

AI in Home Furnishings Marketing: Finding the Balance



When your marketing team is asked to do more with less...

- Create content for multiple channels
- Maintain authentic industry expertise
- Keep pace with digital transformation
- Preserve brand voice and credibility

Smart AI integration can help - if we use it strategically

Today's Session

- Common Pitfalls: Learning from Marketing's AI Mistakes
- Strategic Applications: Where AI Makes Sense
- Choosing Your Tools: Evaluating AI Options
- Project Knowledge: The Key to Better AI Outputs

AI Gone Wrong

Key Challenges:

- All brands start sounding the same as AI learns from itself
- Generic content that could apply to any brand in any industry
- Lacks real industry expertise and emotional connection
- Fails to build meaningful relationships with customers

Joshua Ben Rosen, Prosek Partners WSJ Op Ed

“Prompted to draft a press release on an acquisition, ChatGPT would draw on a vast number of prior news releases announcing acquisitions, combining the archive of rhetorical nothingisms to produce its own low-caliber content.

Joshua Ben Rosen, Prosek Partners WSJ Op Ed

“If every company starts sending out an endless stream of AI-generated material, the resulting feedback loop will nearly guarantee that all the material will start to sound the same. Originality and authenticity would be the only way to cut through the noise.”

“We are thrilled”...21,556 times over

- "We are thrilled to welcome Christy to the NCTC family"
- "We are thrilled to support such an impactful organization like First Tee of Greater Detroit"
- "I'm thrilled to share this breakthrough process that I created and the technology with the world"
- "We are thrilled with the enthusiastic response to the NEXMOW M2 at CES 2025"
- "We are thrilled to introduce Edge to the market"
- "We're absolutely thrilled to have the incredible backing of our investors as we deepen our retail partnerships"
- "It has been an honor to wake up with America these past four years and I am thrilled to apply my background in news, law, entertainment and business"
- And 21,500 more and growing...

Other hackneyed words and phrases...

- synergy
- leverage
- move the needle
- paradigm shift
- think outside the box
- deep dive
- core competency
- pivot
- bandwidth
- low-hanging fruit
- drill down
- circle back
- touch base
- best practice
- optimize
- streamline

Joshua Ben Rosen, Prosek Partners WSJ Op Ed

“Instead of outsourcing communications to AI, businesses should rediscover the reason for the practice—to convey ideas real humans think and explain their actions at a particular moment, in a particular place and under a particular set of circumstances.”

The Future of Marketing Work

It's not about replacement - it's about transformation

- **Yesterday:** Marketers spent hours on routine tasks
- **Today:** AI handles the routine, marketers focus on strategy
- **Tomorrow:** Marketing professionals who master AI tools will lead the industry

Using AI Strategically in Home Furnishings Marketing

The key is knowing where AI can support your expertise, not replace it

- Let AI Handle:
 - Repetitive Tasks
 - Data Analysis
 - First Drafts
- You Focus On:
 - Strategy
 - Brand Voice
 - Customer Relationships

AI should enhance your story, not replace the storyteller

CONTENT CREATION

- First drafts of product descriptions
- Social media post variations
- Basic promotional copy

RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

- Market trend analysis
- Competitor content monitoring
- Customer feedback analysis

CONTENT OPTIMIZATION

- SEO keyword suggestions
- Content readability checks
- Bias analysis

WORKFLOW ENHANCEMENT

- Content calendaring
- A/B testing suggestions
- Performance reporting

WHAT I DO AS AN EDUCATOR:

- Organize course materials and objectives
- Track and evaluate assignments
- Respond to multiple e-mails, most of them emergencies
- Provide consistent, in-depth student feedback
- Maintain voice and tone in communications
- Manage multiple classes and deadlines
- Ensure content aligns with learning goals

How do I think about AI?

- It's the best intern I've ever had
- This intern doesn't get tired, take breaks, roll their eyes, or ask for days off
- This intern impresses me with their knowledge of my company. It's almost like they are vying for my job, but I know they really aren't.
- This intern gives me exactly what I need after minor feedback prompts
- This intern frees me up to do the important tasks
- But like any group of interns, there are some I like better than others. There are some I'd hire before others.
- Not every university's interns are the same. In fact, I pay \$20 per month so I can access the interns at University X because I know they are worth the extra investment.

So Which Intern do I like best?

The AI Awards Show

SILVER MEDAL

- Perplexity
- Gemini
- DeepSeek

GOLD MEDAL

- Claude (\$20)
- GPT (\$20)
- CoPilot

Claude vs GPT

CLAUDE

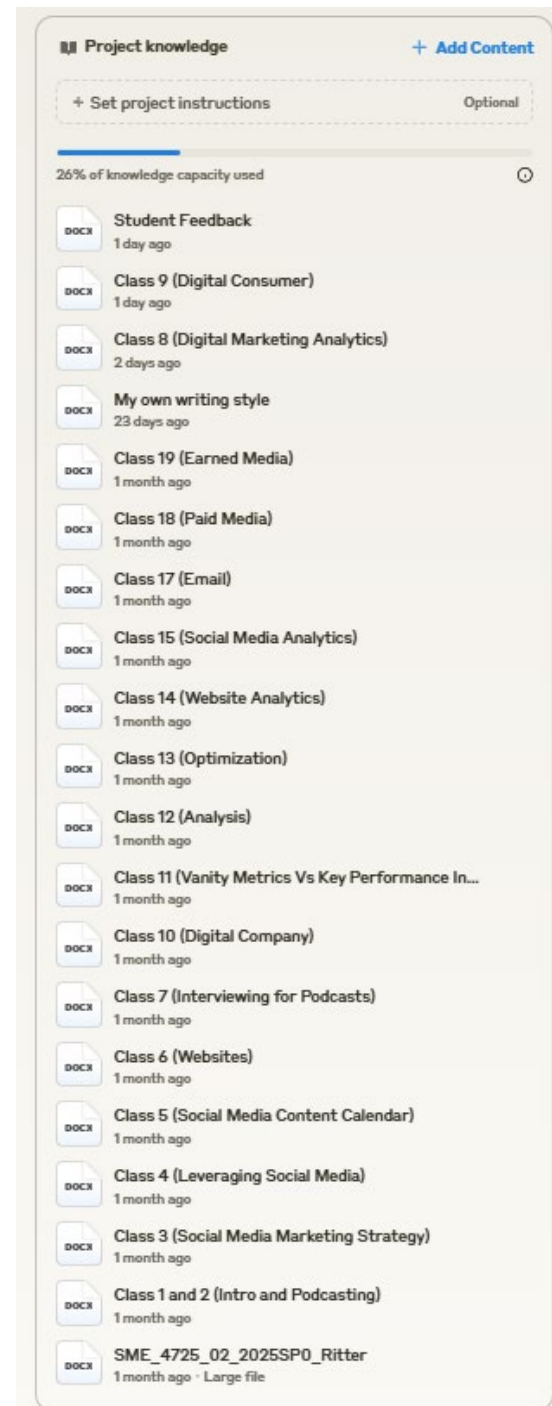
- Friendly
- Intuitive and Reasoning Skills
- First and best “Project” learning
- Consistent platform improvement
- Option to work in closed or open environment

GPT

- Advanced handling of visual and graphic requests
- Intuitive and Reasoning Skills
- “Notebook” learning (getting better every day)
- Consistent platform improvement
- Can operate in a closed system **or** bring in Internet knowledge

Projects (Notebooks)...If you aren't using these, you should be

- Projects allow you to create a pool of knowledge that the platform draws from for each request.
 - Syllabus
 - Course Assignments
 - Lecture Slides
 - Class Roster
 - Course Objectives
 - Examples of my feedback and writing style



Example

Good afternoon, Dr. Ritter

I hope this email finds you well. I am reaching out because I am currently 9 credits short of being on track to graduate in Fall 2026. I explored the option of studying abroad during the upcoming summer semester; however, I learned that the registrar's office will only accept up to 8 credits towards my degree which would mean I could only take 6.

Given this situation, I would like to know what the best course of action would be to ensure I can stay on track to graduate possibly early . Are there additional options available?

Your guidance on the most efficient and cost-effective way to proceed would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your time and support. I look forward to your advice.

Best regards,
XXXXXXXXXXXX

Example

This is complex!

Student wants to:

- Study Abroad
- Graduate a semester early
- Complete all major requirements
- Double minor

Claude “Project” to the rescue:

Hi XXXXXXXX,

I appreciate you reaching out, and I can see you're thinking strategically about your graduation timeline. Looking at your transcript, you've completed 67 credits and are currently enrolled for 18 credits this fall, which will bring you to 85 credits.

To clarify - graduating in Fall 2026 would actually be graduating a semester early (on-time would be Spring 2027). To graduate early in Fall 2026 with the required 128 credits, you'd need to complete 43 more credits in just three semesters: Spring 2026, Summer 2026, and Fall 2026.

Here's the challenge: with normal course loads, you could take 16-18 credits in Spring 2026 and 16-18 in Fall 2026 (32-36 credits total), meaning you'd need 7-11 credits during summer to graduate early. Since the registrar will only accept up to 8 credits from study abroad toward your degree, and you mentioned taking 6 credits abroad, you're cutting it very close.

Additionally, you'll need to complete requirements for both of your minors:

- Sport Management Minor: You've completed SMG 1010, SMG 2100, and SMG 2500 (12 credits), so you need 8 more credits from the elective courses like SMG 3040 (Sport Law) or SMG 3050 (Sport Finance).
- Social Media and Digital Communication Minor: I see you have STC 1225 and are enrolled for SME 4345 and MKT 4100 this fall. You'll still need COM 1113 and STC 4545 to complete this 20-credit minor.

My recommendation would be to either:

1. Take the full 8 credits abroad if possible
2. Consider adding a course or two through HPU Summer Online in addition to your study abroad credits
3. Graduate in Spring 2027, which would give you more flexibility

Since STC courses aren't typically offered during summer, you'd likely need to focus on Gen Ed requirements for most summer coursework. Looking at your transcript, you still have several Gen Ed areas to complete, making summer a good time to address those.

Best,
Dr. R

Projects in Home Furnishings Marketing

- Load Once, Use Always:
 - Product specs, style guides, and brand standards stay ready
 - Industry terms and compliance requirements at hand
- Marketing Made Easier:
 - Consistent messaging across all channels (Projects can be shared with colleagues)
 - Faster content creation with industry expertise

Projects in Home Furnishings Marketing- MY LIST

- Your company motto or mission statement
- Industry or trade guidelines
- Ethical codes
- Examples of past successful work
- Writing examples
- Information about competitors

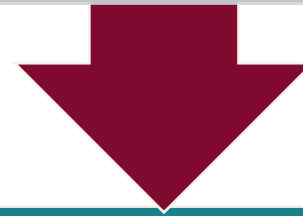
Here's what Claude says he'd like to know...

- Product specifications and technical details
- Industry-specific terminology and glossary
- Common customer pain points and FAQs
- Competitor analysis reports and market positioning
- Safety standards and compliance requirements
- Material descriptions and care instructions
- Sustainability and environmental certifications
- Company brand voice guidelines and tone examples
- Standard pricing structures and promotional guidelines
- Target audience personas and demographic data
- Historical sales performance data
- Seasonal marketing calendar events
- Key retailer requirements and preferences
- Photography style guides and image requirements
- Common product objections and responses
- Distribution channel policies
- Social media content strategy documents
- Awards, certifications and industry recognition
- Customer testimonials and case studies

**But what
about my
job? Should
I be
worried?**

Will AI replace employees?

Not likely, at least in the short term



AI will replace workers who don't
know how to put AI tools to work
for them

Moving Forward with AI

Success is about finding the right balance

1. Avoid the generic content trap - maintain your authentic voice
2. Use AI strategically for routine tasks and first drafts
3. Leverage project knowledge to get industry-specific results
4. Focus your expertise on strategy and relationships

Thank you!

Matt Ritter, Associate Professor of Strategic Communication

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