

Owning AI Search in 2026

5 opportunities to use AI for AEO
and GEO that most marketing
teams aren't thinking about

Introduction

In 2026, search visibility and AI strategy are two sides of the same coin. As AI changes the way people look for information and brands online, businesses need answer engine optimization (AEO) and generative engine optimization (GEO) as core tenets of their strategies.

AI has the potential to dramatically improve how marketing teams refine and scale their approaches to GEO and AEO. But for many it's still an emerging, more advanced use case. Teams are experimenting, but few are applying it in ways that move the needle for search visibility.

To understand where those gaps really lie, we analyzed data from the 2026 State of AI in Marketing Report. What we found: The biggest opportunities are in process, influence and brand, and people.

When marketing teams and leaders operationalize AI, are intentional about how it's used, and get teams across the organization on board, its impact exponentially expands.

This report breaks down five of the most important opportunities for closing gaps that can undermine AI search visibility and helping your marketing teams move from the promise of AI for AEO and GEO to real, measurable impact.

OPPORTUNITY 01

Resolve process issues first

OPPORTUNITY 02

Optimize your brand

OPPORTUNITY 03

Make AI search a team sport

OPPORTUNITY 04

Give your search team a captain

OPPORTUNITY 05

Prove the value of AI for search

1. Resolve process issues first

AI is increasingly embedded in content execution: 91% of marketers use it today, compared to just 63% a year ago. But many of the most valuable use cases are still in the emergent phase because operational challenges are a barrier to AI scale.

Two critical search-related use cases are part of that group: SEO/AI search optimization (just 31% use it) and AI for brand governance (26%). Both of these directly impact brand authority in search. And in both cases, they're being held back by process steps like: brand reviews, access to clean and accurate data, legal and compliance reviews, integrations with SEO/GEO/AEO tools, coordinating reviewers, and publishing content.

The most advanced organizations have made more progress with some of these operational issues—for example, they're nearly 4x more likely to prioritize defining AI strategy, governance, and policies—and it's paying off for AI search use cases.

High-maturity teams are executing impactful use cases at a higher rate than beginners, including AI search (39% vs. 24%) and brand governance (44% vs. 13%). And as a result, they're better able to prove their ROI from AI investments, building momentum for further action.

TAKE ACTION: 5 TIPS FOR RESOLVING PROCESS BARRIERS

Adopt an AI platform that embeds marketing AI directly into your workflows.

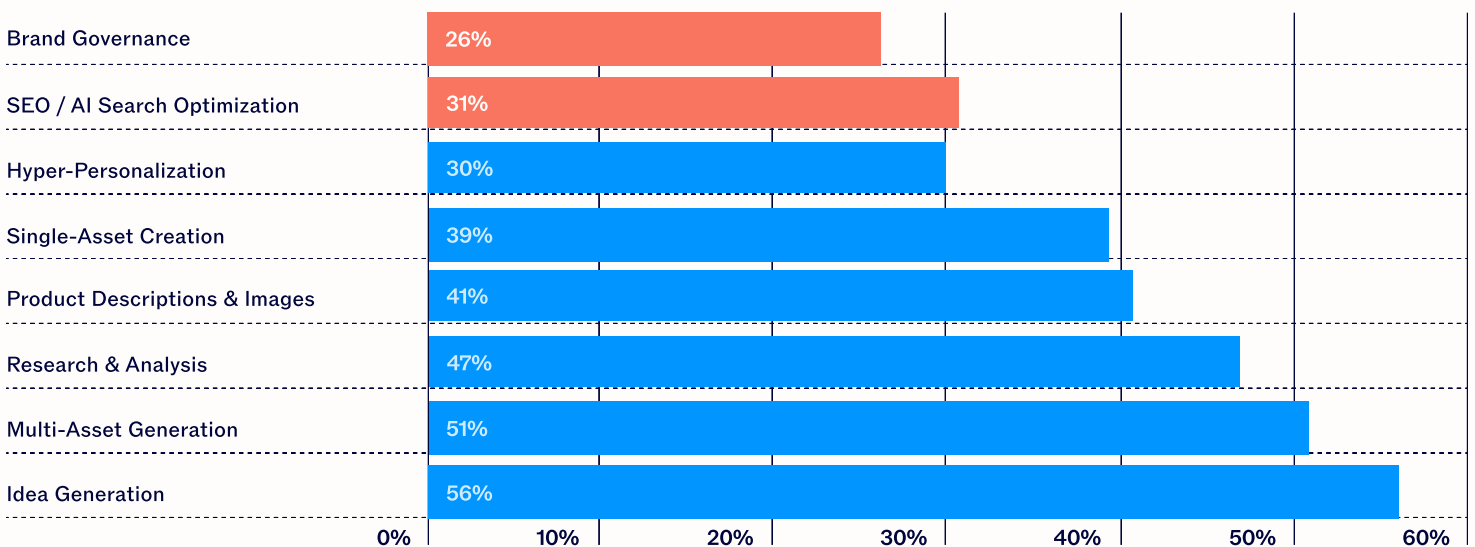
Standardize inputs by aligning core assets (like brand guidelines and campaign briefs) so AI can generate consistent, on-brand content.

Automate high-volume production tasks like drafting, versioning, and localization to eliminate bottlenecks that slow the pipeline.

Design workflows for scale by building adaptable processes that extend across channels and markets without rework.

Keep humans in the loop and focused on validation and final judgment, maintaining quality control without sacrificing efficiency.

TOP AI USE CASES IN MARKETING IN 2026



Source: Jasper, State of AI in Marketing 2026

2. Optimize your brand

A consistent, accurate, and differentiated brand has a huge influence on AI search visibility—but it's not prioritized accordingly. Brand governance is the least-prevalent AI use case for marketers overall and across most roles in the marketing organization when, in practice, it should be a priority across roles.

A strong and sustainable brand reputation relies on more than the content marketers create in-house. Public relations, customer advocacy, influencers, and industry analysts all play a role in how brands are messaged and perceived.

So while brand and creative and marketing ops are the functions most likely to use AI for brand governance, the practice has to extend across the entire enterprise. Scaled governance with AI can help every team maximize their impact and make sure the brand is consistent and accurate at every touchpoint—on and off their website.

Consider this: Reddit, YouTube, and LinkedIn are among the most frequently cited domains across all AI search engines. That means that even with the best-performing content published on your website, a strong hold on how your brand is presented by user-generated content or on LinkedIn by your executives and employees is a necessary part of search visibility.

TAKE ACTION: 5 TIPS FOR RESOLVING PROCESS BARRIERS

Ground AI outputs in up-to-date brand messaging and human-led expertise to ensure scaled content is original, credible, and resonant.

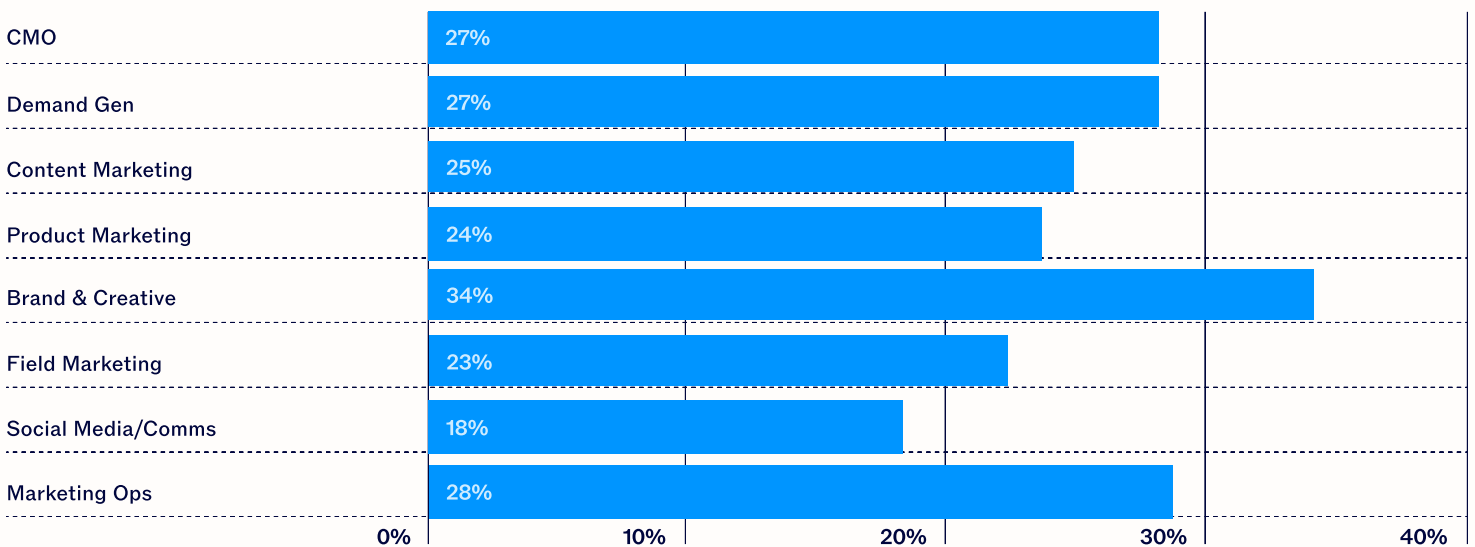
Operationalize brand governance with shared systems that centralize guidelines, messaging, and approvals.

Orchestrate always-on, goal-driven agents that continuously optimize for brand and search goals so your governance stays current as the landscape shifts.

Extend brand ownership beyond marketing by equipping PR, field teams, executives, and customer success with access to shared systems.

Actively shape off-site brand perception by scaling resonant, consistent, and accurate content across high-impact platforms like LinkedIn and Reddit.

WHICH ROLES ARE USING AI FOR BRAND GOVERNANCE TODAY?



Source: Jasper, State of AI in Marketing 2026

3. Make AI search a team sport

The benefits of extending AI search strategy across your organization go beyond brand influence. Data shows that including key teams outside of core marketing operations has a direct impact on how you connect with customers and show up in their buyer journey.

Right now, applications of AI for search strategy are led primarily by CMOs and teams in demand generation, content, and marketing ops.

But as [Forrester emphasizes](#) in their own research, succeeding with AI search is a “team sport.” To succeed, it needs buy-in from everyone across the broader business.

For example, social media and communications teams have a bigger opportunity to make an impact as social citations on AI platforms continue to grow. For product marketers, AI is increasingly important as [the majority of buyers](#) now use AI to find product information and top of the funnel dynamics change.

TAKE ACTION: 5 TIPS FOR RESOLVING PROCESS BARRIERS

Educate your teams on AI search and why it matters for high-level business goals.

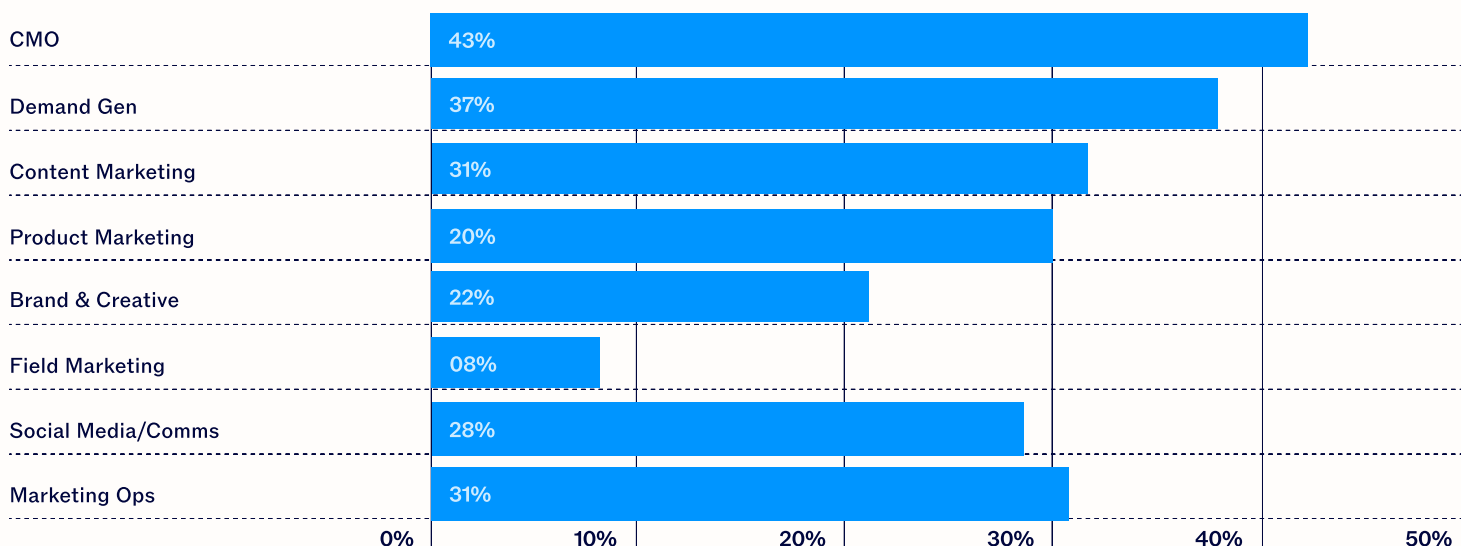
Build AEO and GEO metrics into cross-team initiatives, like product launches or campaign execution.

Develop agentic AEO and GEO workflows that automate optimization while keeping teams aligned on strategy and results.

Define clear ownership for AI search strategy that extends across teams.

Share successes and foster collaboration so teams can learn and expand on wins.

WHICH MARKETING ROLES ARE USING AI FOR SEO/GEO/AEO TODAY



Source: Jasper, State of AI in Marketing 2026

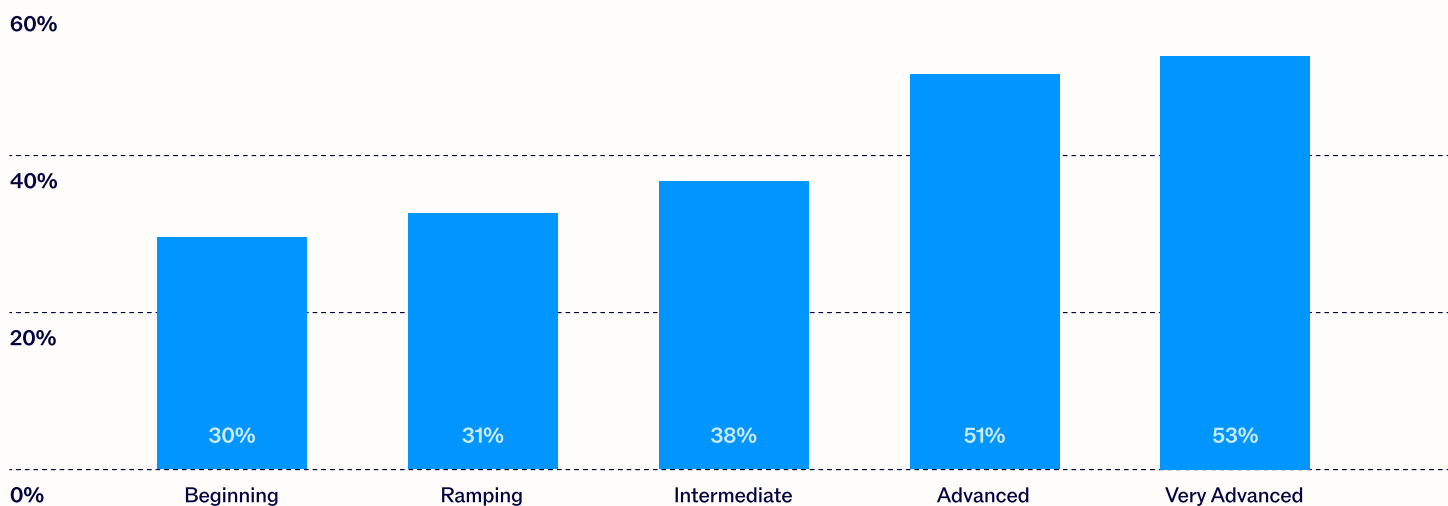
4. Give your search team a captain

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One thing advanced teams do differently to succeed is designate clear ownership. 73% have a formally defined role for overseeing AI strategy, and they're more likely than beginners (52% vs. 31%) to be hiring for essential roles like an AI search specialist in the next 12 months.

Over half of the most advanced organizations plan to hire an AI Search Specialist in the next 12 months



Source: Jasper, State of AI in Marketing 2026

TAKE ACTION: 5 TIPS FOR RESOLVING PROCESS BARRIERS

Appoint a single AI search owner with real authority to stay accountable for performance across SEO, GEO, and AEO.

Connect ownership to systems like marketing agent platforms that can scale repeatable execution and turn strategy to action.

Separate responsibilities across roles like AI search specialist (visibility), content engineer (systems), and AI architect (infrastructure) so execution doesn't overlap.

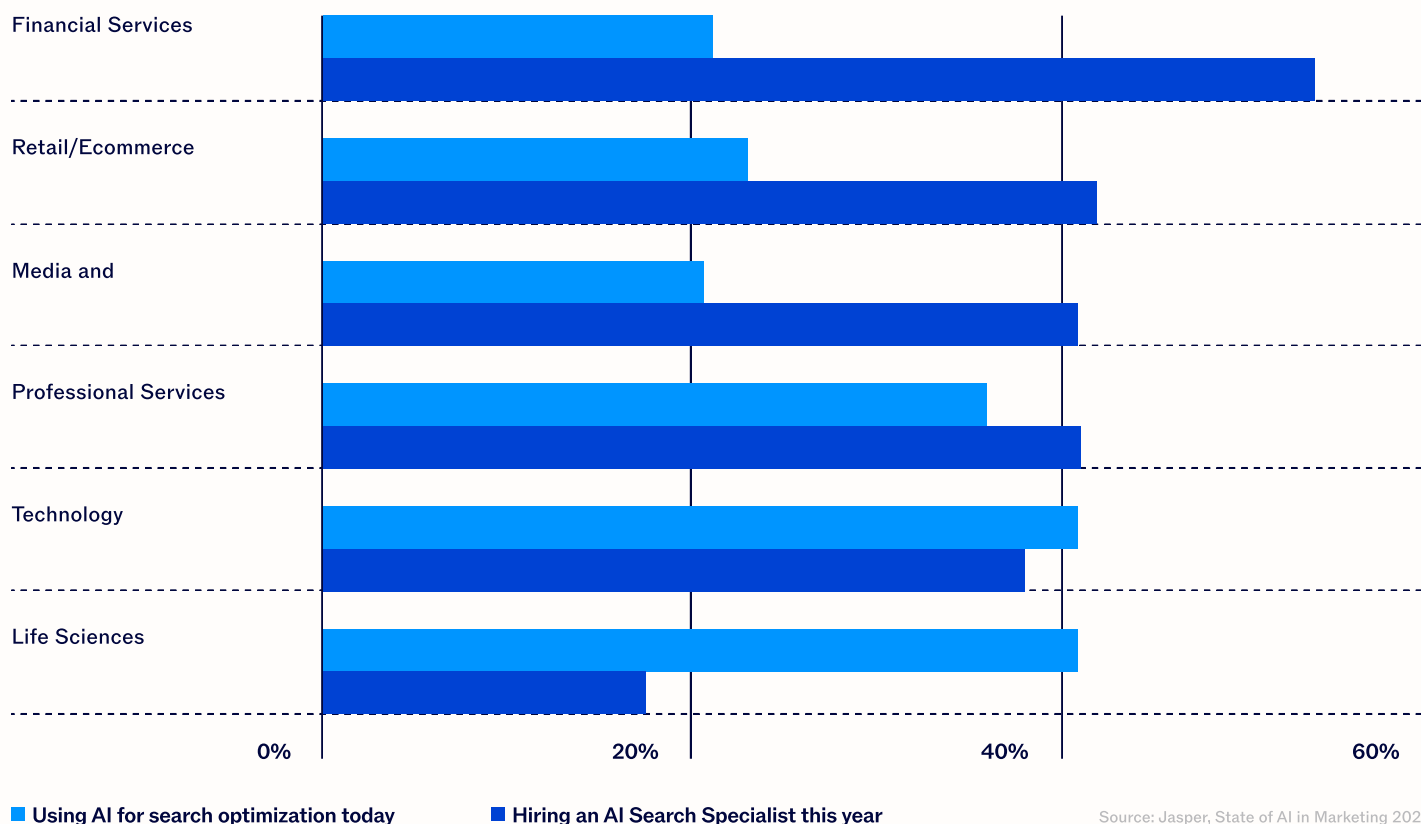
Assign orchestrators as AI scales, ensuring AI workflows, data, and brand systems are aligned with business goals, not just productivity.

Enable hires in AI-focused roles with the tools, authority, and support they need to drive impact.

Interestingly, the industries most impacted by AI search—such as Life Sciences and B2B Technology—are the most likely to be using AI for GEO/AEO but the least likely to be hiring an AI Search Specialist, presumably because they're ahead of the curve from the pressure that was on them from the start and already have the role covered.

On the other hand, the industries not currently leveraging AI for optimization are the most likely to be hiring for an AI search specialist, presumably recognizing that AI search does impact every industry to some degree and they need expertise to meet the moment.

The industries planning to hire AI Search Specialists are the least likely to use AI for search optimization today



Financial services companies, for example, are least likely (21%) to be currently using AI for search optimization and mostly likely to hire an AI search specialist (52%) in the next year.

Similarly, only 24% of retail organizations are using AI and 43% are hiring a search specialist, and the numbers are similar for Media & Comms (24% currently using, 42% hiring).

5. Prove the value of AI for search

AI search is increasingly becoming a leadership focus and subject of boardroom conversations. But leaders aren't using AI in practice as well as their teams. Individual contributors (59%), for example, are about 2X more likely than C-level (36%) and SVPs (27%) to use AI for search visibility.

But it's leaders who are making the decisions about AI investment and strategy. So how can employees demonstrate and prove the value of AI for search visibility to their senior and executive leadership?

They're deepest into the applications and often know the most about how AI delivers value. What they need are dedicated processes and insights that drive home the business impact and outcomes of AI.

A first key step is overcoming the common challenges of [proving AI ROI](#), which requires moving beyond AI adoption to true AI operationalization. When AI is operationalized into the way your team works every day—workflows, systems, tools, and reporting—you're better equipped to see data that shows outcomes, and report it to your leaders.

TAKE ACTION: 5 TIPS FOR RESOLVING PROCESS BARRIERS

Establish a baseline for key workflows so you can measure a clear "before AI" and "after AI."

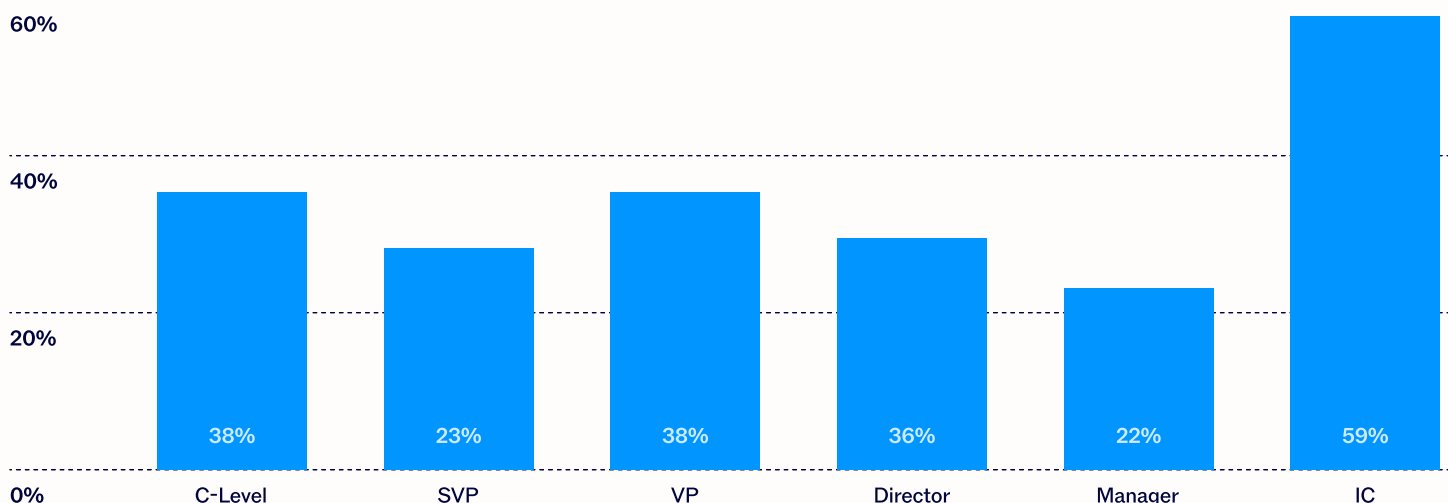
Prove how AI accelerates time-to-market for search-optimized campaigns or content, showing value beyond efficiency gains.

Demonstrate any reduced vendor outsourcing costs as AI supports search optimization workflows at scale.

Standardize and automate reporting so leaders see frequent updates on progress and business impact.

Define clear ownership of metrics so reporting is consistent and trusted across teams.

HOW USING AI FOR SEARCH OPTIMIZATION VARIES ACROSS THE ORG CHART



Source: Jasper, State of AI in Marketing 2026

Why the teams winning AI search are building systems

AI search has already transformed how brands are discovered and trusted. But success isn't coming from isolated experiments or one-off use cases—it's coming from how well a team operationalizes AI across the entire organization.

The five opportunities in this report point to the same underlying shift: Improving AI search visibility isn't just a content or SEO challenge. It's an operational one.

- Process determines whether AI can scale at all.
- Brand determines how your business is represented across the surfaces AI pulls from.
- Cross-functional alignment determines how far your influence extends beyond owned channels.
- Ownership determines whether strategy turns into consistent execution.
- Measurement determines whether any of it continues to receive investment.

When these elements are disconnected, AI efforts stall and fail to scale. When they work together, AI becomes part of a system that continuously improves visibility and performance over time.

This is where leading teams are focusing now. Not on adding more tools, but on building the structure and intent that makes them effective. And as AI search continues to evolve, organizations can win by prioritizing it as a systems-level capability, business strategy, and operating philosophy.

[Operationalize your AI search strategy](#)

See how Jasper powers SEO, AEO, and GEO from strategy to execution.