

How to Approach AI in Marketing

Re-establishing human connection in an increasingly digital age

CREATIVITY IS UNIQUELY HUMAN



Creativity is believed to be *uniquely human*. Our species has long pushed the boundaries of what's possible and continues to build upon innovations made by our ancient predecessors.

Practically, we may not acknowledge creative skills as necessary for our survival. 'Survival' invokes thoughts of our most primal instincts – hunting, gathering, and self-protection – but doesn't always acknowledge the necessity of expression and innovation. According to a study by the Museum of Natural History, humans are long-lived because of

our unique ability to adapt and prioritize **prosocial skills** that help us **connect** with others. Humans are the only species to communicate complex emotions and share experiences that shape their lives through creative expression. Over centuries, this skill has evolved into a phenomenon that still drives our popular culture today: **Storytelling**.

Storytelling is the basis of human creativity. Books, paintings, movies, plays, video games, poems—and yes, branding and marketing—all of these exist to communicate the human experience. Our drive to understand, support, and connect with other people lies at the heart of our creative endeavors.

Recently, groundbreaking advances in artificial intelligence have called into question the uniqueness of human creativity. While technologies like generative AI promise increased productivity across industries, the conversation around them occasionally glosses over the potential consequences of devaluing human creativity. Author Mary Shelley warned us of this in the original *Frankenstein*, a testament to the dangers of pursuing technological advancements without regard for their repercussions. Humans can create quite powerful things—but, Shelley asks us, can they be *too* powerful? If so, will they come back to haunt us?

These questions have taken over business headlines as AI becomes more prevalent in the marketing sphere. But satisfying answers are hard to come by. As the late Stephen Hawking said in 2017:

"We just don't know. We cannot know if we will be infinitely helped by AI, or ignored by it and sidelined, or conceivably destroyed by it."

THE HUMAN DECISION

THE DECISION TO CARE

What sets humans apart from other species is our emotional intelligence, empathy, and knack for creative communication. Our ability to communicate and sense shifting sentiments provides us with the natural desire to help each other. Though emotional intelligence—or "EQ"—may not be wholly unique to humans, only we have used it to connect and improve our lives and the lives of others on a massive scale.

From a marketing perspective, EQ is perhaps our most important skill. Anything we create—from blog posts to billboards—has to be tailored to resonate with our target audience. While AI tools can use enormous datasets and predictive analytics to answer specific queries, they lack the empathy to put themselves in the shoes of their audience. Think about the last time you called a customer service number and had to navigate a conversation with a robot. It can talk to you, but it doesn't make you feel heard.

For some communications, the ability to answer specific queries may be enough. If you're trying to plot a route from Nashville to Gatlinburg, a GPS algorithm can get you there. But if you're trying to convince someone to buy a product or service, your audience has to believe you care—not just about your offering, but about their needs and desires.

The decision to care is the heart of innovation.

WHAT TECHNOLOGY CANNOT REPLICATE

The fear of AI "replacing" humans has become understandably rampant. This technology is accomplishing incredible new feats that are constantly talked about in the news. AI is efficient, quick, and convenient; not only that, but it can pull from millions of databases in a matter of seconds and produce (somewhat) thoughtful content.

On a surface level, it seems as though AI is the perfect alternative to natural human deficiencies. Machines can do more work in less time, which equates to spending less money for many businesses. Machines don't need health insurance, retirement plans, or eight-hour work days. They're less likely to make mistakes and have a wealth of knowledge about every subject in the world. By comparison, human workers seem like an inconvenience.

The simple truth of the matter is: No matter how advanced these technologies get, human EQ cannot be replaced. Our brains are complex pieces of biology that are able to detect subtleties, assess context, and compute complicated emotional situations.

Machines are wholly reliant on the people who operate them and the datasets they pull from. Despite AI's productive efficiency, it struggles to recognize nuances. It cannot connect to people in an organic or meaningful way, nor can it meaningfully express compassion or sympathy.

Connection, as mentioned earlier, is the major human motivator. Think about a common hypothetical: You contact a company's customer service for support. It redirects you to automated bot responses instead of an actual representative. Do you feel confident in the bot's ability to understand your frustration? Do you expect the bot to assess your tone of voice and adjust its communication accordingly?

WHERE AI AND HUMANITY CAN INTERSECT

So, what's the verdict?

AI is becoming inseparable from the digital world. It's becoming more prominent in virtually every profession, which generates the pervading anxiety of AI taking over completely.

Instead of taking a doomsday approach, we want to frame the issue of AI implementation in a thoughtful and optimistic way. Agonizing over the potential takeover clouds the beneficial possibilities of this technological advancement. Knowing what makes humans unique and irreplaceable leaves room to ponder more constructive ideas. What if we reframed our thinking to ask: How can AI *augment* human creativity and innovation?

The most recognized benefit of implementing AI into our lives is its ability to streamline all kinds of processes, from making minor photo edits to generating detailed and accurate buyer personas. AI can see errors and assess massive amounts of information in ways that humans can't. Because of that, it can be a useful tool in improving our own accuracy and increasing the quality of our work.

As an example, AI's efficient and accurate analytic abilities can lessen the burden of administrative tasks, such as booking appointments or email management. We can train machines to handle work that relies on constantly analyzing large pools of data. In turn, this can improve our own decision-making abilities and free our minds to focus elsewhere.

The same is true for research. Because AI can access massive quantities of data, it can provide insightful information that makes content-based tasks, such as outlining an article or blog on a niche topic, much easier.

Understanding AI's limitations is the key to integrating it into our work. Sylvain Duranton, the global leader of BCG X, is an advocate for the 10/20/70 formula: **10 % algorithm, 20% technology, and 70% people and processes**. This outlines an effective way to employ AI while keeping humans at the forefront.

In essence, the **10/20/70 formula** keeps humans responsible for the databases AI curates. Duranton emphasizes the need for people to establish boundaries with AI, because machines cannot know their limits. If the appeal of artificial intelligence is that it's constantly learning, we have to teach it the right information.

Keeping humans at the forefront of technological advancement is the key to striking an ethical and productive balance between organic capabilities and technological improvements. But how can we ensure that this balance is maintained?

This is when businesses must consider operating at human scale.



WHAT IS "HUMAN SCALE?"

Reestablishing human connection in the digital age is a broad mission. It's optimistic as a concept, but how exactly can we achieve something so massive and complex? It may sound cliché, but starting small is the key to making lasting change and impact.

We define "human scale" as a business approach that centers the human experience in our operations. We want to build our marketing strategies around problem-solving, connecting, and building a better future.

Humans have evolved to interact with the world in distinct organic ways. We have highly intuitive sensibilities that are augmented by the way we process physical and emotional sensations. In the digital age, this incredible skill hasn't diminished; rather, it's been obscured. People have become an afterthought to numbers and algorithms.

Now, marketing is almost fully digital. Businesses rely heavily on websites to drive sales, and most advertising efforts are geared toward increasing their online traffic. The importance of digital savviness has become paramount in what we do, and it can often leave us wondering where that leaves us. If AI can do it all, why not let it?

Eliminating our own unique talents would be a disservice to the humans we work with. While AI can excel at handling the nitty-gritty of data analytics that plays a significant role in marketing, it cannot listen to or empathize with clients. AI cannot engage in constructive conversations, understand subtle nuances, or **connect** like we can.

The challenge becomes integrating AI in a way that maintains human connectedness.



MOVING OURSELVES FORWARD

Citing anthropological studies and classic literature in content about marketing and advertising may seem out of place, but those insights are at the core of everything we do. Regardless of the profession or skillset, we have all descended from the same desire to connect with each other.

As an agency that's been operating for over 30 years, we have seen the marketing sphere undergo tremendous changes. What was once a field dominated by human craftsmanship is now a frontrunner for digitalization at a massive scale. Websites, social media, search engine optimization, digital ads – these elements (and more) now define what we do in our day-to-day.

We want to be more aware of how digitization impacts our relationship with our clients. Meaning: Are they receiving the communication they need? Are their concerns being heard, and will we be able to create a personalized plan based on our instincts and interactions?

Here at Morris Creative Group, we acknowledge the brilliance of technology and position ourselves as digital experts. At the same time, **we want to make the humans we work with the center of our mission.**

At the heart of marketing and advertising, there's a story waiting to be told. Brands are an extension of human promises and the desire to offer a service or product that makes an impact. This is why we believe human scale is crucial for the way we operate. Machines will never be capable of understanding that sympathetic drive.

As the world continues to change, we want to prioritize the core of our drive: **To connect with other humans.** With AI advancing every day, it's crucial to maintain the balance between digital efficiency and human creativity.

