



NEWS RELEASE

Marketers Cite Economic Volatility as Top Concern, Turn to AI for Efficiency, IridioSM Survey Finds

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Marketers navigate economic volatility by strategically shifting budgets to high-ROI tactics and technologies, while remaining cautious of AI's risks

CHICAGO--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- A recent survey of marketing leaders conducted by [Iridio](#) found that economic volatility is their top concern, leading to strategic budget shifts and an increased focus on high-value activities like personalization. Iridio's 2026 Marketing Predictions report also found that while marketers are prioritizing investments in AI to enhance customer experience, they remain highly aware of the technology's potential to erode consumer trust.

A recent survey of marketing leaders conducted by Iridio found that economic volatility is their top concern, leading to strategic budget shifts and an increased focus on high-value activities like personalization. Iridio's 2026 Marketing Predictions report found that 53% of marketers cite human interaction replacement and AI deception as top threats to consumer trust, 55% name AI and machine learning as a top 3 tech investment, and 78% of marketers plan to use AI for personalization and improved customer experience.

"Marketers are heading into next year with a clear mandate to maximize impressions while facing constrained budgets, and they are turning to technology to drive a high degree of personalization, efficiency and

impact," said Andy Johnson, Senior Vice President and Head of Iridio. "Our findings show that brands that best operate at the intersection of AI, automation and data stand to benefit the most. The opportunity for brands will be to thoughtfully integrate these technologies, while remaining authentic and responsible in how they engage their customers."

Key takeaways of the report include:

- Volatility forces AI investment: Economic volatility is the primary cause of uncertainty (56%), followed by AI disruption (32%). This concern, coupled with expected consumer attitudes like economic distress (42%) and demand for lower prices (32%), influences strategic planning and makes AI/machine learning the top technology investment priority (55% in their top three) for driving efficiency.
- AI uses: AI investment is overwhelmingly prioritized for high-value functions, including Personalization/Customer Experience (78%) and Data Analysis/Predictive Analytics (76%).
- Trust paradox: While relying on AI, marketers view replacing human interaction with AI (28%) and AI-generated deception (25%) as the biggest threats to consumer trust.
- Budget shifts to digital: Budgets are shifting toward high-impact digital tactics, including Online Video (59%), Websites (57%), and Paid Social Media (56%).

The AI imperative and associated risks

Artificial intelligence and machine learning are the top investment priorities (55% in top three). Marketers prioritizing AI are focusing on critical outcomes including:

- Personalization and improved customer experience (78%)
- Data analysis and predictive analytics (76%)

This push for efficiency is balanced by high risk awareness: 53% of marketers cite human interaction replacement (28%) and AI deception (25%) as top threats to consumer trust. Marketers plan to measure the effectiveness of their personalization efforts by customer retention and loyalty (59%) and brand trust (54%).

Marketing tactic budgets are going up across the board

The Iridio survey indicates marketers expect increased spending across several digital tactics. A majority of respondents anticipate budget growth for:

- Online video (59%).
- Websites (57%).
- Paid social media (56%).

Significant increases are also expected for influencer marketing (48%) and retail media networks (47%). In contrast, marketers anticipate flatter or declining budgets for other channels such as broadcast, direct mail, CTV, traditional outdoor advertising, and print media.

To learn more about Iridio's 2026 Marketing Predictions, visit go.rrd.com/predictions.

Methodology

The data was compiled from an Iridio-commissioned survey of 600 marketing leaders at manager-and-above levels across the United States. The survey was conducted in September 2025 and included respondents from a wide range of industries, representing organizations with annual revenues ranging from \$25 million to over \$5 billion.

About Iridio

Iridio simplifies marketing complexity by unifying creative, media, and data and analytics in one platform. As a trusted marketing partner to top brands in retail, healthcare, financial services, and other industries, Iridio's data-driven solutions connect brands with their audiences at defining moments. Backed by RRD's legacy and global scale, Iridio offers a flexible suite of services that range from single-channel campaign activations to fully integrated programs, enabling brands to optimize the customer journey and achieve meaningful business results.

About RRD

RRD provides a complete portfolio of marketing, packaging, print and business services to the world's most respected brands, including 91% of the Fortune 100. The company's proprietary technology, advanced data analytics and established expertise fuel organizational decision-making, from strategy through execution. With operations in 30 countries, global organizations and regulated industries trust RRD to reduce complexity and drive audience connections across the entire customer journey.

media.info@rrd.com

312.326.7168

Source: Iridio