

Hack your **martech stack**

Get more from your marketing technology, automate repetitive tasks, and innovate with AI.

Most martech stacks accumulate tools one after another. Over time, that creates stack sprawl: fragmented data, disconnected workflows, duplicated spend, and underused capabilities. Marketers often pay for far more functionality than they use, while budgets face scrutiny and AI raises expectations for speed, personalization, and measurable results.

A bigger tech stack is not a strategy. The opportunity is to make the existing stack work harder: optimize what is already in place, shed or replace what no longer earns its keep, automate repetitive work, and innovate where AI and new capabilities create real advantage.

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"After 15 years of relentless expansion, we may have finally hit peak martech — or at least a plateau."

*Scott Brinker, 2026 Marketing Technology Landscape
chiefmartec*

FROM EXPANSION TO PLATEAU

The evolving martech landscape

15,505

martech products on the 2026 landscape, more than 100x the number in 2011

49%

of martech capabilities in active use

19.4%

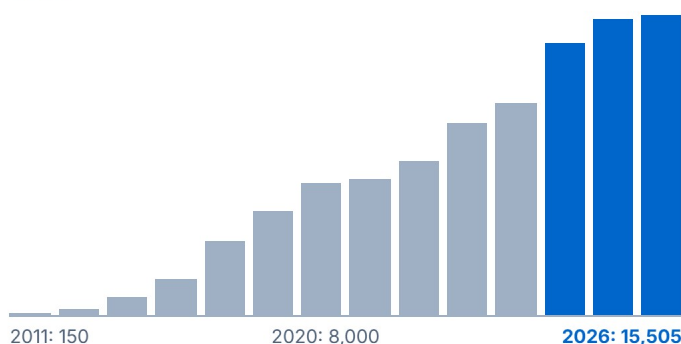
of the average marketing budget goes to martech, a five-year low

Sources: chiefmartec and MartechTribe, *State of Martech 2026*; Gartner, *2025 Marketing Technology Survey*; Gartner, *2026 CMO Spend Survey*.

After more than a decade of rapid growth, the martech landscape has leveled off.

In the past year, 1,488 products joined the martech landscape and 1,367 dropped off, for net growth of less than 1%. According to Scott Brinker, marketing has reached "peak martech." This plateau suggests that marketing teams are rethinking how many tools they need and how to make the most of the ones they have.

MARTECH PRODUCTS ON THE LANDSCAPE, 2011 TO 2026



Source: chiefmartec, *Marketing Technology Landscape*, annual editions.

What is driving the change

A few factors are driving these changes in the martech stack, including:

Fragmentation

New tools add to workloads, bring more integrations to maintain, more data sources to reconcile, and more interfaces to learn. Over time, this complexity raises maintenance costs and increases cognitive load, which is one reason so many tools go underused. The more tools teams have to operate and maintain, the less time they can spend on actual work.

Rising costs and consolidation

Martech's share of the marketing budget has dropped to a five-year low, from 26.6% in 2021 to 19.4% in 2026. With less to spend, consolidation has now become a priority and every subscription has to earn its place. Teams must now do more with fewer tools, contracts, and resources.

Underutilization

Marketing platforms, like all B2B software, typically include a full set of features. For a number of reasons, however, teams often use only a fraction of those available: tools carry a learning curve, duplicate features that exist in other tools, and make workflows more complex.

Repetitive work

Manual tasks absorb hours that could go to strategy and creative work. Many of these tasks follow the same steps every time, which makes them a natural fit for automation.

AI innovation

Thanks to AI, anyone can build small automations or apps that automate individual tasks, and technical teams can rapidly prototype and develop full-featured applications and dashboards. According to Retool's 2026 Build vs. Buy Report, for instance, 35% of teams have already replaced at least one SaaS tool with custom software, and 78% expect to create more custom internal tools in 2026.

// AI is rapidly moving from a novelty to an indispensable part of the martech stack.

Scott Brinker, co-author, *State of Martech 2025*

THE RESPONSE

Rethinking the tech stack

Why teams are shifting toward consolidation, automation, and AI innovation

Tool overload, rising complexity, and tighter budgets have pushed marketing leaders to take a hard look at the technology they own. Factors such as AI, economic volatility, and martech sprawl are driving teams to adopt new strategies for martech and marketing automation:

01

Optimizing the existing tech stack

Get more value from the tools you already pay for. Audit usage, fix data and integration gaps, remove workflow bottlenecks, look for untapped use cases, and align the stack to business priorities and the customer journey.

02

Shed, buy, or build with intent

Not every gap requires another tool. Assess whether a capability should be shed, bought, built, or absorbed into an existing platform. Reduce redundant spend and complexity while preserving the capabilities that drive revenue.

03

Automating repetitive work

Turn manual campaign operations, lead routing, lifecycle messaging, reporting, and data hygiene into reliable automated workflows. Free marketing teams from repetitive execution so they can focus on strategy, creativity, and revenue-generating work.

04

Innovating with AI

Use AI and emerging martech capabilities where they create measurable advantage: content operations, personalization, predictive segmentation, conversational experiences, and intelligent reporting. Innovation should extend the existing stack, not add another disconnected layer.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Hacking your tech stack

In a volatile landscape, tech-driven innovation has become key to keeping pace with today's fast-moving marketing landscape. The teams that get the most from their technology are those willing to experiment, look for new opportunities, and innovate.

— NEXT STEP

Do more with your marketing technology

For years, I have been creating marketing automations, martech hacks, and web apps that do exactly that. I bring 15+ years of experience in marketing, SEO, and copywriting to help teams drive new value from the technology they already have.

My work spans marketing automation, B2B tech content strategy, and custom tech solutions, from hyper-personalization to custom automations, web apps, lead magnets, and more.

To learn more about my solutions, book a free, no-obligation strategy call.

[Book a strategy call](#)nathantwarne.com

About Nathan T Warne

- 15+ years in marketing, SEO, and content
- Hands-on work across martech tools, automation tools, and AI dev tools
- Innovative builder creative problem-solver
- Specialization in hyper-personalization, custom app development, and marketing automation