



From Marketing Products to Designing Individual Fit

How AI could change user behavior and the way we build products services and experiences

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Elganainy Adaptive Marketing Framework — EAMF

From understanding individual needs to shaping value around them

Foundational article and proposed applied framework | October 2026

The thesis in one sentence

EAMF proposes that, as tools make adaptation and building more accessible, marketing must consider how customers help shape products and experiences, how that participation changes perceived fit, ownership, and identity, and how brands earn value through quality, trust, and support.

This article proposes a thesis and an operating framework to test. It does not claim to have invented personalization or established a universal change in user behavior. Application scenarios are hypothetical; forecasts depend on the market and the organization's ability to execute.

The core question is larger than personalising an advertisement or recommending a product. A customer may now ask: can I adapt a repository, shape a game community, or assemble a watch that expresses my own choices? Accessible tools, licensed components, and AI assistance can expand the practical options. Research on self-design and the IKEA effect provides a possible psychological mechanism: meaningful participation that reaches a successful outcome can add value beyond functional fit. EAMF connects those ideas as a testable proposition. It does not assume that everyone wants to build, that AI caused existing customisation cultures, or that brand heritage and authenticity cease to matter.

1 Start with the user's question

Imagine someone beginning a purchase journey with: “This is what I want to achieve, this is my budget, this is the time I have, and these are the things I cannot compromise on. What would work for me?” That starting point differs from asking which available product is best. It changes the order of work. One journey begins with a product and seeks a buyer; the other begins with a human objective and looks for an appropriate combination of products, services, information, and delivery arrangements. Not every need supports this shift, and not every organization can deliver it. But when understanding a need and assembling reasonable alternatives become less costly, more experiences can begin with the individual before the catalog.

Businesses did not ignore people before AI. Market research, service design, and personal customer relationships have long attempted to understand them. The potential change is the ability to operate parts of that understanding more quickly, interactively, and at greater scale. Producing more messages or a



different advertisement for every person is insufficient. Can the organization change what the user actually receives, or how they receive it, when their legitimate needs differ from the default assumption? If the product, timing, channel, and policy remain entirely fixed, highly personal language may increase expectations more than value.

2 What individual fit means

I use “individual fit” to mean the degree to which a deliverable offer aligns with a user's stated objective, declared constraints, and voluntarily shared context. The offer might be a product, a service bundle, a learning pathway, or a route to an existing service. “Deliverable” matters: an attractive proposal that cannot be fulfilled is not successful personalization. Nor should the objective be reduced to buying more or spending longer inside an application. It might be saving time, understanding choices, completing a task at lower cost, or discovering that no purchase is necessary.

Fit is not a permanent characteristic of a person. Someone who prioritizes speed today may prioritize careful examination tomorrow. A person who needs an introductory explanation in one subject may be an expert in another. I therefore propose the person undertaking a task in a particular context and time as the unit of adaptation. This is more useful than a profile that claims to know someone's identity indefinitely. It discourages unnecessary psychological inference and supports short, correctable questions. “Are you prioritizing the lowest total cost for this task?” is a practical agreement. “You are a budget-conscious person” is a much broader judgment.

3 The ideas this builds on

The intellectual history deserves explicit recognition. Joseph Pine's *Mass Customization* and Don Peppers and Martha Rogers's *The One to One Future* both appeared in 1993. In 1997, James Gilmore and Pine described different approaches to customization, including changes to products and to their presentation [1, 2]. These works remind us that individualized communication, offer configuration, and adaptation to use did not begin with language models.

Eric von Hippel examined user innovation and supporting toolkits in *Democratizing Innovation* in 2005. Research has also explicitly addressed “mass individualisation,” including a 2021 study by Sikhwal and Childs [8, 9]. The movement from mass provision toward individual requirements cannot honestly be presented as a new discovery.

In 2004, Prahalad and Ramaswamy discussed co-creation, while Vargo and Lusch advanced a service-dominant understanding of marketing [3, 4]. The proposed contribution here is not to rename or claim to supersede those ideas. It is to connect them through a contemporary operating question: how can AI-supported dialogue, fulfillment feasibility, user control, and measurable value work together? Any originality lies in the quality of that synthesis, its application, and its testing, rather than a claim that no one previously imagined serving different people differently.

The IKEA effect: why “my version” can have extra value

The common thread between adapting software, shaping a game server, and designing a watch is customer agency: the customer makes consequential choices in the thing they use. Better functional fit is one



possible benefit. A separate question is whether participating in its creation changes how much the result means to them.

Relevant research supports this mechanism, with important limits:

- **Self-assembly and successful completion:** Norton, Mochon, and Ariely's 2012 paper, "The IKEA Effect: When Labor Leads to Love", used four studies involving boxes, origami, and Lego. Participants valued their own creations more; the effect dissipated when they failed to complete the task or destroyed the result. These experiments concern valuation under particular conditions, not inevitable loyalty or market-wide brand displacement.
- **Authorship beyond functional fit:** Franke, Schreier, and Kaiser's 2010 "I Designed It Myself" study found across five studies that perceived authorship could add willingness to pay beyond preference fit and effort. Feelings of accomplishment mediated the effect; the outcome and perceived personal contribution mattered.
- **Direct watch evidence:** Franke and Piller's 2004 watch-toolkit study involved four experiments, 717 participants, and 267 people designing watches. Self-designed watches attracted greater willingness to pay than standard alternatives in that setting. This supports the mechanism in watches; it is not a contemporary market-share estimate or evidence that buyers reject established luxury brands.
- **A counterweight: people also quit:** Krause and Franke's 2024 research on self-design abandonment reports six studies showing how early excitement can give way to frustration with interim results and the process, prompting abandonment. The opportunity is conditional on helping people reach a satisfying result.

The IKEA effect is therefore not an instruction to make customers work unnecessarily. Its application to EAMF is to offer meaningful participation with a credible route to success: useful starting points, reversible decisions, previews, compatible options, and help when the person gets stuck. A broken fork, frustrating configurator, or badly assembled watch cannot be assumed to gain value just because the customer invested effort.

The same distinction matters for AI. A plausible hypothesis is that AI assistance can reduce technical barriers while preserving the customer's meaningful choices. Full automation that leaves the user feeling they contributed nothing might produce less authorship-related value than guided co-creation, even if it is faster. The studies above do not directly establish that AI comparison; it requires testing. Compare an off-the-shelf version, a fully generated version, and a guided co-created version while measuring outcome quality, completion, perceived contribution, satisfaction, and willingness to pay.

Psychological ownership means feeling that a result is "mine"; it does not establish copyright, trademark rights, a software licence, or ownership of the original game. Emotional authorship and legal rights must be evaluated separately.

The strongest branding proposition is consequently conditional: some customers may increasingly value a brand that helps them shape a personally meaningful result. Authorship can complement craftsmanship, authenticity, status, and belonging. The brand may become a trusted platform, component supplier, assembler, or service partner, while still retaining its own identity. EAMF should test where this happens and for whom, rather than present the disappearance of brands as a settled outcome.



4 What AI actually changes

AI can reduce the effort involved in some activities: translating an unstructured request into requirements, summarizing information, explaining alternatives in different language, and drafting an offer from available components. These capabilities do not automatically establish accurate understanding or commercial viability. A system may mistake a temporary preference for a mandatory constraint, propose an unavailable service, or express more confidence than its evidence supports. It should operate within a process with approved sources, execution rules, and accountable people.

I distinguish three operational layers. Understanding gathers what the user says and checks what is missing. Configuration selects from what the organization can genuinely provide. Execution makes commitments and measures the outcome. A language model might be useful in the first layer, constrained by a catalog and rules in the second, and prohibited from making some decisions in the third. Mixing these layers can turn a persuasive answer into an uncoded promise. Separating them allows better conversation without granting unnecessary authority.

5 From keywords to expressing a task

Conventional search often requires people to describe their needs in a website's vocabulary: categories, keywords, and a limited set of filters. Conversation allows someone to begin with an outcome: "I need something I can use in the evening, that requires little setup, and remains useful if my schedule changes." This may expose constraints that a conventional interface misses. It does not mean people will always write detailed requests. Many want a quick answer, do not know which information matters, or prefer browsing independently.

A useful response should not replace a catalog with a lengthy interview. Offer a clear starting point, then ask one or two questions only when the answer could materially change the recommendation. Parallel routes can remain available: direct selection, filters, conversation, and human help. Assuming conversation is the best interface for everyone reproduces the one-size-fits-all problem in another form. Interface quality should be judged by effective task completion with an appropriate burden, rather than the number of messages the user sends.

6 New expectations will not be uniform

If someone becomes accustomed to describing a need and receiving a useful response, they may become less tolerant of certain rigid experiences. But the transfer of that expectation across industries is a hypothesis to measure. A person may welcome extensive adaptation in entertainment and reject personal inference in healthcare or finance. They may value speed for a routine purchase and want time and professional review for a consequential decision. There is no single consumer personality called "the AI-era user."

Specific questions are testable. Does the user want to understand why an option was recommended? Do they expect a preference to be remembered after authorizing its storage? Are they frustrated when a correction must be repeated? Do they prefer adaptation to a simple fixed experience when quality is otherwise equal? These questions are more productive than declaring traditional marketing obsolete. They also allow the opposite finding: an unpersonalized experience may be valuable because it is predictable, transparent, and requires less disclosure.



7 Personalizing a message is not personalizing a product

Five different levels are often collapsed into one word. Communication adaptation changes language, examples, or detail. Recommendation adaptation changes the ordering of existing options. Experience adaptation changes channels, timing, sequence, or assistance. Offer configuration combines known components into a different package. Core generation or modification changes the product or service itself. Each level has different costs, risks, and dependencies, and one does not necessarily require the next.

A retailer can explain an existing product to a beginner without manufacturing anything new. A service provider can offer different appointment arrangements without changing the service itself. Manufacturing an individual physical product may require substantially different supply chains and quality controls. Organizations should specify exactly what adapts and what remains fixed. “Designed for you” becomes misleading when it means only inserting a name into a message. Limited, truthful customization can be more valuable than a promise of uniqueness unsupported by operations.

Three ways to adapt a marketing experience

Different mechanisms need different controls. More generation does not automatically mean more value.

01 Standardized

One approved experience
Consistency and low
operating cost
Useful when needs are
similar

02 Configurable

Select from approved
modules
Rules, context or user
choices
Useful for repeatable
differences

03 Generative

Create new content
within limits
Model output needs
validation
Useful when variation
adds value

Choose the least complex mode that improves the customer outcome.

Original explanatory diagram. Standardized, configurable and generative experiences use different mechanisms.

8 Standard products will remain valuable

Standardization offers genuine advantages: lower costs, more consistent testing, easier availability, clearer comparisons, and simpler repair. Many needs do not require product-level differences. People may also want the same product because it is a shared standard or has a strong user community. I see the opportunity as expanding the choices between a shared core, flexible components, and an adaptive experience, rather than replacing mass production altogether.

The practical question is where a difference changes the outcome enough to justify its cost. If changing packaging solves no important problem, clearer instructions or easier returns may deserve priority. Brief human support might remove more uncertainty than a complex recommendation engine. An organization with twenty unhelpful variations is not necessarily more customer-centered than one with two clear, suitable choices. The value lies in the effect of the variation, rather than the number of variables.



9 Work backward from the need

Working backward from customer outcomes has established managerial precedents. Amazon, for example, describes preparing a press release and frequently asked questions before development [10]. Here, working backward does not mean copying a competitor's product or extracting hidden personal traits. It begins by describing the result the user wants before proposing a solution. Next come constraints: budget, timing, accessibility, and information the user does not wish to share. Organizational capabilities are then checked, and alternatives are presented with their trade-offs.

This sequence prevents an immediate jump from an ambiguous request to a preselected product. It does not mean every preference should be satisfied. A request might be unsafe, infeasible, or incompatible with other people's rights. The objective should also be distinguished from the user's proposed way of achieving it. Someone asking for more messages might need one well-timed reminder. That interpretation should be checked rather than imposed: "Is your goal not to miss the appointment, or do you need continuous updates?" Working backward combines curiosity with respect. It neither claims to know the person's interests better than they do nor ignores a useful clarifying question.

10 Reinterpreting segmentation targeting and positioning

This perspective does not eliminate segmentation, targeting, and positioning, commonly abbreviated STP. Segmentation remains useful for understanding patterns of need and identifying markets the organization can serve. Targeting remains a decision about capabilities, economics, and priorities. Positioning remains a promise people can understand and remember. In the proposed framework, a segment is a probabilistic starting point rather than a final judgment about each individual within it.

A service may target people with time constraints without assuming every member prefers digital channels or the shortest possible explanation. It can begin with a reasonable default and allow correction within the journey. Positioning should remain stable even when experiences differ. A business promising clarity cannot hide fees from some users in the name of personalization. Flexible delivery should reinforce a coherent brand promise, rather than generate contradictory promises that no one can hold accountable.

11 Implications for the marketing mix

For product, the question becomes which parts should be standardized and which can be configured around the task. For place, attention expands to channel, timing, availability, and continuity between channels. For promotion, some content shifts toward helping people understand, compare, and choose. Price requires particular care. A clearly disclosed difference between packages is different from secretly changing prices based on inferred willingness to pay or vulnerability.

I recommend beginning with transparent prices and rules, explaining why alternatives cost different amounts. If the user wants a faster option with a disclosed additional operating cost, they can evaluate that trade-off. Using anxiety or vulnerability to raise prices or pressure decisions undermines trust. Technical possibility does not establish acceptable practice. An adaptive marketing mix needs explicit boundaries on what the organization will not use for personalization, alongside its account of what technology can do.



12 From campaigns to organizational capabilities

A marketing team might generate thousands of advertising variations while operations cannot accommodate a minor difference in demand. Personalization then becomes a linguistic layer on top of a fixed experience, potentially generating complaints. Meaningful adaptation needs reliable knowledge of inventory, capacity, service levels, prices, restrictions, and escalation routes. The system needs current information and an accountable owner who can withdraw an offer when fulfillment is no longer possible.

The marketer's role therefore expands toward helping design a promise the organization can keep. It does not replace product management, operations, legal expertise, or clinical responsibility. Marketing can identify the language people use, expose gaps between demand and provision, and propose experiments. Decisions still belong to responsible owners. The organization needs explicit agreement on who owns content, approves rules, reviews exceptions, receives complaints, and bears responsibility for errors.

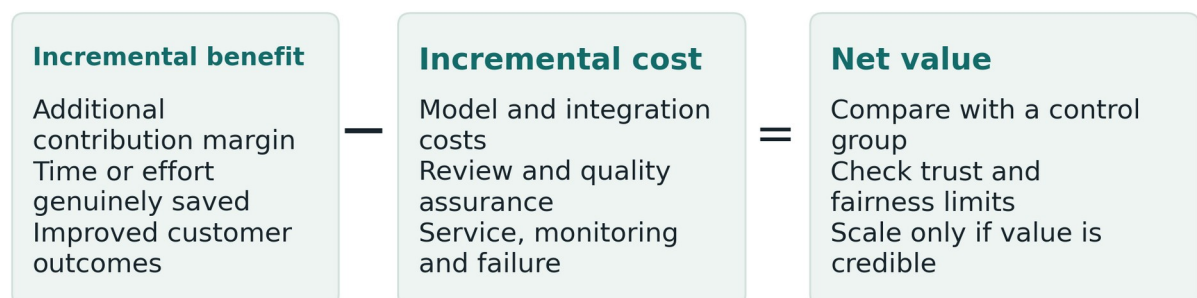
13 The economics of fit

Personalization is not free simply because generating text is inexpensive. Relevant costs include data organization, systems integration, content review, user support, exceptions, and quality assurance. Operational costs may rise when variations create additional fulfillment requirements. I propose measuring incremental value after relevant costs, rather than inferring success from clicks or conversion alone. Employee time, rework, and complaints also matter; an advertising dashboard may not reveal them.

Consider a hypothetical calculation. An adaptive experience produces an additional 10,000 currency units of contribution before the personalization program's costs. Operating that program costs 6,000, and supporting the resulting cases costs another 5,000. The net result is negative 1,000 despite apparently stronger sales. These numbers illustrate the calculation, not a market forecast. The point is that success must survive both economic scrutiny and examination of user experience. The better decision may be a narrower scope, simpler rules, or optional adaptation for the cases where it adds enough value.

Evaluate incremental value before scaling

A useful decision model, not a promise of uplift. Include delivery costs and customer harm.



A higher conversion rate can still be a worse business outcome.

Original explanatory diagram. Compare incremental value after costs with a suitable control group.



14 Trust belongs in the design

A user can find a recommendation suitable and still wonder how the system knew something, whether information was used outside its intended purpose, whether another person received a different price, or how to undo an inference. A long privacy policy at the bottom of the page is insufficient. The interaction should explain what information is requested, why, what it will change, and what happens if the user declines. Clarity at the moment of choice is more useful than general assurances about privacy.

Practical starting points include relying on information the person supplies for the purpose, collecting only what is needed, specifying retention, and supporting correction and withdrawal. These are design and governance principles, not a substitute for reviewing applicable legal obligations. Sensitive and consequential decisions require additional specialist oversight. The NIST Generative AI Profile can help organize risk governance and evaluation, but it does not automatically certify a product as safe or compliant [5].

15 User agency matters more than accurate prediction

A system can correctly predict a choice and still provide a poor experience if it confines the person's options. Agency means being able to understand alternatives, change the objective, decline personalization, inspect reasonable choices, and reach a person when needed. Previous behavior should not become a permanent constraint. Someone who once chose a low-cost option should not indefinitely lose sight of other options. A lack of interaction should not be treated as continuing agreement with every inference.

I propose brief, correctable explanations: "We ordered these options because you selected an evening appointment and this budget." This is more useful than asserting that AI knows what suits the user. An unpersonalized alternative can also remain available. The goal is not to expose every technical detail, but to provide control over the factors that materially influence the decision. In sensitive contexts, helping someone decide must remain distinct from steering them toward the organization's preferred outcome at the expense of their stated goal.

16 Feedback loops and bias

Learning only from previous behavior can repeatedly surface the same options and reduce opportunities for discovery. Underrepresented patterns of use may receive poorer service or be misunderstood. The effects can involve language, accessibility, support availability, and cost transparency, rather than advertising diversity alone. Experience quality should be examined across relevant use cases and groups, while avoiding unnecessary collection of sensitive information merely to simplify analysis.

Possible responses include user-selected exploration, an alternative outside the usual pattern, or an invitation to update preferences. No single formula guarantees fairness. Metrics may conflict, and averages can conceal problems affecting smaller groups. Organizations should identify foreseeable risks, review actual cases, and provide complaint and correction mechanisms. If important errors cannot be detected and addressed, more personalization may expand harm rather than improve service.



17 When an agent shops for a person

A user may delegate comparison, negotiation, or purchase preparation to a digital agent within specified permissions. The organization then serves two readers: the person defining the objective and the system interpreting available information. Accurate specifications, total costs, availability, and terms become especially important. But agents will not necessarily create a more individualized market. Their designs may favor popular products or rank alternatives in similar ways.

A 2025 working paper on shopping agents presents a counterpoint to automatic optimism: some agents can contribute to more homogeneous choices and concentrated demand, with results depending on the models and experimental conditions [6]. This does not establish the future of commerce. It does undermine a deterministic prediction. We should prepare for greater expression of individual requirements and greater dependence on intermediaries that might reduce diversity. A practical response is accurate, verifiable information and a direct channel through which the person can understand and correct the decision.

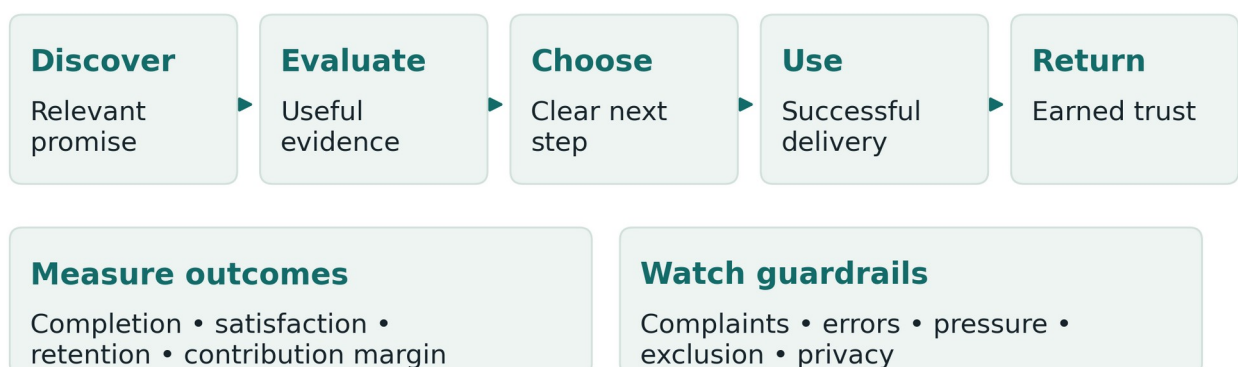
18 A hypothetical learning example

Consider a professional learning platform with a shared, approved curriculum. One learner has two hours each week and wants to apply a skill to a particular project; another has more time and needs broader foundations. The platform need not generate different knowledge for each. It could preserve learning outcomes and assessment standards while adapting the order of modules, examples, exercises, schedule, and assistance. This separates quality that should remain consistent from access arrangements that can vary.

Evaluation should extend beyond lesson completion. Faster completion does not necessarily indicate better understanding, and greater comfort may simply mean insufficient challenge. Relevant measures include application of the skill, time to competence, pathway clarity, and support requirements. The learner should also be asked whether adaptation was useful. This is a hypothetical design, not a claim that AI invariably improves education or that any curriculum can be individualized without specialist review.

Follow the whole customer journey

Personalization should reduce friction across the service, not simply increase clicks.



Original explanatory diagram. Measure the entire customer journey alongside customer-protection limits.



19 A hypothetical healthcare example

Healthcare requires a firm distinction between adapting access to a service and making clinical decisions. An organization may help someone understand booking steps, select a communication language, find approved logistical information, request accessibility support, or contact the appropriate team. Interpreting symptoms, selecting treatment, or assigning clinical priority requires different systems, governance, and professional responsibility. These activities do not become marketing tasks because an AI interface is involved.

Imagine someone attempting to book an established service but struggling with administrative instructions. The system can clarify the process and check understanding of timing and required documents. If the person asks whether the service is appropriate for their condition, it should direct them to a qualified professional. It must not invent medical advice to complete a conversion or use fear to increase bookings. Nor should browsing a page be treated as permission to infer a condition and use it commercially. WHO guidance emphasizes ethics and governance for advanced AI in health [7]. Actual deployment requires specialist review beyond this article.

Real examples in design tools and games

ArtCraft and PhotoCraft: the specific open-source example

The named example is **ArtCraft's Crafting Apps**; its Photoshop-style image editor is **PhotoCraft**. ArtCraft also has a separate AI image-and-video studio, so the names should not be treated as one interchangeable product. The official app catalogue lists PhotoCraft alongside tools for vector drawing, video, raw photography, PDFs, effects, and publishing. PhotoCraft's own page links to its actual source and downloads.

The official PhotoCraft repository describes an independent Rust implementation and offers a choice of MIT or Apache-2.0 licensing. Its contributor guidance describes studying behaviour and public specifications rather than copying proprietary code, and provides a development workflow for AI agents. This supports discussing agent-assisted development and the project's stated clean-room approach; it is not an independent audit of every contribution or proof that AI alone produced a complete Adobe replacement. Its brand licence separately restricts the ArtCraft marks in modified versions.

The maturity limit matters: the project calls PhotoCraft early alpha, and its roadmap documents remaining gaps. It should not be presented as fully equivalent for professional work. The relevant EAMF insight is that an openly licensed codebase gives capable users a route to inspect, adapt, and contribute to their own workflow. Whether this replaces an Adobe subscription depends on the specific task, file fidelity, reliability, maintenance, and support. Simply downloading it does not generate an IKEA effect; meaningful contribution and a successful result are the proposed psychological connection.

Status and sources checked October 16, 2026. Clean-room methodology is the project's stated approach, not an independent legal or code-provenance certification.

Why build an alternative? Price, control, and unmet needs

For someone who needs only a small part of a professional suite, Adobe's subscription may feel expensive relative to the value they actually use. That judgment depends on budget, workload, and the cost of switching; it is not proof that the same product is poor value for every professional. ArtCraft's own



positioning makes control and recurring-payment dependence explicit: its homepage promotes keeping and modifying the software without a required subscription, while its Crafting Apps are presented as free, open-source tools. This is evidence of the alternative's value proposition, not proof that Adobe's pricing was its sole founding cause or that Adobe refused to listen to particular complaints. ArtCraft's ownership proposition; Crafting Apps.

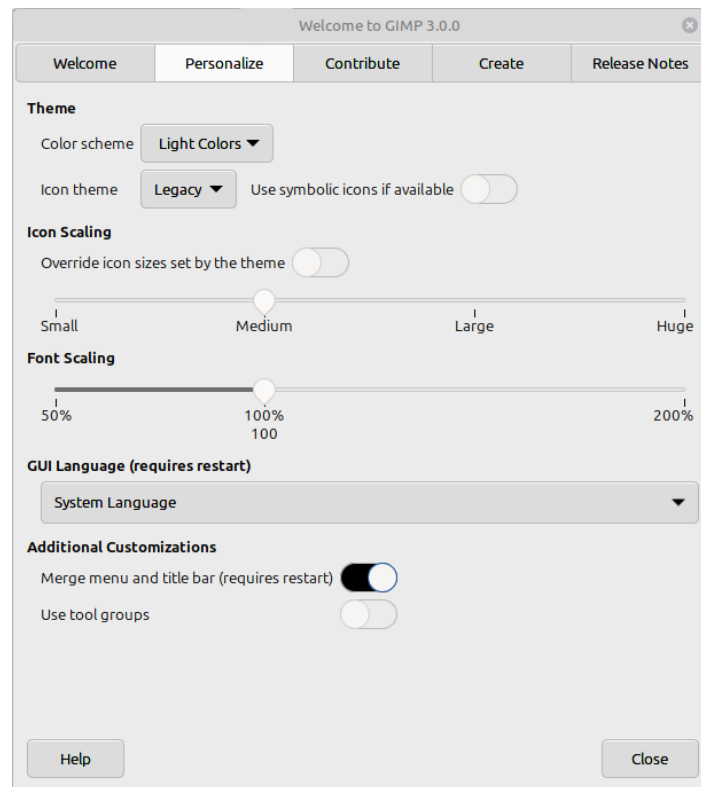
The broader mechanism is user innovation. When an important need remains unmet, customers with sufficient skills or resources may develop a solution themselves or share the work with others, rather than wait for a supplier. Eric von Hippel's research documents this mechanism well before generative AI. *Democratizing Innovation*, 2005. EAMF's hypothesis is that a perceived price-value gap, restrictive control, or persistent lack of response can strengthen the motivation to leave; accessible code, communities, and AI assistance can make building an alternative more feasible. Successful participation may then add the IKEA-effect value discussed above. Dissatisfaction motivates the search; capability enables the response; authorship can increase attachment to the result.

For brands, listening therefore means addressing affordability, workflow fit, portability, and customers' ability to adapt the product, not merely answering complaints. The competitor may become a solution the customer helps create. Yet "free software" does not remove development, support, or computing costs: ArtCraft itself offers optional paid generation plans. ArtCraft pricing.

Photoshop alternatives and what they actually demonstrate

Free tools performing many image-editing tasks illustrate an important part of the argument. Photopea runs in the browser and supports PSD files; GIMP is a free and open-source image editor [11, 12]. For someone with a particular task, the practical question may be whether they need a familiar branded package or the functionality that achieves their objective. Brand and bundle are then compared against purpose, price, and accessibility. This does not mean Photoshop itself became free, that these tools copied its source code, or that they are equivalent in every feature.

Photopea's first-release post, dated September 14, 2013, describes implementing a PSD parser using Adobe's format documentation and implementing aspects of rendering and layer blending [11]. GIMP's history also predates the current generative-AI wave [12]. These examples show a longstanding demand for more accessible functionality. File compatibility is not the same as copying the original program. Competition can remove barriers involving cost, installation, or complexity without inventing an entirely new human need.



GIMP 3.0 personalization controls. Real screenshot, resized only. GIMP team, [CC BY-SA 4.0](#). [Official source](#).

Where does the AI hypothesis enter? It may reduce some of the work required to build a small tool, interface, or workflow around a narrow task. An editor might emphasize the tools relevant to the user's current goal rather than expose every function continuously. That is an application hypothesis, not proof that producing a complete professional alternative has become instant or free. Accuracy, compatibility, security, performance, updates, support, and intellectual-property obligations remain. “Free to the user” can also involve advertising or another funding model; it does not mean production and operation have no costs.

Games that players help change

Minecraft illustrates how a game can support more than consumption of a closed experience. Its creator ecosystem supports changes to appearances, worlds, resources, and behaviors within available tools and rules [13]. Some users can become designers and creators of experiences for others. Game modification and user-created content predate generative AI. Their history should not be attributed to a later technology, and permission to modify one game should not be generalized to every game or asset.

An AI-supported extension is more clearly visible in Roblox's March 2025 Cube announcement, including text-to-3D capabilities and associated tools for creators [14]. Such tools can lower some barriers to asset production, but a generated mesh is not a complete, balanced, safe game. It may still need materials, functionality, testing, and integration. Designers remain responsible for rules, performance, content rights, and community safety. The example demonstrates an expanded production capability; its long-term effects on game quality and economics require measurement.



A game can be customizable without generative AI

Conceptual illustration of three mechanisms. These are not screenshots from any product.

Creator-built content

A person designs a world, character or scenario. The platform distributes it.

Player configuration

A player chooses approved settings, paths or assets. Rules apply those choices.

Generative assistance

A model creates a new asset or response from instructions. Validation still matters.

All three may coexist. None guarantees an unrestricted, fully personalized game.

Original explanatory diagram. Conceptual mechanisms in games, not product screenshots.

The marketing implication concerns the user's relationship with the product. Some people want tools to help make, change, and share an experience rather than receive only a finished one. Value can come from both the result and participation. Research on the “I Designed It Myself” effect examined how a sense of authorship can contribute to perceived value [15]. Complete automation may therefore remove something the user values. The useful question is which parts the person wants to delegate and which they want to own.

Generated interfaces and adaptive learning

Google Research presented work on generative user interfaces in November 2025, including interactive elements formed in response to a request [16]. This goes beyond changing text in a fixed interface toward changing how a task is presented. It does not establish that every website should be regenerated for every person. The published comparison excluded generation speed from its evaluation. Human-rater preferences in a particular experiment should not be translated into claims about higher sales or retention.

Duolingo announced AI-powered Video Call with Lily in September 2024, describing language practice adapted to learner proficiency [17]. This is a company-provided example of a shared core and variable experience, not independent proof of broad educational superiority. Across these examples, some layers of products become more shapeable around a task. The layers, user freedoms, and evidence requirements differ. Each example should therefore be described at its actual level rather than folded into a universal promise that everything will become personalized and free.

GitHub, open source, and the customer who can build

The competitive change goes beyond choosing a cheaper application. A technically capable customer, or a customer working with a developer and an AI coding assistant, may adapt an existing project or assemble a small tool around the exact job they need done. The choice becomes: buy a finished product, configure it, extend it, fork an existing project, or build a narrower alternative. For EAMF, this is a hypothesis about a widening set of customer options, not evidence that every customer can now recreate any product.



A repository is a starting point, not a permission slip

A repository, or repo, holds a project's files and development history. Git is a version-control tool; GitHub is one repository-hosting and collaboration platform; GitLab and KDE Invent host projects too. A fork is a separate repository derived from an upstream project, which can develop independently. It does not remove the original licence. GitHub's explanation of forks.

Public visibility, open-source licensing, and a zero-price download are different properties. GitHub explicitly distinguishes publicly viewable code from code licensed for reuse, modification, and distribution. Its platform permits viewing and forking public repositories, but that is not blanket permission to ship the software as your own product. Check the licence, dependencies, assets, and trademarks. GitHub's repository licensing guidance.

A concrete GitHub example is Excalidraw's official repository, an open-source drawing editor with an embeddable component. Its MIT licence permits modification and redistribution subject to its conditions, including preserving the copyright and permission notice. A team could build a specialised workshop tool around it instead of developing a drawing engine from zero. That workshop application is an illustrative possibility, not a case study reported by Excalidraw.

Four mechanisms that should not be confused

- **Open-source adaptation:** work from source released under a licence that permits the intended use. A fork can change the interface, defaults, or workflow while retaining upstream code and its obligations.
- **Documented integration:** use an API or published format specification. Photopea's API documents embedding, file loading, and scripting. Adobe's Photoshop file-format specification, dated November 2019, documents PSD/PSB structures for third-party readers and writers. Interoperability alone does not establish how any particular competing product was developed.
- **Reverse engineering:** analyse an existing system to recover understanding of its design and requirements, as described in NIST's software-reuse glossary (December 1994, p. 13). This is distinct from receiving its source under an open-source licence, implementing a documented interface, or working backward from a customer need. Technical feasibility is not legal permission; the applicable licence, contracts, and law require case-specific review.
- **Independent implementation with AI assistance:** define a job and develop new code to perform it, potentially using permitted libraries. A familiar feature or similar output does not by itself prove copying or reverse engineering. GitHub documents agents that write changes and create pull requests, while stressing human oversight. Such capability supports assisted development; it does not certify security, ownership, or production readiness. GitHub's responsible-use documentation.

What “a free Photoshop-like program” actually means

The examples above should be read precisely:

- **GIMP:** a free, open-source image editor for retouching and composition. Its official source is on GNOME GitLab, as confirmed by GIMP's source guide, updated October 3, 2026. See its project overview and GPL text. It supplies editable source, not Adobe's code.
- **Krita:** a free, open-source digital-painting application, with its official source on KDE Invent. Its licensing page specifies GPL v3 and explains obligations when distributing modified builds. Its strengths and workflow



differ from a general-purpose photo editor; being an alternative for some tasks does not imply feature parity.

- **Photopea:** a free-to-use browser editor that supports PSD files. Its official GitHub repository explicitly says the application is not fully open-source and that the repository is for reports, requests, and discussion. Forking that repository is not obtaining the complete editor source. Using the service, integrating its API, and owning a modifiable codebase are separate options.

From “which package?” to “which outcome, at what total cost?”

Consider an illustrative small retailer that needs only three operations: resize product images, place an approved logo, and export standard campaign sizes. Buying a full editing suite remains one option. Using an existing editor, writing a plugin, or building a narrow interface around licensed components are others. An AI assistant may help explain a repo, propose changes, write tests, and troubleshoot. Someone still needs to define acceptable outputs, verify image quality, review dependencies, and own the result after launch.

The comparison is therefore broader than subscription price:

- **Use a ready-made tool:** relatively little development work; training, compatibility, and vendor dependence remain.
- **Extend through an API or plugin:** closer workflow fit; integration skills, service terms, API charges where applicable, and version changes matter.
- **Maintain a fork:** more control; someone must merge fixes, test upgrades, review security, and satisfy licence obligations. For GPL-covered distributions, source-sharing requirements need attention; they are not the same as MIT notice requirements.
- **Build a narrow tool:** potentially very close fit; specification, engineering review, deployment, backups, and ongoing support can outweigh licence savings. A working demonstration is not a maintained product.

The strategic implication is an EAMF proposition: some customers can become co-designers or builders of their own solution. A supplier then competes with adaptation and selective self-building as well as rival brands. Its defensible value may lie in reliable outcomes, effortless workflows, interoperability, support, and reduced maintenance burden. Measure the proportion of customers choosing self-building, time to a successful task, switching friction, and total operating cost before claiming this shift is widespread. Open source and AI expand the decision space; they do not make expertise or operating costs disappear.

Source and licence descriptions checked October 16, 2026. Product examples are documented; the retailer scenario and EAMF implications are analytical illustrations, not measured adoption results.

GTA custom servers: the player also shapes the experience

GTA V provides a concrete extension of the games argument. FiveM's official documentation describes a framework for custom multiplayer experiences, with guides for operating servers, scripting, and creating assets. The server becomes a place where a community can shape an experience rather than merely select a finished game mode. Cfx.re documentation.

The mechanism is specific: servers run collections of resources, including client scripts, server scripts, and streamed assets. This supports changing parts of the experience without claiming that the underlying game has become open source. Cfx.re's resource model. A hypothetical community could emphasise roleplay, a



particular language, or its own participation rules. Those are examples of potential community choices, not evidence that every server supports every modification.

“Private server” should mean a separately operated community experience here, possibly with restricted entry. It should not imply unrestricted rights over GTA, circumvention of access controls, or a replacement for purchasing access to the game. The Creator Platform License Agreement, updated September 10, 2026, requires valid game entitlement, makes custom servers conditional on its rules, and prohibits implying Rockstar endorsement. It also restricts third-party brand promotions and use of marketplace content in generative-AI tools. These examples therefore do not authorise an advertising server or unrestricted reuse of game assets.

The branding implication is analytical: a player can form attachments to the original game, the modding platform, and a particular server community at the same time. Community identity, moderation, shared rituals, and trust in administrators may contribute to the experience's value. Customisation can deepen participation in an established ecosystem; it need not mean abandoning the original brand.

This also changes the work required to deliver value. A server operator needs dependable hosting, compatible resources, security review, backups, clear rules, moderation, and ongoing maintenance. The official server guide documents several hosting routes. Choosing a hosting route is only the beginning of operating a worthwhile community. AI could assist with permitted original development, but the existence of this ecosystem does not demonstrate that AI caused it or removes its operating responsibilities.

Custom-built watches: from choosing a model to composing a personal object

The same question appears in a physical product. A buyer may want a particular case, dial colour, hands, strap, and personal symbol instead of the exact combination in a manufacturer's catalogue. The relevant distinction is between buying a standard model, configuring an offered product, modifying an existing watch, and assembling a new watch from compatible components.

There are documented examples of these routes:

- **Manufacturer-led personalisation:** UNDONE's customisation guide lets buyers choose visual details and add personal elements such as initials, engraving, or a caseback image. This is a brand selling participation in design, rather than disappearing from the purchase.
- **A distinct identity on the watch:** UNDONE's corporate-customisation page offers custom dials and logos and describes a Waseda University dial carrying the university's logo. This verifies a logo-customisation offering, not that every individual customizer order includes any logo without restrictions.
- **Aftermarket assembly and modification:** namokiMODS sells cases, dials, hands, and component bundles, and explicitly identifies itself as an independent aftermarket business unaffiliated with the referenced watch brands. Its modding guide covers both assembly and changes to existing watches. These are tangible building blocks for a customer's chosen combination.

A personal logo or an unbranded dial is a different proposition from applying another company's logo to imply that it manufactured or approved the finished watch. A genuine movement alone does not establish the provenance of the entire assembled watch. Sellers and builders should clearly disclose which parts are original, which are aftermarket, who assembled the watch, and what any brand relationship actually is. Personalisation should not depend on confusion about authenticity.



For example, a buyer might commission a watch with a deep-green dial, orange second hand, chosen strap, and their own monogram. This is an illustrative design brief, not a documented purchase or a claim that those exact options are available from every supplier. Its emotional attraction could be authorship: “this combination expresses me.” Another buyer may value an untouched factory model, its heritage, or collectability more. A person can appreciate both.

What could change in branding?

EAMF proposes a shift in the questions some customers ask: alongside “Which brand represents me?” comes “Who will help me make something that represents me?” The brand's role can extend from author of a fixed design to trusted provider of components, assembly, design guidance, and support. Several identities may coexist: component maker, assembler, community, and owner.

For a business, that implies practical responsibilities:

- **Explain provenance:** make component origins, independent assembly, and permitted use of marks legible. Distinguish “compatible with” from “made by.”
- **Earn trust through execution:** document quality checks, movement regulation where relevant, and the finished watch's tested capabilities. A part's specification is not proof that the completed assembly achieves it.
- **Make warranty ownership clear:** identify who covers the finished watch, which changes are covered, where repairs happen, and how replacement parts will be obtained. Do not assume the original manufacturer's warranty covers an aftermarket assembly.
- **Design meaningful choices:** let customers influence details they care about while preventing incompatible combinations. The value is a coherent result, not the largest possible menu.
- **Support identity without deception:** personal emblems, community stories, and design contribution can provide differentiation while preserving honest disclosure.

This is a plausible branding direction, not evidence of a market-wide move away from original brands. Supplier catalogues establish availability; they do not establish the size or speed of a change in taste. Test the hypothesis with custom-order share, willingness to pay for participation, repeat purchases, service demand, and whether customers replace standard watches or add personalised ones to a collection. The strategically useful question is how authorship, quality, provenance, and belonging combine in the customer's decision.

Sources checked October 16, 2026. GTA/FiveM and watch offerings are documented examples. Consumer motivations and branding implications are EAMF interpretations requiring validation; they are not attributed to generative AI as an established cause.



From a fixed package to a shapeable experience

Three different mechanisms. Shared demands for quality, rights and maintenance.



EAMF: proposed analytical comparison • Not proof of universal brand abandonment

Conceptual comparison of software adaptation, custom game communities and configurable physical products. The mechanisms differ; each needs rights, quality controls and a maintenance owner.

20 The brand in an adaptive world

If different people receive different experiences, what makes the brand coherent? I propose consistency in principles and standards: a clear promise, accurate information, fair rules, dependable quality, and responsible responses to mistakes. Language, timing, and pathways can differ, but facts should not. An organization should not make incompatible guarantees to different people simply because each version appears more persuasive.

Approved reference content becomes an important marketing asset. Organizations need authoritative service definitions, current terms, valid reasons for recommendations, and boundaries on system claims. Models may rephrase explanations within those boundaries; they should not invent features, testimonials, or customer experiences. A successful brand may be the one that makes fewer exaggerated claims and fulfills its commitments more consistently. Personalization expands how a promise is expressed without reducing responsibility for its truth.

The brand implication is a redistribution of authorship, not a proven disappearance of brands. A customer can value the original platform, the component maker, the assembler, a community, and their own contribution simultaneously. A stronger proposition may become: we give you reliable foundations and help you make a result that feels yours. That promise must be supported by provenance, compatible choices, quality assurance, clear rights, warranties, and ongoing service. Evaluate where participation adds value and where a finished expert-designed product remains preferable; taste, expertise, time, status, and risk will differ across customers.

21 How to test the thesis

I propose a small experiment comparing a good baseline experience with a narrowly adaptive one. Comparing a polished new interface with a neglected old one is less informative. Define a single task, an identifiable intervention, a primary success measure, and guardrails such as complaints, withdrawal, and errors. Where appropriate and permitted, random assignment can strengthen inference. Specify the



observation period and required evidence before interpreting results. An early conversion increase does not establish long-term effectiveness across segments.

The effect of AI should also be separated from basic service improvements. If instructions become clearer, an unnecessary step disappears, and a conversational interface is added simultaneously, the source of improvement remains uncertain. A fixed experience with the same clarity may perform better at lower cost. That would be a useful result. A serious framework allows evidence that personalization is unnecessary in some situations and retains it where it adds value beyond the simpler alternative.

Test authorship separately from product quality. Compare a ready-made solution, a fully AI-generated solution, and guided customer co-design while matching usable outcome quality as closely as possible. Track completion and abandonment, successful and failed construction, perceived contribution, psychological ownership, satisfaction, willingness to pay, support burden, and total cost. Record whether customisation replaces a branded purchase or complements it. A positive result among successful builders alone is not enough: include people who quit, and distinguish participation benefits from better fit or novelty.

22 What to measure

Four complementary perspectives are useful: user outcomes, organizational economics, execution quality, and trust and control. For user outcomes, examine task completion, quality, and time. For economics, examine incremental contribution after relevant costs. For execution, examine fulfilled promises, escalation, and rework. For trust, examine understanding of recommendations, ease of correction, complaints, and use of the unpersonalized route. No single favorable measure cancels a serious failure elsewhere.

A high opt-out rate could signal a problem, or it could indicate that controls have become genuinely visible. Numbers need interpretation. Reported satisfaction is not identical to benefit: someone may appreciate a friendly explanation of incorrect information. Revenue growth is not automatically value for the user. A useful measurement system makes these distinctions visible and allows an apparently profitable experiment to be stopped when it produces misleading promises, unacceptable pressure, or disproportionate burdens.

23 When not to personalize

Standardization can be preferable for simple, repeated tasks; when necessary data is more sensitive than the expected value warrants; when differences cannot be explained; or when operational complexity is excessive. Users may also simply say, "Show me the options as they are." Respecting that choice is part of individual fit. Agreeing to personalization should not become the price of receiving a decent basic service.

Warning signs include collecting extensive data without knowing what it will change, committing to AI before identifying the problem, or measuring success by the number of generated variations. Ask instead which simple intervention could remove the friction. A clear page, flexible policy, trained employee, or improved booking system may be enough. Technology is one means of designing a service, not an independent reason to rebuild it.



24 From the idea to an operating framework

I propose the Elganainy Adaptive Marketing Framework, or EAMF, as an applied method that begins with the task, understands constraints with the user's permission, defines feasible adaptation, forms an honest offer, tests its effects, and learns under governance. The name identifies this formulation; it does not claim ownership of a general idea, unique terminology, or an empirically validated theory. The framework can operate without generative AI. Its core is the relationship between need, capability, execution, and measurement.

The first output is a clear account of what the user wants and what the organization can change, rather than a campaign. The second is a decision record: why an option was shown, what information supported it, and which boundaries applied. The third is a limited, reversible experiment. This shifts attention toward useful variation that can be delivered safely and economically. The accompanying practical guide develops templates, accountabilities, measures, and rollout stages that organizations can adapt.

The operating cycle has seven connected stages:

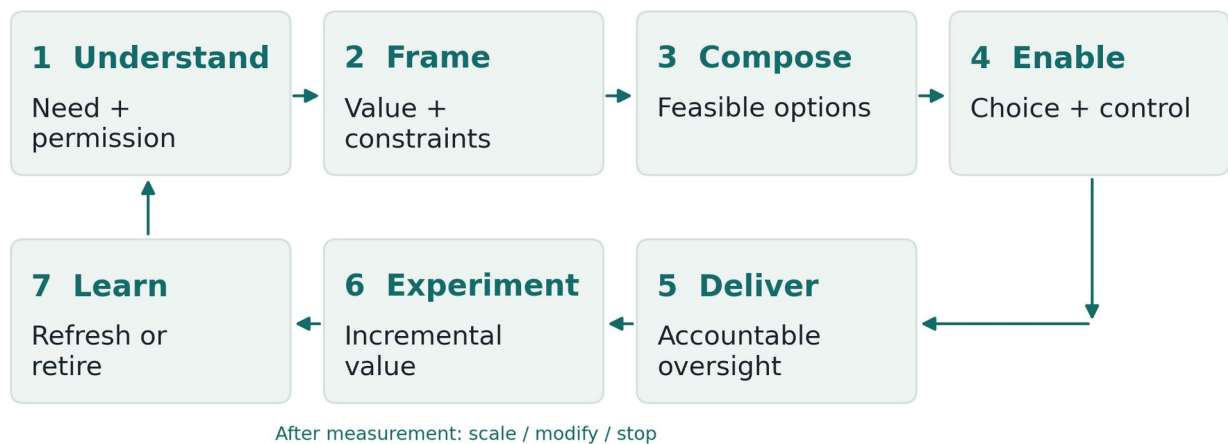
1. Understand with Permission: identify the task and the information that is necessary and permitted.
2. Frame Value and Constraints: define the outcome and the boundaries that must remain fixed.
3. Compose Feasible Options: build alternatives supported by quality, capacity, and cost.
4. Enable Choice and Control: help the user understand, choose, correct, and decline.
5. Deliver with Accountable Oversight: assign responsibility for promises and exceptions.
6. Experiment and Measure: test additional value against a good, simpler alternative.
7. Learn, Refresh and Retire: decide what to update, forget, or withdraw, and on what evidence.

Governance, privacy, and safety apply throughout the cycle. They are not final steps to add after generating sales. Applying the stages does not require open-ended generation or an extensive personal profile.



The EAMF operating loop

Proposed applied framework by Karim Elganainy. Each release must pass explicit feasibility and safety checks.



Across every stage: privacy • safety • feasibility • operational capacity • the right to refuse

Original explanatory diagram. The seven-stage EAMF loop is a proposed applied framework, not an empirically validated theory.

For customer-built or co-designed products, the seven stages must also establish the role the customer actually wants: choosing a finished result, configuring it, creating with guidance, or maintaining a derivative. Define which decisions remain meaningfully theirs, what the provider guarantees, and who owns testing, rights review and maintenance. Measure perceived authorship alongside successful delivery and total cost. The aim is not to transfer unpaid work and risk to the customer; it is to make chosen participation achievable and worthwhile.

25 Falsifiable hypotheses

I offer five working hypotheses. First, a brief direct question about an important constraint may be more useful than numerous behavioral inferences. Second, adapting the journey may create value before adapting the core product. Third, explanations and correction controls may support trust even when they reduce immediate conversion. Fourth, organizations with flexible operating components may benefit more than those with abundant personalized content but limited fulfillment flexibility. Fifth, some markets may reward simplicity and non-personalization more than others.

Any of these hypotheses could be wrong in a particular setting. Users may reject questions, already know their preferred choice, or obtain less value than the flexibility costs. The framework is useful when it makes such failures visible instead of concealing them in futuristic language. Negative results deserve the same internal attention as favorable ones. Useful marketing knowledge requires conditions, boundaries, and evidence, rather than an appealing name alone.

Conclusion Marketing that helps people reach their goals

The opportunity is not to manufacture a different version of everything for every person. It is to build organizations that recognize consequential differences, know when to respond, explain their limits, and



measure whether the response genuinely helped. In some industries that may mean more flexible products. Elsewhere it may mean clearer service, less confusing choices, an easier pathway, or the simple right not to disclose more information.

If marketing has developed partly through better understanding and reaching markets, the next direction I propose exploring is better organizational responsiveness to individual needs without sacrificing quality, viability, or trust. AI may help, but it does not determine the purpose or bear responsibility alone. The ultimate test is whether the user can say: “I understood my options, the decision remained mine, and I received something that genuinely helped.”

References and reading notes

The sources distinguish intellectual precedents and research from capabilities described by their providers. The framework and managerial proposals are the author's synthesis, not findings established by these sources. No field experiments were conducted for this article. This edition was prepared in October 2026; changing product pages should not be treated as permanent guarantees of feature availability.

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