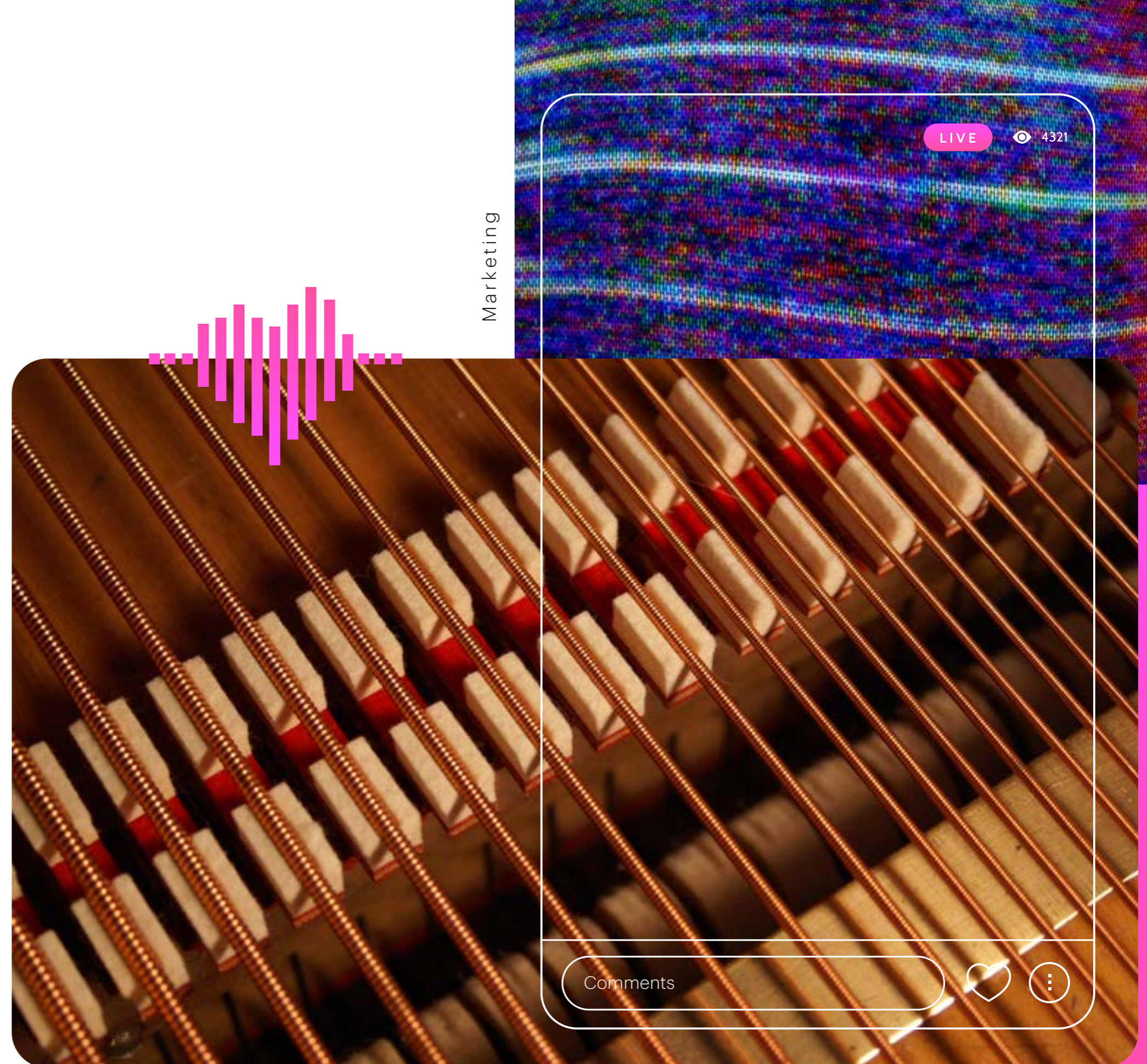


Accenture Song

A life-centric approach to growth

Marketing, the Maestro way

How a new approach is driving relevance and growth



Marketing





Relevance is critical to any enterprise's future—yet amid global volatility, [evolving technologies](#) and increasingly [unpredictable consumers](#)¹, achieving and maintaining it is harder than ever. It's a **chance for marketing leaders, long the stewards of relevance, to shine**: C-suites increasingly are relying on them to navigate these challenges and deliver a clear path to growth.

But today, marketing's mission is fragmented by complexity and new opportunities. An ever-growing number of channels, touchpoints and tools are delivering an explosion of data—and drawing more parts of the company (sales, human resources, IT and beyond) into marketing conversations. Generative AI and other advancements are allowing for creativity and experimentation at speed and scale. At the same time, tension between the [art of brand marketing and the analytics of performance marketing](#)² is overshadowing what customers really need: information and engaging experiences that help them make decisions.

How can marketers drive relevance in this state of constant flux? To find out, Accenture conducted a global survey of 1,150 cross-functional executives across an array of industries.³ We found that in many organizations (66%), marketers are still scrambling for full control of brand identity and consumer engagement. Burdened with an overwhelming set of responsibilities and blocking others from contributing, they allow opportunities for collaboration, efficiency and creativity to slip away. At other organizations (25%), marketers accept that total control is no longer possible, but are plagued by uncertainty and unable to adapt.

66%

of marketers are **still scrambling for full control** of brand identity and consumer engagement

25%

of marketers accept that **total control is no longer possible**

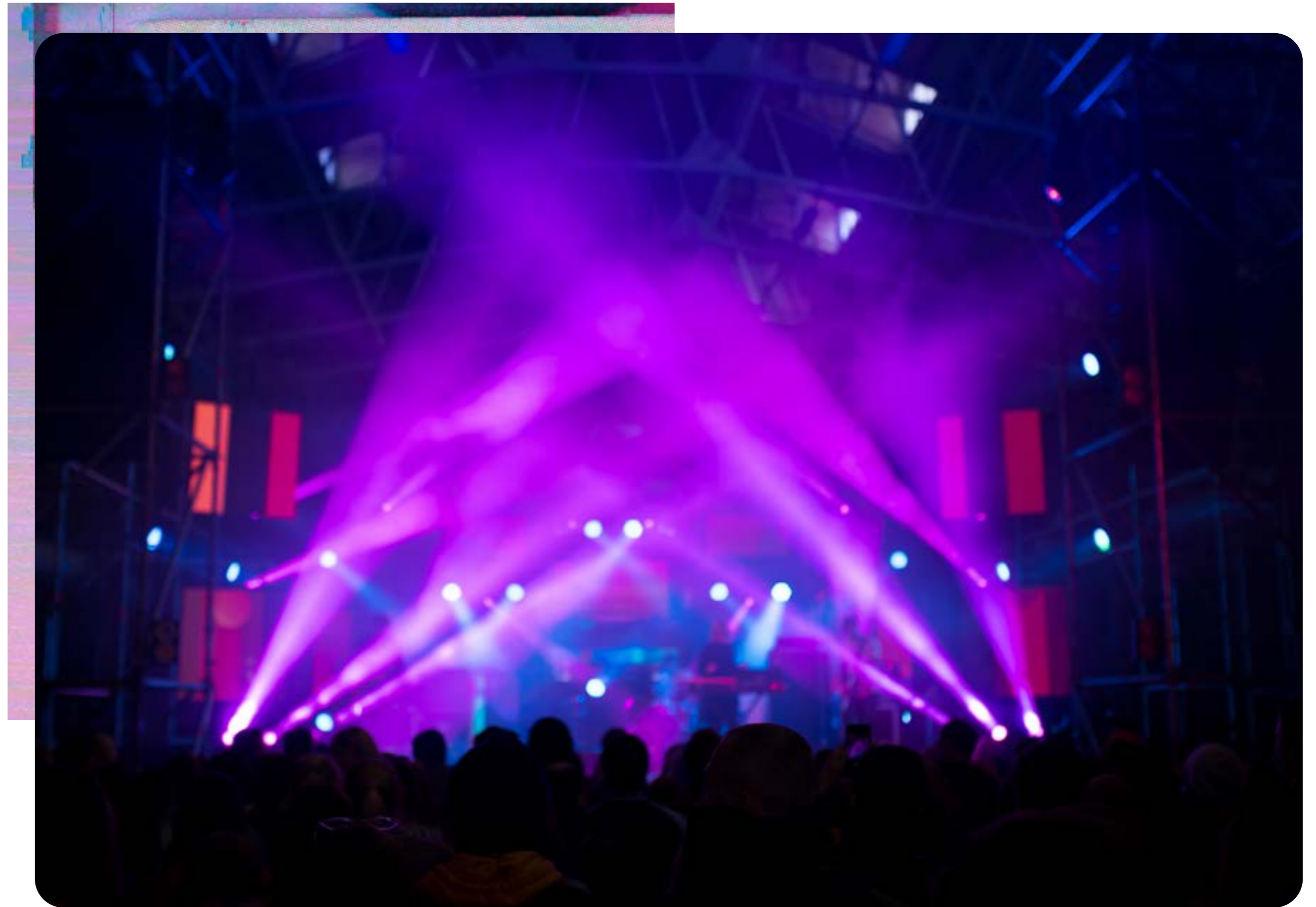
9%

of marketers recognize that **marketing is no longer a solo performance**

However, some companies — **just 9% of those we surveyed** — are finding success with a different approach



They recognize that marketing is no longer a solo performance; instead, it's a symphony, with players across the company ready to play their parts. And their marketers are stepping into the spotlight to conduct the music.



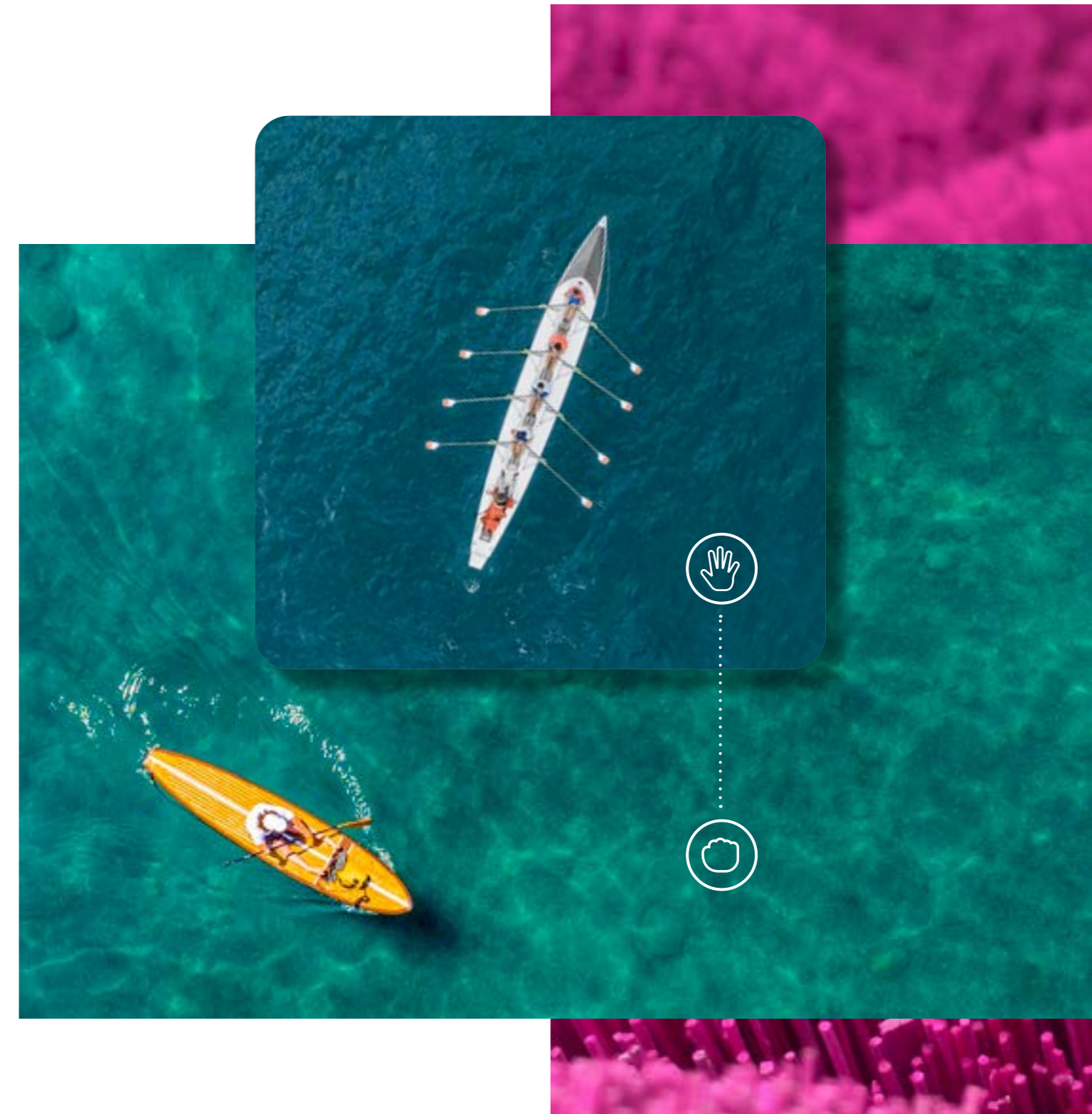
A Maestro approach: many players, one mission

These top-performing organizations are reimagining marketing from an isolated function to an enterprise-wide capability. Their marketing leaders are taking what we call a **Maestro approach**: rather than trying to control the conversation end-to-end, they are breaking down silos, facilitating cross-functional collaboration and leading a broader strategic effort that delivers growth and relevance.

These marketers work across all parts of the business to foster a unified brand experience. They break down artificial internal boundaries to encourage collaboration in every corner

of their organization and direct all eyes to the North Star of a shared customer vision. Through training and operational changes, they spread marketing skills to other functions and establish accountable leadership. This way, everyone is prepared to identify and respond to key marketing opportunities, anywhere they appear.

And when marketing is a company-wide capability, marketers themselves become connectors bringing disparate parts into harmony—and leaders driving innovation in pursuit of business goals.





Our survey found that all companies with strong collaborative relationships between marketing and other functions saw up to **4% more revenue** growth than their peers. With the added benefits of a Maestro approach,

they were **33% more likely** than their peers to say they had “more control over their brand than ever.” And they were more likely to report that they performed “far better than peers” in a number of ways:

1.6x

in terms of customer lifetime value.

1.4x

in terms of environmental, social and governance (ESG) targets.

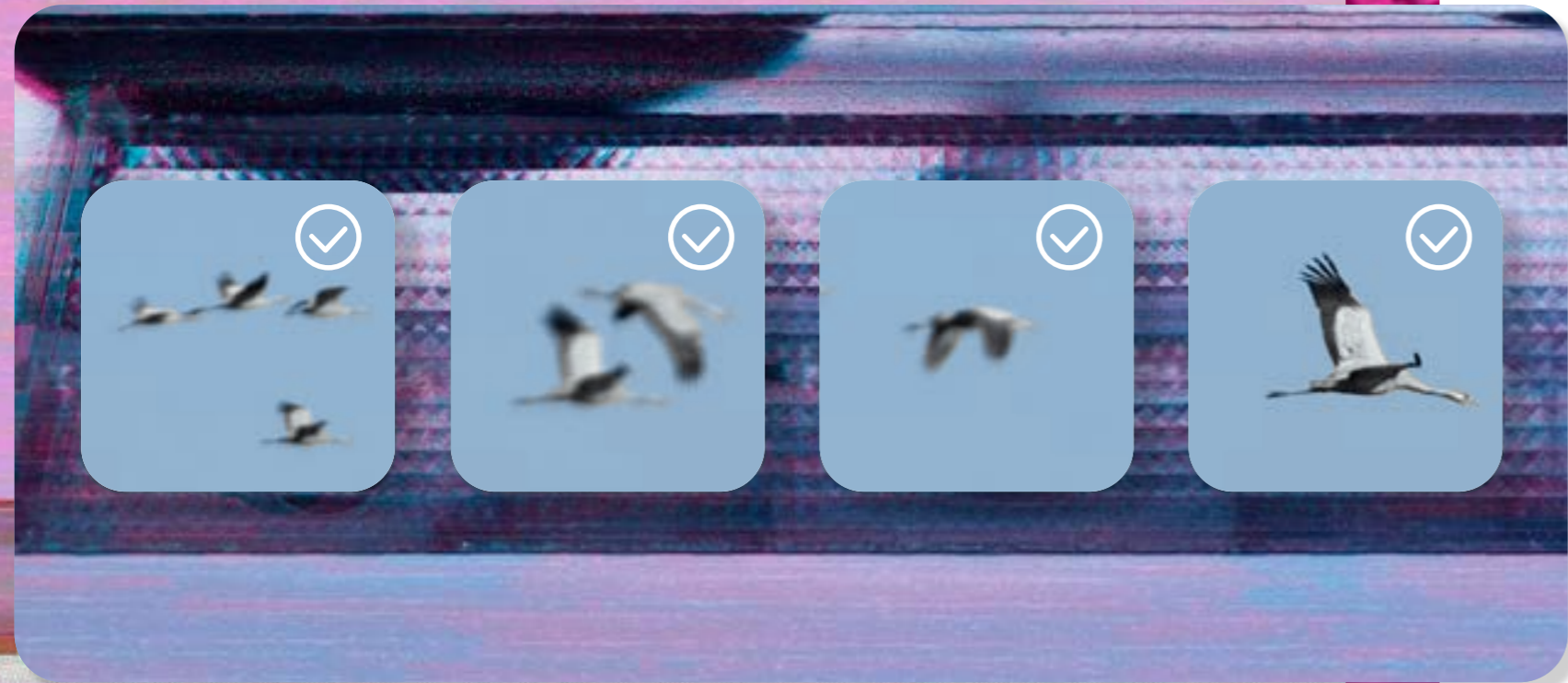
1.8x

in terms of speed to market.

Taking a Maestro approach better positions marketers and the overall organization to respond to changing audiences because it is life-centric:⁴

it understands customers as multidimensional individuals constantly evolving in response to unpredictable external forces—and builds the business around serving those changing needs and priorities. By reshaping marketing around tech, talent and collaboration, this approach supports the pursuit of [Total Enterprise Reinvention](#),⁵ a strategy for driving growth and optimizing operations by transforming every function within a company and enabling continuous evolution.





Embracing the Maestro way: **See, solve, simplify, scale**

Marketers with a Maestro approach are paving a path to growth and relevance. They do this in four ways:



01. See customers in a new light and establish marketing as an enterprise-wide capability

Marketers know that relevance comes from seeing customers as people with complex, ever-changing lives. This modern and more realistic understanding of how people operate, combined with the changing marketing landscape, drives companies to align around a common customer vision and rethink what marketing is, how it operates and what it can achieve.

Those taking a Maestro approach are 33% more likely than peers to share an enterprise-wide vision that recognizes marketing as having two layers: the individual practitioners doing the work, and the strategic capability sounding across the entire enterprise. As more parts of the organization become involved in the brand conversation and customer experience, marketers themselves shift their role to guiding that broader strategy.

It's a future-focused vision that is brought to life by connecting with customers and rewiring the organization for closer collaboration, better insights and faster delivery of critical customer capabilities.

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33%

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4321

Taking action

To achieve this, marketers need to:

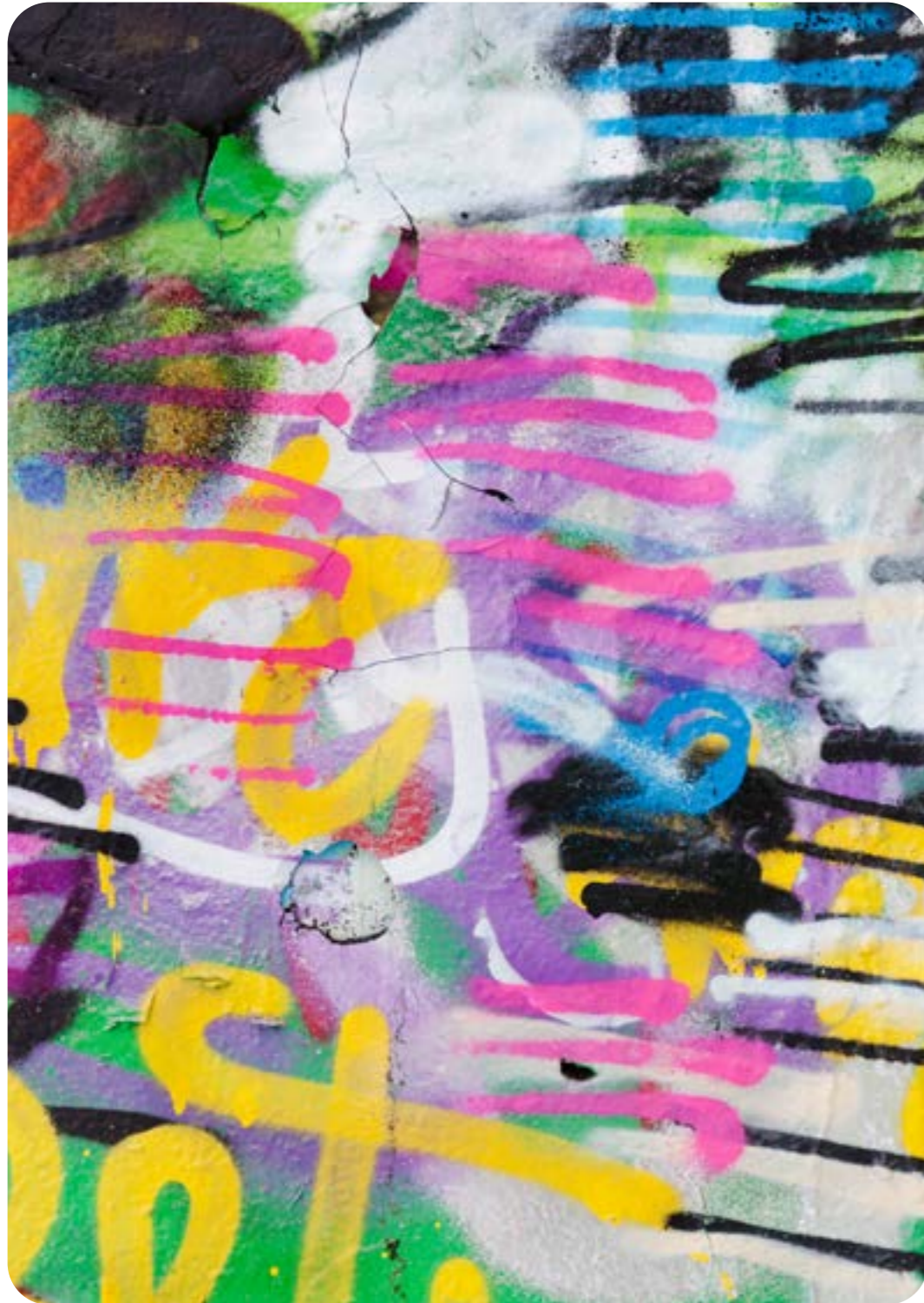
- Use both empathy and technology to stay focused on their customer vision. They must understand customers not just as buyers, but as complex people with shifting needs and priorities—and seek innovative ways to serve them.
- Connect all parts of the company in strategic alignment around the customer vision and communicate their role clearly and consistently from the top.
- Adjust internal operations and practices to facilitate cross-functional collaboration, data-sharing and communication.

A Maestro view

"I view marketing as the conductor of an orchestra. The marketer doesn't recruit the woodwind section—someone else specializes in that. My job is to take on an orchestrating role and make sure the entire group is working well together. It starts at the top: leadership has to establish shared objectives and make sure their people have bought into them before you can have successful collaboration."

— Jane Stiller, Chief Marketing Officer, ITV





02. Solve for layered customer journeys by forging strategic relationships

To keep up with increasingly complex customer journeys, marketers need to deliver creative and flexible solutions in a constantly changing, resource-constrained environment, while benefiting not just customers but all stakeholders. That means going beyond the fundamentals and looking across the entire experience continuum.

To do this, marketers must foster the right relationships externally and internally so they can see clearly and act quickly. [Our previous research](#)⁶ showed that just a small percentage of marketers frequently collaborate across functions and move talent between groups. But taking a Maestro approach makes it possible. For example, these organizations are 19% more likely than their counterparts to report close collaboration between marketing and human resources.



This mindset encourages marketers to partner cross-functionally with sales, human resources, IT, customer service and beyond. Each of these functions has its own data, touchpoints and interactions with customers. **Breaking down the boundaries between them allows marketers to build connections that uncover hidden value and unseen opportunities.** And identifying mutually beneficial relationships with external partners can tap into a world of growth possibilities.

Function	Key players	Marketing's influence	How a Maestro approach maximizes the connection
Human Resources	CHRO	Informs employer brand.	Prioritizes building a brand that attracts and retains top talent.
Commerce/Sales	CRO, CGO, CSO	Shares accountability for revenue growth and overlaps for opportune ways of working.	<u>Defines connectivity points such as social, commerce and sales.</u>
Customer Experience	CXO	Informs new ways of driving customer engagement.	<u>Formalizes partnerships, deepens customer insights through AI.</u>
Technology	CTO, CDO, CIO	Shared tech ecosystem for campaign, content and analytics.	Finds ways to enrich personalization and gain actionable insights.





Taking action

A Maestro approach requires collaborative cross-functional connections. To enable them, marketing leaders must:

- Create a roadmap for enabling capabilities across the organization that help everyone better understand each step of the customer journey.
- Build strong relationships with other internal leaders and work together to champion change.
- Encourage relationships with [external partners](#) that deliver better solutions for customers and contribute to growth.



Meaningful relationships, meaningful results

*“Some of our most creative and effective marketing initiatives are the result of having deep, strong relationships with strange bedfellows. When we launched the **1% for the Planet checking account** (which helps support eco-friendly nonprofits), we partnered with Doconomy, a fintech company from Stockholm, and Protect Our Winters. We were able to pull together a product that was unique in the marketplace because we had deep, authentic relationships with nontraditional partners. You get a lot of credibility when you build relationships with other*

organizations you would not normally be part of. It’s about what partners say about you when you’re not in the room. And that has led to huge commercial outcomes in the form of business referrals. [Meanwhile,] my closest ally internally is the head of HR. If you can get all of your employees to be a vocal, proud advocate about what the company is doing, that’s what matters. As they say, culture eats strategy for breakfast. If you want to build a strong culture, you have to partner with HR and understand what values you want to recruit and reward.”

— Ben Stuart, Chief Marketing Officer, Bank of the West





03. Simplify for relevance by streamlining operations and rethinking success metrics

Companies need to seek simplicity—not just in what they offer but in how they operate. Across an enterprise, more people have contact with the customer than ever before. But many businesses aren't set up to be interoperable. Technology can bridge the disconnect. Companies need to take two steps:

1. Rewire internally across all customer-facing functions with an integrated technology stack uniting platforms and ecosystems.
2. Activate automation to make day-to-day tasks more efficient.

This allows all functions to operate more productively, even amid changing circumstances, and lets marketers re-focus their role.

Rather than trying to control every output, those who take a Maestro approach empower others in the organization to take some responsibility for brand conversations and engagement. They seek simplicity by spreading their skills across the enterprise, connecting everyone for maximum impact. This results in greater cross-departmental collaboration and efficiency. Marketers are then free to focus on championing customer insights (which they're 32% more likely to do than peers.) They can turn their attention to elevating the brand experience and conducting the broader symphony that unites all players.



Taking action

Streamlining operations helps everyone contribute—and lets marketing leaders conduct an impactful strategy. To enable this, they must:

- Design an operating model that nurtures cross-functional connection, activates top talent and enables better orchestration of data and technology.
- Use automation and generative AI to drive efficiency in routine tasks and redirect people's time to more creative or challenging work.
- Develop new metrics for success, including a roadmap for shared goals and a measurement framework that incentivizes collaboration.



04. **Scale** for growth by connecting data, technology and talent in new ways

Vision, relationships and streamlined operations set up organizations for success.

To scale those wins, they can connect human ingenuity and technology. With a cloud-based digital core, data-driven insights and AI-powered innovation, they can optimize experiences, respond faster to changes and deliver more with their existing resources.

According to our survey, these marketers focus on data. They are 23% more likely than other survey respondents to strongly agree that they are collecting data from more channels than two years ago. And they are more likely than their peers to see data and digital/programming skills as crucial for meeting future marketing needs (18% more and 34% more, respectively). This results in greater cross-departmental sharing of data and insights, allowing organizations to react to changing customer needs and external forces with greater knowledge and agility.

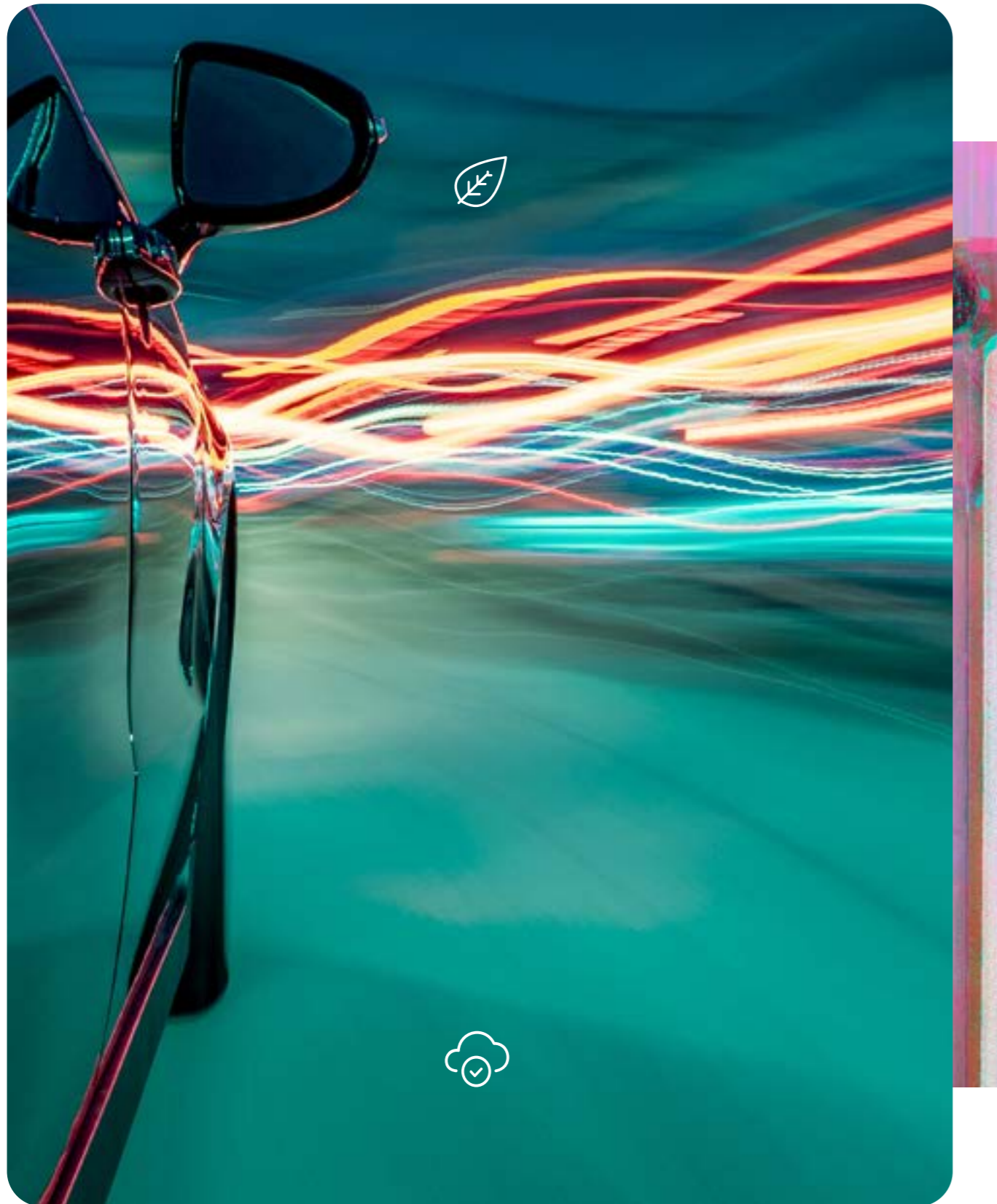
But a Maestro approach also allows marketers to see the human connection that powers the machines. Generative AI and other advancements are offering new ways to automate and share tasks across an enterprise, freeing marketers to spread their wealth of knowledge and speed its application to every function. With a Maestro approach, marketers are 20% more likely than those with a less-focused approach to say they have the right kinds of talent built into their functions. And though they are generally enthusiastic, our survey shows their overall approach to using technology to automate creative tasks is more considered than their peers’.

Taking action

By tying the technology and human elements closer together, a Maestro approach fosters a culture that enables innovation in every corner of the business. To enable this, marketing leaders must:

- Increase company-wide [Technology Quotients](#) and upskill all teams for full digital fluency—meaning they don't just understand technology in relation to specific tasks, but are able to use it thoughtfully and creatively to unlock value.
- Establish a shared data strategy underpinned by a singular view of customers and their experiences to make each interaction more relevant and personal.
- Upskill people across the enterprise in delivering value to customers and exercising creativity, empathy and brand storytelling—which are central to marketing as a practice.
- Establish development programs and other initiatives that support people as their roles change and make everyone a contributor to innovation.





smart

As a new joint venture between Geely and Mercedes-Benz, the car brand smart is entering the market with a new portfolio of digitized and electric vehicles. It faced a major opportunity: the chance to entirely reinvent auto sales. Accenture and smart partnered to create a new experience and ecommerce platform on a greenfield that connects data from a variety of sources, responds to the hyper-personalized realities of customers' buying habits and connects everyone—customers, dealership agents, service call centers and beyond. It's built to be future-

proof, leveraging back-end solutions from Adobe, SAP and Salesforce for a short time to market, plus a headless front-end for a consistent experience across all touch points. And with a modern data architecture spanning all interactions, the resulting insights can be used to expand offerings and services and inform decisions about marketing, sales, supply chain/distribution, lead management and more. With this personalized approach and a new vision for direct sales business model, smart is making a big leap into the future.

New connections, new relevance

The rapid changes that are reshaping the marketing landscape show no sign of slowing down. But with them come unprecedented opportunities to rethink how companies connect with people and build new relevance. As companies seek life-centric strategies that help them to better perform in the future, a Maestro approach to marketing offers an opening note. It empowers marketers to redefine their role—and allows organizations to expand the very definition of what marketing is and what it can achieve for them.

Ultimately, taking a Maestro approach allows marketing to thrive as a cross-functional capability involving a multitude of players freed from traditional operational silos. With an eye toward the future, marketers themselves become conductors of a company-wide symphony, with technology and talent working in strategic harmony. And the businesses that embrace them are positioned to adapt to ongoing change—while opening the door to innovation, relevance and growth.



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About the research

Accenture Song and Accenture Research conducted a global, cross-industry survey of 1,150 executives made up of approximately 45% Chief Marketing Officers (CMOs) and 55% CEOs and other C-suite functional leads to better understand how they are trying to achieve relevance in today's challenging circumstances. We used decision tree analysis to identify the key behaviors and attitudes reflected in the survey data that were most strongly correlated with self-reported performance.

Accenture

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