EXECUTIVE PERSPECTIVES ON TOP RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

for the Near - and Long - Term

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Global Business Consulting

CMOs Focus on Growth Through Revenue, Expansion and Ecosystem Value

By Jennifer Friese, managing director

Ecosystem development and geographic expansion are cited by chief marketing officers (CMOs) in our Top Risks survey as leading opportunities for growth in 2027, with revenue potential ranking even higher.

In the pursuit of these opportunities, CMOs are placing greater emphasis on ecosystem development as a crucial growth lever, particularly to capitalise on the efficiencies provided by AI technology. For CMOs, this means partnering with technology providers to unlock capabilities that accelerate innovation and growth, and enable organisations to scale.



"Better alignment across data, technology and growth functions will be critical to turning opportunity into results."

Partnerships can extend a brand's capabilities, reach and speed to market. Gap Inc., for example, is partnering with Google Cloud and other technology providers to connect data, AI, content and commerce, creating more personalised experiences that strengthen customer retention and drive growth.

On geographic expansion, TikTok Shop expanded its European footprint to Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands and Poland in 2026, enabling shoppers in those countries to discover and buy products via shoppable videos and interactive livestreams without leaving the app.

Capturing these opportunities requires disciplined execution. As economic pressure increases scrutiny of marketing and value realisation, CMOs need to focus AI investments on measurable business value while strengthening the data, processes and workforce capabilities required to scale effectively.

The survey suggests that CMOs are moving from AI experimentation towards execution, with governance, integration and workforce readiness emerging as priorities. Investment plans reinforce that shift, emphasising the business processes, security and data foundations needed to convert AI innovation into sustainable business value.

Five actions CMOs can take now

- **Align growth priorities around the customer:** Identify ecosystem partnerships and market expansion opportunities that offer the greatest customer and revenue potential, with clear measures of success.
- **Prioritise AI use cases with measurable business value:** Concentrate investment in AI applications that improve customer experience, decision-making or operating efficiency, rather than adopting AI without a clear purpose.
- **Strengthen the data foundation for AI and personalisation:** Work across functions to improve data quality, accessibility and integration before scaling AI-enabled marketing and customer experiences.
- **Build governance and trust into transformation from the outset:** Embed privacy, security, responsible AI and regulatory requirements into the design of customer and AI initiatives rather than adding controls later, particularly as AI increases demands for data governance and auditability.
- **Prepare the workforce to turn intelligence into action:** Combine technology investment with skills, redesigned processes and clear accountability so teams can use AI and data effectively.



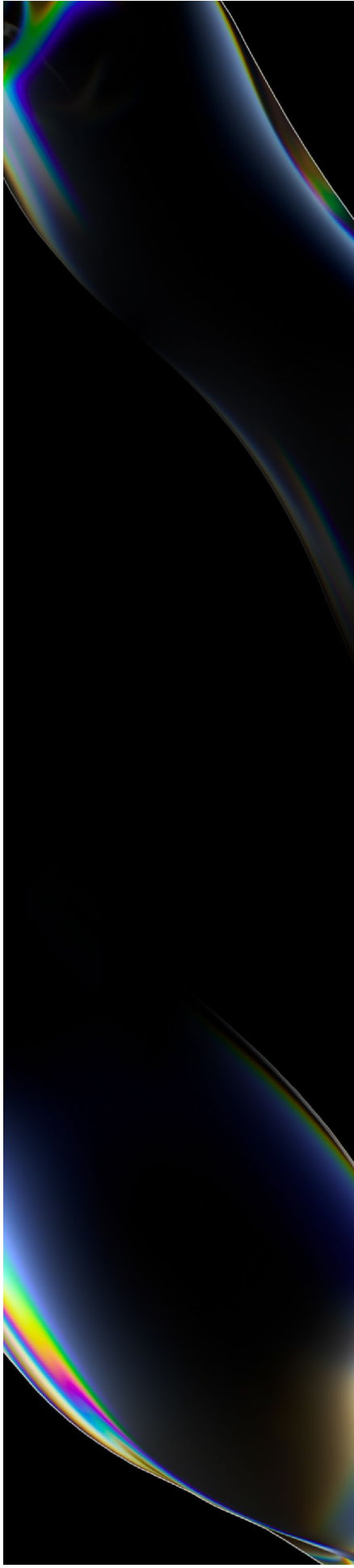
Overall, the survey points to a common imperative for CMOs: turn data and technology into better business and customer outcomes while building the trust and infrastructure needed to sustain growth.

About the survey

Our 15th annual Executive Perspectives on Top Risks and Opportunities Survey contains insights from 1,330 board members and C-suite executives around the world regarding their views on:

- Ability to transform and protect the enterprise and respond to market opportunities and risks;
- Opportunities for growth considering the current environment;
- Priorities perceived as most critical to maximising the value of AI deployments;
- The top risks on the horizon for the near-term (two to three years ahead) related to 30 specific risks across three dimensions (transform, protect and respond);
- A discussion of their organisations' near-term strategic investment priorities, given the opportunities and the risks they face; and
- The long-term horizon based on 11 risk themes that encompass the 30 near-term risk issues.

Our survey participants shared their views through an online survey conducted in June and July 2026.



About the author



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Jen is a results-focused leader with experience in devising and executing digital business and marketing strategies that build brands and drive growth. Her work includes leading digital and customer transformation projects, creative and product development, content strategy management and execution, employee experience strategy and implementation, and digital media strategy and buying. As a growth-minded leader, Jen works with clients and teams to design customer-first solutions that drive growth and business security for the future. Contact Jennifer at jennifer.friese@protiviti.com.

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