

Large Language Models as Marketing Assistants: Productivity Gains and Creativity Trade-offs in Campaign Development

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Abstract

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This article examines whether large language models can serve as effective marketing assistants in campaign development without undermining creativity and brand authenticity. As generative language models become embedded in everyday marketing workflows, they promise substantial productivity gains in idea generation, copywriting and message adaptation, but may also introduce risks of homogenized content and weakened differentiation. The study conducts a systematic literature review of peer-reviewed research published between 2020 and 2024, identifying and analyzing studies that investigate language-model-based tools in advertising and marketing contexts. The evidence shows that these models reliably accelerate drafting and increase the number of creative options explored, yet collaboration modes that rely heavily on model suggestions tend to reduce novelty and can lower perceived authenticity when AI involvement is disclosed. The article discusses these results through a productivity-creativity lens and highlights contextual factors such as user expertise, disclosure practices and governance. It concludes with a research agenda for designing human-AI workflows that combine efficiency with distinctive, authentic campaigns.

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1. Introduction

Large language models (LLMs) are generative AI systems trained on massive text corpora to predict and produce human-like language across a wide range of tasks. In marketing practice, these models are increasingly embedded as flexible assistants for campaign development, supporting activities from audience insight generation and slogan ideation to long-form copywriting and A/B test design. Earlier waves of AI in advertising concentrated mainly on targeting, bidding and personalization, treating creativity as a largely human domain (Vakratsas & Wang, 2020; Gao et al., 2023; Ziakis & Vlachopoulou, 2023). By contrast, LLMs and related generative models intervene directly in the creative layer of campaigns: they can propose concepts, write persuasive text, adapt tone of voice across segments and languages, and iterate at a pace that far exceeds human-only teams. Recent reviews position such AI tools as key enablers of data-driven, real-time digital marketing, while also raising concerns about control, oversight and strategic differentiation (Gao et al., 2023; Ziakis & Vlachopoulou, 2023; Kshetri et al., 2024).

Within this broader transformation, LLMs are framed as general-purpose marketing assistants that can plug into multiple stages of campaign development. Empirical and conceptual work shows that practitioners already use ChatGPT-style interfaces for content ideation, drafting of social media posts and emails, SEO-oriented copy, and the synthesis of customer reviews or user feedback into actionable insights (Rivas & Zhao, 2023; Tafesse & Wien, 2024). Generative AI frameworks in digital marketing argue that such tools can reduce production time and costs, enable rapid experimentation with multiple creative variants and support

more granular tailoring of messages across touchpoints and customer journeys (Gao et al., 2023; Islam et al., 2024). These contributions highlight substantial potential productivity gains, particularly for resource-constrained firms or teams that must maintain high content volumes.

At the same time, a growing body of research cautions that efficiency gains may come with creativity and authenticity trade-offs. Experimental work on LLM-supported creative tasks finds that model assistance can raise average quality and speed, but may reduce originality and exploration when users outsource too much of the ideation process or accept default suggestions without critique (Chen & Chan, 2024; Ivcevic & Grandinetti, 2024). Studies focused on marketing content show that audiences may react differently to AI-generated versus self-created brand material. For instance, generative AI use in social media content creation can diminish perceived brand authenticity when followers learn that a brand does not create its content itself, with potential implications for engagement and brand equity (Brüns & Meißner, 2024). These findings suggest that LLMs can be powerful co-creators, yet over-reliance or unreflective use risks homogenized campaigns and weaker differentiation.

Despite rapidly expanding commentary on generative AI, systematic evidence on LLMs specifically as marketing assistants in campaign development remains scattered. Existing reviews often consider AI in marketing in general or address generative AI at a conceptual level, providing only partial coverage of concrete LLM-supported workflows and measured effects on productivity and creativity (Gao et al., 2023; Ziakis & Vlachopoulou, 2023; Islam et al., 2024; Kshetri et al., 2024).

Empirical studies differ widely in tasks, collaboration modes, evaluation criteria and outcome measures, which makes it difficult to draw robust managerial implications. This article addresses these gaps by conducting a systematic literature review of peer-reviewed studies published between 2020 and 2024 that examine LLM- or GPT-based tools in marketing and advertising campaign development. The review synthesizes current evidence on productivity gains and creativity trade-offs, maps how LLMs are integrated across campaign lifecycle stages and identifies contextual conditions, such as user expertise, task type and collaboration modality, under which LLM assistance appears most beneficial or most risky (Brüns & Meißner, 2024; Chen & Chan, 2024; Ivcevic & Grandinetti, 2024; Rivas & Zhao, 2023; Tafesse & Wien, 2024).

2. Literature Review

Research on AI in marketing has evolved from early work on algorithmic targeting and bid optimization to broader frameworks on how intelligent systems reshape marketing activities and consumer behavior. In advertising creativity, AI was initially deployed to support media and optimization decisions while message generation remained largely human led (Vakratsas & Wang, 2020). More recent reviews of AI in advertising and digital marketing describe a shift toward generative models that can produce headlines, copy and visual concepts, thereby extending AI into creative functions and raising new questions about oversight, brand risk and differentiation (Gao et al., 2023; Ziakis & Vlachopoulou, 2023). A complementary hybrid review of AI and consumer behavior highlights how intelligent systems now

shape information search, decision processes and engagement, and calls for closer examination of how AI tools interact with psychological mechanisms in marketplace settings (Jain et al., 2024).

Within this broader landscape, a growing stream of work focuses on generative AI and large language models as specific tools in marketing practice. Studies on generative AI in digital marketing outline how LLM-based systems can support end-to-end workflows that range from audience insight synthesis and content ideation to copy variation and performance analysis, while also noting adoption barriers such as integration complexity, governance concerns and capability gaps (Islam et al., 2024; Kshetri et al., 2024). Topic modelling of practitioner discourse shows that marketers already use ChatGPT-style tools for content creation, idea generation, customer communication and decision support across multiple channels (Tafesse & Wien, 2024). Sector-specific work, such as a qualitative study of ChatGPT adoption in the Indonesian cosmetic industry, further illustrates how LLMs are embedded into marketing strategy, personalization and ethical decision-making in concrete organizational contexts (Wilendra et al., 2024). Conceptual work on marketing with ChatGPT emphasizes both productivity and ethical dimensions, arguing that GPT-based assistants can scale communication and analysis while simultaneously raising issues of transparency, bias and erosion of human judgment if deployed without clear guardrails (Rivas & Zhao, 2023).

A third body of literature links LLM use more directly to creativity, originality and brand-related outcomes. Experimental research on human–LLM collaboration in creative tasks finds that model assistance tends to improve average quality and

efficiency, yet can reduce novelty when users rely passively on default suggestions instead of engaging in active co-creation (Chen & Chan, 2024). Broader creativity research similarly portrays AI as a powerful tool for idea generation and refinement that can enhance fluency but risks homogenizing outputs when over-relied upon (Ivcevic & Grandinetti, 2024). In marketing-specific contexts, studies on generative AI for social media content suggest that audiences may penalize brands that outsource too much of their communication, perceiving AI-authored posts as less authentic once the use of AI is revealed (Brüns & Meißner, 2024). Taken together, these literatures underline the core tension that motivates the present review: large language models promise significant productivity gains in campaign development, but their impact on creativity, distinctiveness and perceived authenticity remains contingent on how collaboration is structured, disclosed and strategically managed.

3. Methods

This study adopts a systematic literature review approach to synthesise current knowledge on large language models as marketing assistants in campaign development. The review focuses on peer-reviewed articles published between 2020 and 2024, capturing the period in which generative language models became prominent in marketing research and practice. Searches were conducted in major academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect and Google Scholar, using combinations of keywords such as “large language model”, “generative language model”, “generative AI”, “marketing”, “advertising”, “campaign”, “copywriting”, “creativity” and “content creation”. Studies were

included if they were written in English, published in peer-reviewed journals or full-paper conference proceedings, and examined the use of large or generative language models for marketing or advertising tasks related to campaign development, such as idea generation, content production, message adaptation, optimization or evaluation. Papers that focused solely on technical model development without marketing application, or that discussed AI in marketing in general without a generative or language-modelling component, were excluded.

The screening process proceeded in two stages. First, titles and abstracts were reviewed to remove clearly irrelevant studies and ensure at least a minimal focus on marketing or advertising activities. Second, full texts of the remaining articles were examined to confirm that they addressed language-model-based tools in campaign-related workflows and reported conceptual, empirical or design insights relevant to productivity or creativity outcomes. The final set of studies was coded using a structured template capturing publication details, context and sector, model type or tool description, campaign tasks supported, study design, measures of productivity and creativity, and key findings. Coding paid particular attention to collaboration modality between humans and language models, evaluation criteria for creative quality and originality, and reported impacts on brand-related constructs such as authenticity and consumer response. These coded data formed the basis for the thematic synthesis presented in the results and discussion sections.

4. Results and Discussion

The review shows that large language models are already woven into multiple stages of marketing campaign development, but in uneven and experimental ways. Across conceptual and empirical work, LLMs appear most frequently in ideation, content drafting, and message adaptation tasks, where they are treated as versatile assistants rather than fully autonomous agents (Vakratsas & Wang, 2020; Gao et al., 2023; Ziakis & Vlachopoulou, 2023; Islam et al., 2024). Reviews of AI in advertising and digital marketing highlight that generative systems now extend beyond optimisation into the creative layer, enabling rapid production of slogans, ad copy, and channel-specific variants while reducing time and cost pressures on teams (Gao et al., 2023; Kshetri et al., 2024). Sector-specific evidence, such as the Indonesian cosmetic industry, shows that firms use LLM-based tools to support idea generation, content personalization, and tactical decision-making in everyday marketing practice (Wilendra et al., 2024). At a broader level, hybrid and narrative reviews of AI in marketing and consumer behavior frame these tools as part of a wider shift toward data-driven, automated, and always-on marketing infrastructures (Ziakis & Vlachopoulou, 2023; Jain et al., 2024).

In terms of productivity, the studies converge on clear short-term gains. Islam et al. (2024) and Kshetri et al. (2024) report that generative AI systems can compress production cycles, increase the number of creative alternatives explored, and support more granular tailoring of content across touchpoints. Practitioners in qualitative and topic-modelling studies describe using LLMs to draft emails, social posts, and ad variants, to summarize customer feedback, and to simulate alternative campaign

angles under tight deadlines (Rivas & Zhao, 2023; Tafesse & Wien, 2024; Wilendra et al., 2024). Experimental research on creative work complements these accounts: Chen and Chan (2024) find that LLM assistance improves average quality and efficiency of outputs, especially when users can request targeted suggestions and refinements. Similar patterns appear in creativity support studies outside marketing, where writers use LLMs to overcome blocks, iterate faster, and receive help in planning, translating, and reviewing their work (Chakrabarty et al., 2024). Taken together, these findings support viewing LLMs as powerful engines for productivity, particularly when they are integrated as interactive suggestion tools rather than one-click content generators.

However, these productivity gains are accompanied by systematic creativity trade-offs. Chen and Chan (2024) show that while LLM collaboration raises baseline quality, it also nudges outputs toward more conventional and moderate solutions, especially when users rely heavily on model suggestions. Ivcevic and Grandinetti (2024) argue that generative systems excel at recombining existing patterns, which can support everyday creativity but may limit originality if human experts do not question or extend the model's proposals. Chakrabarty et al. (2024) observe that professional writers often find LLMs more helpful in translation and reviewing than in high-level ideation, hinting that model strengths lie in elaboration rather than radical concept generation. Applied to campaign development, these results suggest that over-dependence on LLMs for core ideas risks homogenized campaigns that optimize for fluency and familiarity rather than distinct brand positioning. The reviewed marketing studies therefore point to a "productivity plateau", where

additional automation yields diminishing creative returns unless teams consciously adopt co-creative practices that preserve space for human exploration and risk-taking.

The review also surfaces important downstream implications for brand meaning and consumer response. Brüns and Meißner (2024) show that when followers discover that a brand's social media content is generated with generative AI rather than created "by the brand itself", perceived authenticity declines and evaluations worsen. Rivas and Zhao (2023) similarly highlight ethical and perceptual risks when organizations deploy LLM-based assistants in customer-facing interactions without clear disclosure or oversight, including concerns about manipulation, bias, and the erosion of human judgment. At the strategic level, Jain et al. (2024) and Islam et al. (2024) stress that AI-driven personalization and automation can reshape consumer decision processes, but may also trigger resistance if perceived as intrusive or inauthentic. These findings imply that productivity gains at the content level cannot be evaluated in isolation from brand-level outcomes such as authenticity, trust, and long-term equity.

Overall, the synthesis supports a contingent view of LLMs as marketing assistants rather than universal solutions. When used to automate routine drafting and support iterative refinement under the guidance of skilled marketers, LLMs can expand the range of campaign options and free human teams to focus on higher-order strategic and creative decisions (Gao et al., 2023; Islam et al., 2024; Kshetri et al., 2024). Yet when brands treat LLMs as low-cost substitutes for human creativity and voice, the evidence suggests a shift toward more generic, pattern-based content

and a heightened risk of authenticity and ethical concerns (Brüns & Meißner, 2024; Rivas & Zhao, 2023; Wilendra et al., 2024). Future research should therefore move beyond documenting tool adoption to systematically testing different collaboration modalities, disclosure strategies, and governance arrangements in real campaign settings, with attention to both productivity metrics and richer measures of creativity, distinctiveness, and consumer response.

5. Conclusion

This review concludes that large language models are emerging as powerful marketing assistants in campaign development, but their benefits are neither automatic nor uniform. Across the studies examined, LLMs clearly improve productivity by accelerating idea generation, content drafting and message adaptation, especially for routine or high-volume tasks. Teams are able to explore more creative options in the same amount of time and to tailor messages more finely to different audiences and channels. At the same time, the evidence shows that these gains come with meaningful trade-offs for creativity, originality and perceived authenticity, particularly when models are treated as low-cost substitutes rather than co-creative partners.

The synthesis also highlights important limitations in the current evidence base that reduce the strength and generalizability of the conclusions. Many studies rely on small samples, short-term experiments or narrow sectoral contexts, which makes it difficult to assess long-term impacts on brand equity, relationship quality and organizational capabilities. Measures of creativity and authenticity are often

simplified, and studies rarely compare different collaboration modes or disclosure strategies in a systematic way. These gaps should prompt readers to question how far current findings extend to other industries, cultures and levels of campaign complexity, and in what ways unobserved factors may have influenced reported results.

Building on these observations, future research should move beyond documenting adoption and perceived benefits to testing how different ways of working with LLMs shape outcomes over time. Longitudinal and field-based studies in real campaign settings could examine how collaboration structures, prompt design, and human review practices affect both productivity and creative distinctiveness. Experimental work that varies disclosure, governance and role allocation between humans and models would help clarify when audiences accept AI-assisted content and when they perceive it as inauthentic or manipulative. By explicitly addressing these shortcomings and open questions, subsequent studies can provide more valid, context-sensitive guidance on how marketers can harness LLM-driven productivity while preserving, and possibly enhancing, the creativity and authenticity that underpin effective campaigns.

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