Forrester's 2026 B2C Marketing, CX, & Digital Business Predictions: One-Third Of Brands Will Erode Customer Trust Through Self-Service AI

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CAMBRIDGE, Mass.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Oct. 28, 2025-- According to Forrester's (Nasdaq: FORR) 2026 B2C marketing, customer experience, and digital business predictions, the rapid adoption of generative AI is exposing fragmented vendor ecosystems and increasing consumer skepticism. In 2026, a third of companies will harm experiences with frustrating AI self-service. The pressure to cut costs will cause companies to deploy customer-facing genAI chatbots and virtual agents prematurely — and in contexts where they're unlikely to succeed. This will erode the brand and customer experience, harming both customer acquisition and retention. As customers' expectations continue to rise and tolerance for surface-level efforts fades, trust and value will become the guiding beacons for consumer marketing, customer experience (CX), and digital leaders.

Forrester's Predictions reports deliver forward-looking insights into signals and trends that empower business leaders and their teams to think beyond conventions and ignite bold ideas in the year ahead. Forrester's consumer marketing, CX, and digital business predictions cover topics including: B2C marketing; customer experience; consumers; digital commerce; media and advertising; marketing agencies; and trust and privacy.

Key highlights from Forrester's 2026 B2C marketing, CX, and digital business predictions include:

- **AI-driven privacy breaches will lead to a 20% surge in class-action lawsuits.** A convergence of forces — growing privacy awareness, regulation, data breaches, and AI — will drive a spike in US consumer class-action lawsuits. As privacy concerns continue to challenge the AI industry, consumers and law firms will expand their focus from tracking pixels to AI applications and the companies that use them.
- **Advertisers will cut display ad budgets by 30% as consumers leave the open web.** Despite consumers' skepticism about genAI, they will continue to turn to AI-generated summaries and chat interfaces designed to return answers. This will shrink addressable audiences on the open web, and click-through rates will decline. As a result, leading advertisers will cut display ad budgets by 30% and redirect spending to more entertainment-driven content platforms, such as connected TV, streaming audio, and social video.
- **A third of consumers will opt for offline (over online) brand experiences.** Forrester's 2025 data shows that 52% of US online adults actively pursue in-person, tactile experiences — driven by a desire for richer, more sensory interactions that digital channels can't replicate. Digital experiences aren't going away, but consumers in 2026 will more intentionally choose to disconnect online to connect *offline*.

"In 2026, as consumer expectations rise, and tolerance for surface-level efforts fades, leaders across consumer marketing, customer experience, and digital business should work together to deliver experiences that align with their brand promise," said Sharyn Leaver, chief research officer at Forrester. "Measures such as enhancing personalization that prioritizes relevance and value and integrating AI through a customer-centric lens will be table stakes for brands to earn their customers' loyalty."

Resources:

- Download Forrester's 2026 Predictions guides for B2C marketing, CX, and digital leaders; B2B marketing and sales leaders; and technology and security leaders.
- Register to attend Forrester's webinar covering key B2C marketing, CX, and digital predictions for the coming year and learn why trust and value will be guiding beacons in 2026.
- Visit Forrester's 2026 Predictions hub to access additional complimentary resources.

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