strategy built on psychology.*

## Default Effect

*We accept what's already there*

We don't question the pre-selected option. The pre-installed app wins. The pre-set search engine wins. The brand that has always been there wins.

Your job: become the default for your audience.

*Example: iPhone pre-installs Apple Maps. Google Maps is more feature-rich. Apple Maps still gets 60%+ usage on iPhone — because it's there.*

## Status Quo Bias

*Switching feels costly, even when the alternative is better*

Humans weight losses more heavily than gains. The cognitive effort of switching feels like a loss. This is why existing customers are stickier than you think — and why winning new ones requires removing switching cost.

Your job: make choosing you feel effortless.

*Example: Real SearchPulse respondent on why they still use Google: 'It works, why change?'*

## Delegated Choice

*We let AI and algorithms decide on our behalf*

When a customer asks ChatGPT to recommend a supplier — they're not choosing. They're delegating to an AI with its own biases, shaped by what it was trained on.

Your job: be the brand the AI recommends.

*Example: Most people consuming Google AI Overviews don't know they're using AI. The decision was delegated without their awareness.*

# The funnel hasn't broken. It's psychologically forked.

*Different generations formed their digital habits at different times. Status Quo Bias locked each one in place.*

## FORK 1

### Gen Z / Alpha

*Under 25*

TikTok. Instagram.  
Social-first from birth.

*Trust = peer validation*

62%  
of 18–34s search  
via social media first

## FORK 2

### Millennials / Gen X

*25–44*

Google + Social + AI.  
Hybrid. Context-dependent.

*Trust = authority + data*

58%  
replaced search with AI  
for product research

## FORK 3

### Boomers +

*45+*

Google.  
Full stop.

*Trust = simplicity*

80%+  
Google dominance  
for 45+ audience

## FORK 4

### AI Delegated

*Income-driven*

Platform-agnostic.  
Growing fast. Invisible.

*Trust = whoever trained it*

2x  
high-income users  
use ChatGPT more

# Your audience's four search personas.

General population percentages. Your audience split will differ — the exercise in Part 3 will help you find yours.

60%

## Traditional Searchers

Google-led. Autopilot. Habit-locked. These make up the baseline revenue you lose if your SEO fundamentals slip. They arrive and convert via Google.

### What to do:

Strong technical SEO. Page speed. Schema. Google Business Profile. Branded Google Ads.

28%

## Streamlined Searchers

Google + Social. Aesthetic validation. The 'messy middle' conversions lost when search and social messaging diverge. They discover on social, research on Google.

### What to do:

Consistent visual brand. UGC. Reviews. Retargeting. Google presence must match social identity.

10%

## Multi-Platform Searchers

TikTok/Instagram as primary search. The next generation of buyers who are entirely blind to you if you ignore native social search. They search for your category on TikTok.

### What to do:

TikTok SEO: keyword-rich captions, native video, creator partnerships. Instagram Reels for discovery.

2%

## Digital Explorers

AI-first. Highest income (£120k+). Your highest-value leads potentially being handed to competitors by AI. They ask ChatGPT to recommend suppliers.

### What to do:

AI visibility: structured content, FAQ schema, authoritative backlinks. Be the brand AI recommends.

# Why people choose a platform.

The platform someone uses isn't random. It's driven by what they're trying to do emotionally and functionally.

EMOTIONAL

## Crowd-Sourcing

To find out what others are doing, follow trends, feel part of a wider conversation.

*Bias: Social Proof | TikTok · Instagram · Reddit*

## Taste-Tuning

To discover content that fits personal aesthetic and aspirational identity.

*Bias: Mere Exposure Effect | Instagram · Pinterest · YouTube*

## Fact-Finding

To get accurate, comprehensive, unbiased information.

*Bias: Authority Bias | Google · ChatGPT · Wikipedia*

## Autopilot

To shortcut the search experience using familiar platforms without thinking.

*Bias: Default Effect | Google (always) · YouTube*

RATIONAL

# Same category. Four completely different journeys.

Example: Someone researching a premium software product for their business.

<b>Fork 1 · Gen Z</b> <i>Multi-Platform Searcher</i>	<b>Fork 2 · Millennial</b> <i>Streamlined Searcher</i>	<b>Fork 3 · Boomer</b> <i>Traditional Searcher</i>	<b>Fork 4 · AI Delegated</b> <i>Digital Explorer</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 TikTok searches 'best software for X'</li><li>2 Watches creator reviews</li><li>3 Instagram: checks brand aesthetic</li><li>4 Google: brand name search to validate</li><li>5 Buys or DMs the brand directly</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 Google: broad category search</li><li>2 Reddit: reads real user opinions</li><li>3 YouTube: watches comparison video</li><li>4 ChatGPT: 'compare X vs Y for my use case'</li><li>5 Trial signup or demo request</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 Google: searches product/category</li><li>2 Clicks top organic result or ad</li><li>3 Reads the website thoroughly</li><li>4 Looks for phone number or email</li><li>5 Calls or fills in a form</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 ChatGPT: 'recommend best X for Y'</li><li>2 Receives AI recommendation</li><li>3 Googles the recommended brand name</li><li>4 Checks LinkedIn for credibility signals</li><li>5 Decision largely already made by AI</li></ol>

# Every persona needs a different kind of proof.

*Providing the wrong trust signal is worse than providing none. It signals you don't understand your customer.*

## Gen Z / Alpha

*Signal: Peer Validation*

UGC. Creator content. Real people using your product. Community discussion. 'People like me trust this brand.' The source needs to be someone they identify with.

*Avoid: Corporate testimonials, press releases, award badges — read as inauthentic*

## Millennials / Gen X

*Signal: Authority + Social Proof*

Expert opinion. Independent reviews. Data-backed claims. Third-party validation from sources they respect — not from you. They see through marketing; they want other people's genuine opinions.

*Avoid: Anything that feels like advertising. They've seen it all and they discount it*

## Boomers +

*Signal: Simplicity + Familiarity*

Clear, jargon-free messaging. Established brand markers. Contact information that works. Evidence of longevity. They want to know you've been around and you're not going anywhere.

*Avoid: Complex UI, dense information, too many options — cognitive overload kills trust*

## AI Delegated

*Signal: Citation Volume + Authority*

Being mentioned across authoritative websites. Structured data. FAQ schema. Industry publication coverage. This is what trains the AI to recommend you when someone delegates their decision.

*Avoid: Unindexed content, uncited website, no external references — if the internet doesn't reference you, the AI won't*

# How to build a strategy that holds up under pressure.

1

## **AUDIT — know where you actually are**

Map current traffic sources by channel. Identify which persona each source serves. Find the gaps — which forks are you invisible on? Don't assume. Pull the data and be honest about what it shows.

2

## **DEFINE — prioritise your highest-value fork gap**

Not the biggest audience — the most valuable one you're missing. A 10% Multi-Platform audience with high purchase intent is worth more strategic investment than 60% Traditional Searchers you're already serving well.

3

## **BUILD — create fork-specific content and presence**

Each fork needs native content in its format. SEO content for Traditional. Social-native video for Multi-Platform. Structured authority content for AI Delegated. Repurposed content rarely works across forks.

4

## **SIGNAL — provide the right trust signal for each persona**

Map your trust gap. What does your primary persona need as proof? Are you providing it? In the right format, on the right platform, from the right source? Check the Trust Gap framework.

5

## **MEASURE — use metrics that reflect multi-fork reality**

Brand search volume. Share of AI citations. Social search impressions. Blended CAC. Revenue influenced. The old single-channel metrics will actively mislead you in a multi-fork world.

# What to do on each fork.

Channels, content types and tactical priorities per fork. Use this as a planning checklist.

## Traditional (60%)

- Technical SEO — site speed, Core Web Vitals, schema markup
- Google Ads — branded protection + high-intent keywords
- Content: comprehensive long-form guides and comparison pages
- Google Business Profile — reviews, posts, Q&A
- Email marketing to consented first-party database

## Multi-Platform (10%)

- TikTok: keyword-rich captions, native video, creators
- Instagram Reels optimised for Explore and search discovery
- Reddit: genuine community participation in your category
- YouTube: educational content for consideration stage
- Pinterest for visual/lifestyle/home categories

## Streamlined (28%)

- Consistent visual identity across search and social
- Meta Ads with UGC-style creative and Advantage+
- Instagram + Facebook with social proof content
- Retargeting sequences bridging discovery to decision
- Review strategy: Google, Trustpilot, industry-specific

## AI Delegated (2%)

- Structured data and schema markup across all pages
- Authoritative long-form content cited by other sources
- PR: industry press coverage builds AI citation footprint
- FAQ content answering AI-style natural language queries
- LinkedIn thought leadership for B2B AI discoverability

# What separates the teams that win.

## ✓ DO

- Build first-party data assets before you need them — consent-based email lists, CRM, loyalty programmes
- Create content structured for AI citation, not just Google ranking — authority and citation signals now both matter
- Treat each fork as a distinct audience requiring native content and different trust signals — no lazy repurposing
- Use AI tools to scale production — but keep humans in charge of strategic direction and brand judgment
- Measure brand search volume growth as a leading indicator that your marketing is working
- Test your brand in ChatGPT, Perplexity and Google AI Overviews monthly — know what's being said about you

## ✗ DON'T

- Don't assume your audience is homogeneous — they're on four different forks with different needs
- Don't dismiss TikTok search because 'our customers aren't Gen Z' — check the actual data for your audience
- Don't hand creative decisions entirely to Meta or Google's AI — provide strong brand inputs or get generic outputs
- Don't obsess over AI Overviews eating your traffic — focus on being the source AI cites instead
- Don't let paid media become your only acquisition channel — algorithm changes will punish over-reliance
- Don't report last-click ROAS as proof that marketing is working — it systematically misleads in 2026

# What this looks like for a real brand.

Brand: B2B Professional Services | Target: Marketing Directors & Finance Leaders aged 35–55

## Persona split

~55% Traditional, ~30% Streamlined, ~5% Multi-Platform, ~10% AI Delegated (higher than avg due to high-income professionals)

## Primary fork

Traditional — Google-anchored for initial research. But AI Delegated is the highest-value segment and fastest-growing.

## Search motivation

Fact-Finding (Traditional) and Delegated Choice (AI Delegated). They want authoritative answers, not peer validation.

## Trust signal needed

Authority. Industry credentials. Case studies. Third-party press coverage. LinkedIn thought leadership. Trade publication citations.

## Channel priorities

1. Technical SEO + long-form authority content 2. LinkedIn thought leadership + targeted LinkedIn Ads 3. ChatGPT/AI citation building via PR and structured content

## AI visibility action

Monthly: ask ChatGPT 'recommend a [service] firm for [market]'. Build press coverage from authoritative sources. Add FAQ schema to all service pages.

## Measurement

Brand search volume. LinkedIn engagement from target personas. Share of voice in trade press. AI citation frequency. Pipeline quality (not just volume).

# Q&A

Slot 2 — 10 minutes

Questions on Strategy, the Fractured Funnel, and the Behavioural Science Framework

ACT 03

# The Default Mapping Workshop

# This is where theory becomes your strategy.

Everything from the last 80 minutes now gets applied

to your actual brand. In this room. Right now.

This is not a thought experiment. At the end of this session you'll  
have a real strategic output you can share with your team on Monday

## HOW WE'LL USE THE 40 MINUTES

**5 min**

Read through all five stages —  
think before you write

**10 min**

Stages 1 & 2 — individual  
work

**10 min**

Stage 3 — peer challenge in  
pairs

**10 min**

Stage 4 — your strategic  
priorities

**5 min**

Stage 5 — group debrief

# Stage 1: Map your audience.

# Stage 2: Map their search journey.

## STAGE 1 — Your Audience

- What is the age range of your most valuable customer?
- Which of the four forks does that age range primarily sit in?
- Search your category on TikTok, Instagram, Reddit, ChatGPT. What's there?
- Estimate your audience's persona split — must add to 100%. Traditional \_\_\_% / Streamlined \_\_\_% / Multi-Platform \_\_\_% / AI Delegated \_\_\_%
- Which fork are you currently best-equipped to serve?
- Which fork are you currently least-equipped to serve?

## STAGE 2 — Their Search Journey

- For your primary fork — what is their FIRST search action when considering your category? Which platform? What type of query?
- What do they do to research further? What sources do they trust?
- What happens right before they convert or make a decision?
- Which search motivation drives them — Autopilot, Fact-Finding, Crowd-Sourcing, or Taste-Tuning?
- At which stage of their journey are you currently visible?
- At which stage are you currently invisible?

# Stage 3: The peer challenge.

Share your Stage 1 and 2 answers with your partner. Their job is to challenge your assumptions — not to be nice.

## Questions to ask each other:

CHALLENGER

How do you know your audience is in that fork — is this assumption or evidence from data?

CHALLENGER

Have you actually searched for your category on TikTok? On ChatGPT? On Reddit? What did you find?

CHALLENGER

You say you're invisible on [fork X] — is that actually a strategic gap or genuinely not relevant for your brand?

DEFENDER

What data could you collect in the next 30 days to confirm or disprove your audience assumptions?

DEFENDER

If you could only address one missing fork, which would have the highest revenue impact — and why?

BOTH

What would a brand that was excellent across all four forks look like in your category? Who is closest to that today?

# Stage 4: Build your strategic priorities.

Use everything from Stages 1–3. These five outputs are what you take back to your team.

**A**

## Your trust gap

What trust signal does your primary persona need — and what are you currently providing? Write down the specific gap between what they need and what you're giving them.

**B**

## Your fork gap

Which fork is your biggest strategic gap — the most valuable audience you're currently invisible to? What's one thing you could do in the next 90 days to begin building a presence there?

**C**

## Your AI visibility status

What does ChatGPT currently say about your brand or category? What is one specific action to improve your AI citation footprint?

**D**

## Your measurement gap

What metric are you currently reporting that is actively misleading you or giving you false confidence? What metric should replace or sit alongside it?

**E**

## Your Monday morning action

One specific, concrete, calendared action you will take in the first week back. Not 'improve our social strategy.' Something with a deadline and an owner.

# Stage 5: Share and learn.

*What patterns are emerging across the room?*

**1** Who's willing to share their biggest fork gap — the audience they're currently most invisible to?

**2** Did anyone find something surprising when they searched their category on a platform they don't currently use?

**3** What's the most common trust gap in the room? Are there patterns we can name together?

**4** Who has a Monday action they're willing to commit to in front of the group?

# Your customers' defaults are being reset right now.

The question isn't whether digital has changed. It has.

The question isn't whether the funnel has fractured. It has.

The question is **which fork are you showing up on?**

**Take the exercise sheet home.**

Use the five outputs. Share them with your team. Do the Monday action.

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