



CMO

CHALLENGES 2025


By VIRTUS ASIA
Insights for Today's Marketing Leaders



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We interviewed senior marketing leaders from top brands across various industries in the APAC region. They shared their insights on the challenges and concerns that keep them up at night.

THE RAW TRUTH?

CMOs and marketers are stuck doing more with less - drowning in fragmented data, navigating rapid technological changes, and grappling with evolving roles and unstable leadership, all while being forced to prioritize short-term wins at the cost of long-term brand equity.

TOP CHALLENGES FOR CMOs



ADSPEND



DATA



BALANCE

Caught in the squeeze: CMOs are battling rising costs and shrinking budgets, forced to deliver more with less while the stakes keep climbing.

Connecting the dots: Marketers struggle with fragmented systems, incomplete data, and unclear insights, making it harder to turn information into action.

Walking the tightrope: The pressure for instant ROI is undermining long-term brand growth, forcing CMOs to walk a tightrope between today's demands and tomorrow's vision.



HOW HAS IT **EVOLVED** FROM 2024?

1. We observed a consistent trend of budget constraints.

While both years highlight financial pressures, the 2025 responses specifically point to economic uncertainty and media cost inflation as key driving forces. The urgency to “do more with less” is even more pronounced, likely due to challenging external market conditions.

2. The data challenge in 2025 has shifted from fragmentation (2024) to overload. CMOs report feeling inundated with data and struggling to transform it into actionable insights. The introduction of AI tools in 2025 further complicates the landscape; these tools, while promising, are not yet fully integrated or optimized, leaving them as potential solutions rather than immediate fixes.

3. The tension between short-term and long-term goals remains consistent across both years. However, in 2025, there is a heightened focus on the risks of short-termism—where the immediate demand for results and performance compromises long-term brand strategy. Strategic vision appears to be under greater threat, making the pursuit of long-term sustainability increasingly difficult.

IN WHAT AREAS DO YOU FEEL YOUR MARKETING TEAM COULD **IMPROVE** TO BETTER MEET YOUR GOALS, AND **WHAT RESOURCES OR SUPPORT** WOULD BE MOST IMPACTFUL IN HELPING THEM ACHIEVE THIS?



1. Harnessing AI in Martech Set-up



2. Bridging the Gap between Strategy and Delivery



3. Better Data-driven Decision Making

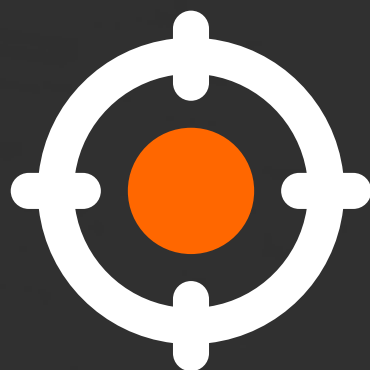
WHAT ARE THE FUNDAMENTALS THAT ARE NOT CHANGING, BUT NEED CONSTANTLY TO BE IMPROVED AND WORKED ON?



1. Understanding Human Behavior and getting Consumer Insights



2. Marketing as a growth driver, delivering a clear ROI



3. Evolving practices while maintaining enduring principles
*“The right product, the right place,
the right audience, the right outcome”*

WHAT CHANGES DO YOU ANTICIPATE MAKING TO YOUR **MARKETING STRATEGY** IN THE NEXT 12-18 MONTHS?



1. How to **work effectively with and through AI Channels**, and working towards incorporating them in the workflow. (doing more with less resources)



2. **Focus on Omnichannel** and bridging online and offline marketing efforts. (renaissance of offline activities)



3. **Upskilliing** the teams to leverage AI

WHAT EMERGING TRENDS OR TECHNOLOGIES ARE YOU MOST EXCITED ABOUT?



1. AI in Lead Generation and Content Creation



2. Process Improvements and Automation



3. More Advanced Analytics

WHAT ARE YOUR **EXPECTATIONS** FOR YOUR **MARKETING PARTNERS** AND AGENCIES, AND WHAT **CURRENT SHORTCOMINGS** DO YOU SEE?



1. **Lack of creativity** and big picture thinking



2. **Too little investment in talent** and too high turnover

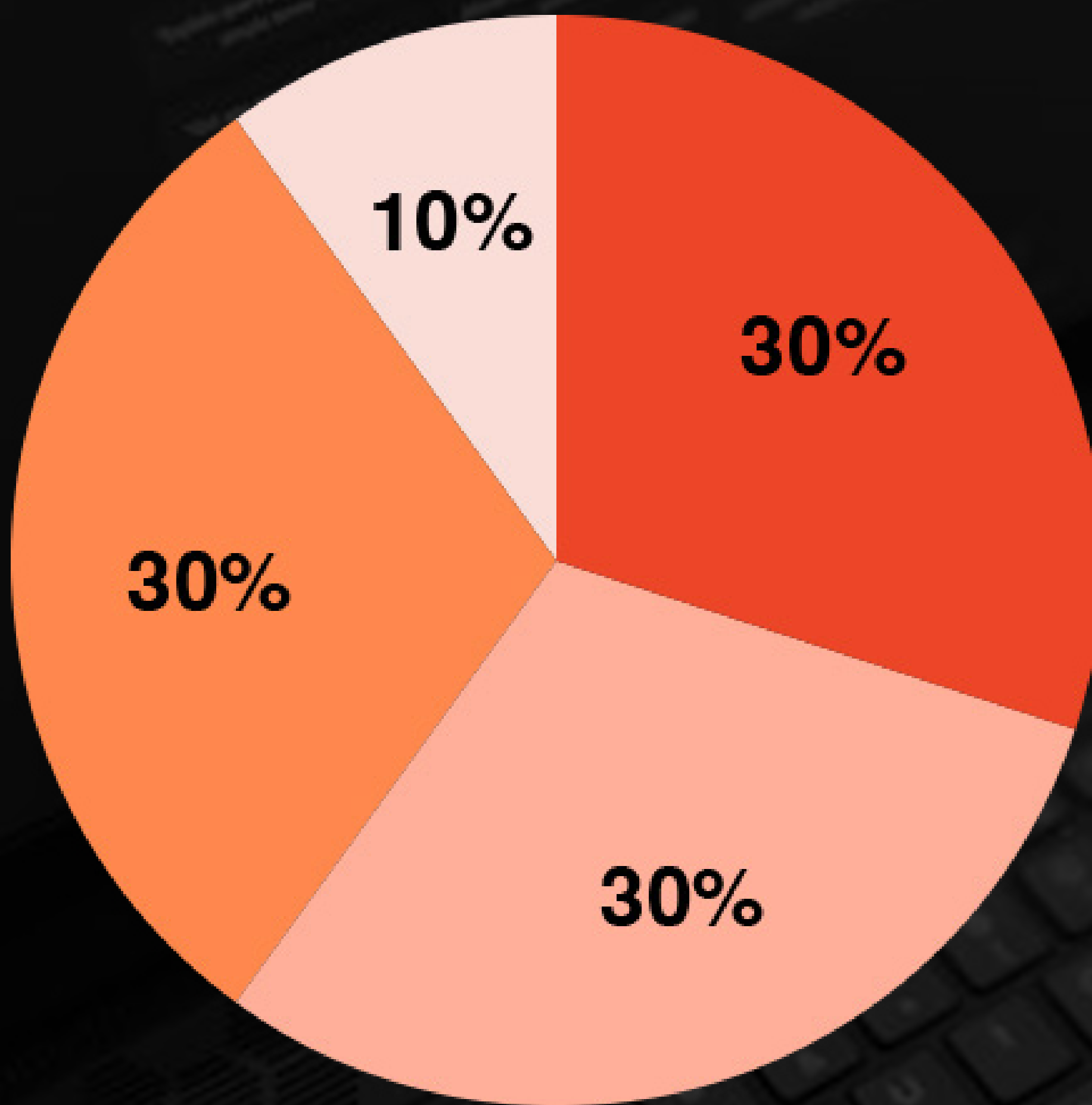


3. **Short-term thinking**


EXPECTATIONS

1. **Agencies adapting their remuneration model**
(linked to business outcomes)
2. **More agility:** be proactive and foreseeing trends
3. **Be data-driven,** don't just say it

TO WHAT EXTENT HAS AI INFLUENCED YOUR APPROACH TO MARKETING, MEDIA, OR MEASUREMENT STRATEGIES?



- Minimal Impact** - AI has had limited influence on strategies or decisions.
- Moderate Impact** - AI has somewhat shaped strategies, with some adjustments.
- Significant Impact** - AI has considerably influenced strategies, leading to notable changes.
- Transformative Impact** - AI has fundamentally reshaped approaches, becoming central to strategies.



THE BRUTAL TRUTH

CMOs are under increasing pressure to do more with less - overwhelmed by fragmented data, navigating relentless technological advancements, and contending with shifting roles and unstable leadership.

All this while being forced to prioritize short-term wins, often at the expense of long-term brand equity.

**ARE YOUR KPIS WORKING
FOR YOU - OR AGAINST YOU?**



WHERE WE COME IN

EXPERTS WITH UNBIASED INSIGHTS

Strategic advice to identify strengths and improvement areas.

UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL OF AI

Practical tools to boost campaigns and leverage predictive analytics.

MEASURE TO IMPROVE

Refine KPIs and drive results through advanced analytics.

STAY AHEAD IN AN EVER-CHANGING INDUSTRY

Custom training to outpace marketing and media shifts.

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THE SPECIALISTS BEHIND OUR SOLUTIONS



Jan Harling, CEO

With over 15 years of expertise in Media and Marketing, Jan is driven by a passion for Insight, Strategy, Analytics, and Innovation.



Guy Hearn, Agent of Change

A seasoned professional with 25+ years of experience in Insight, Data Measurement, and Strategy, Guy thrives on driving transformative solutions.



Christine Hou, Executive Consultant

A Marketing Science, Strategy, and Branding expert with over two decades of experience, Christine brings unparalleled expertise to every project.



Clement Tsang, Executive Advisor

Specializing in Media Transformation, Clement leverages 25+ years of strategic and marketing experience to guide businesses through change.



Leslie Zhang, VP of Sales

An authority in Mar-Tech, Ad-Tech, and AI-driven Big Data, Leslie has over 14 years of experience in driving innovation and results.



Munguli Sangtam, Creative Director

A versatile creative powerhouse, Munguli excels in Graphic Design, Illustration, Web Design, and Branding.



Mawi Pendoza, Director of Operations

With more than a decade of experience in Marketing, Workflow Optimization, and Problem Solving, Mawi ensures operational excellence and efficiency.



MINIMUM COMPLEXITY MAXIMUM IMPACT

Let's turn your challenges into opportunities!

Jan Harling | CEO

jan.harling@virtusasiaconsulting.com



2025

CMO Challenges
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