

Inside Financial Marcomms: What's Next in 2025



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Opinium surveyed UK financial services marcomms professionals in the first half of 2025 to understand their strategic priorities and challenges for the year ahead.

Three cross-cutting themes emerge: an urgent drive for efficiency and ROI, the untapped potential of AI, and the need for agile, empathetic messaging in response to global uncertainty.

- 01** Global and technology shifts are leading to evolving strategic imperatives and marcomms professionals in FS move from broad customer retention and new client acquisition towards maximizing existing client value and aggressive competitive share gains.
- 02** Building trust, demonstrating value propositions, and ensuring brand authenticity are paramount communication objectives, with messaging strategies adapting to emphasize empathy, agility, and reassurance in uncertain times.
- 03** However, operational pressures from insufficient budgets, market volatility, and resource strain, may force a reactive approach and hinder long-term strategic planning.
- 04** Digital advertising, thought leadership, events, and sponsorships are seeing increased investment to drive growth and credibility. There's a notable increase in print advertising too, possibly for gravitas.
- 05** AI's primary impact is currently on enhancing efficiency, employee productivity, and cost savings, directly addressing resource constraints. However, its potential in customer-facing areas like targeting and CRM remains largely untapped.

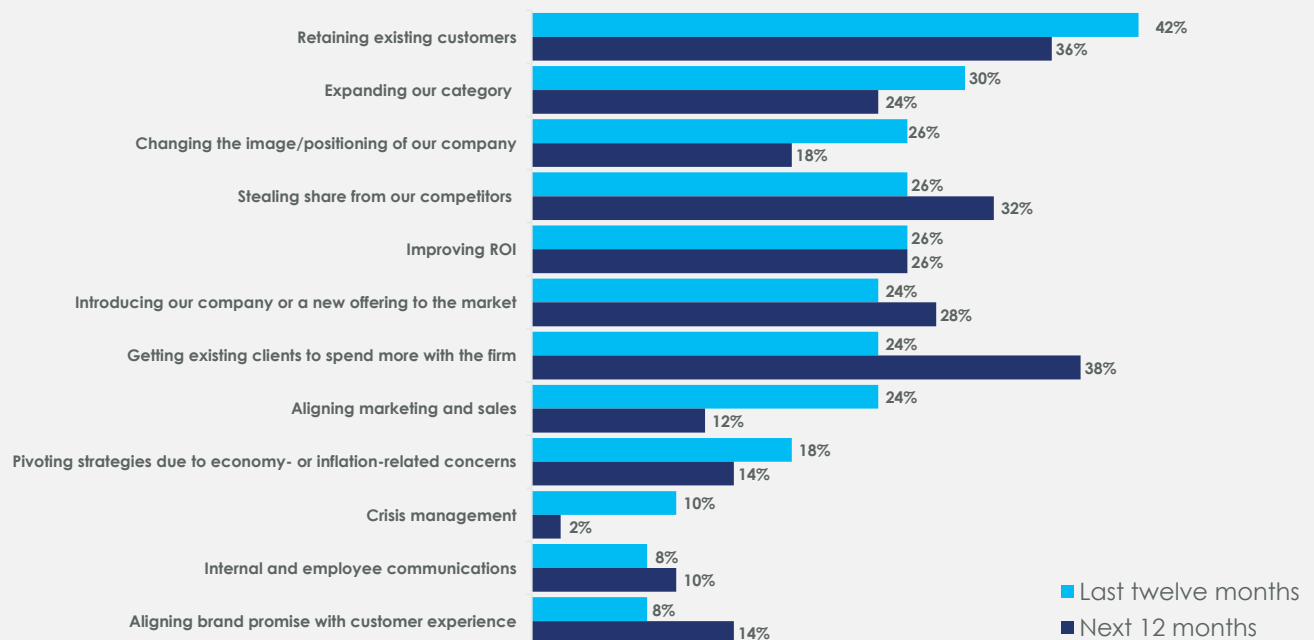
Marcomms leaders shift their focus from broad retention to maximising client value

The UK financial services (FS) sector has faced a dynamic and challenging environment in the first half of 2025, shaped by regulatory change, enforcement activity, operational resilience, and economic uncertainty. Amid this backdrop and over the last 12 months, the primary focus for most FS Marcomms professionals has been stability and growth, with **retaining customers followed by new client acquisition** marked as top priorities.

Looking ahead, priorities are shifting from broad retention and expansion towards maximising the value of current client relationships. In the next 12 months, 38% of professionals cited **'Getting existing clients to spend more with the firm'** as their top priority. While **'acquiring new clients'** dropped from 30% in the past year to 26% for the upcoming 12 months, **'stealing competitor market share'** notably increased from 26% to 32%. This indicates a strategic pivot from broad market expansion towards more targeted, competitive acquisition.

The significant rise in prioritising competitive tactics suggests these will be integral to the growth strategies of more firms

Key areas of focus last 12 months vs. next 12 months

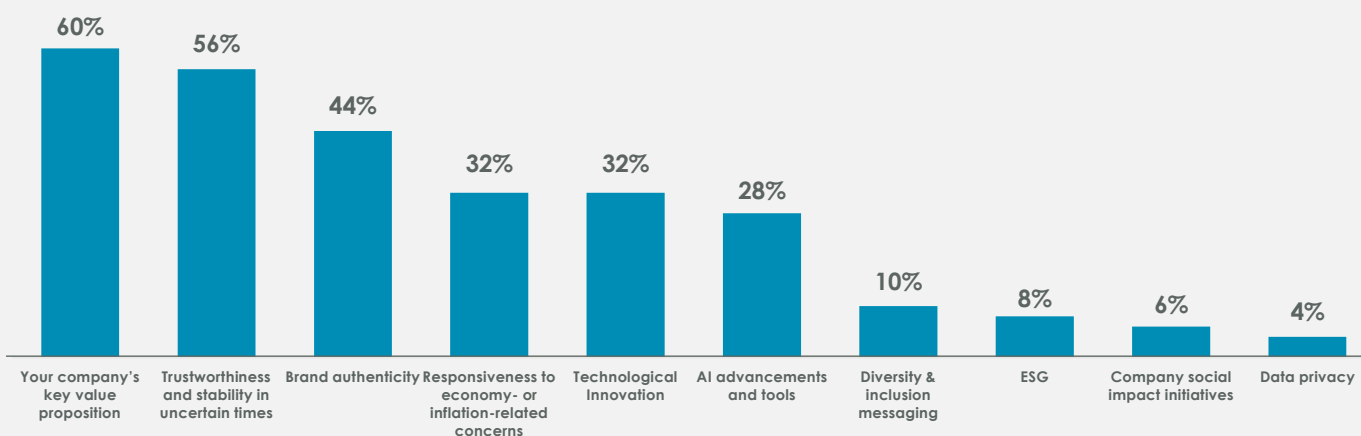


Sights set on communicating Trust, value and authenticity into the next year

In today's complex financial landscape, marked by regulatory shifts and a cautious market, UK Financial Services (FS) marcomms teams overwhelmingly prioritise communicating their company's **key value proposition** and reinforcing its **trustworthiness and stability**.

Brand authenticity is also a significant priority, underscoring the need to balance modern themes like technological innovation or economic responsiveness with essential reassurance.

Top 10 communication priorities



Almost half have revamped messaging due to market shifts

The current economic and geopolitical climate is significantly shaping FS marcomms planning. Notably, 44% report **shifts in messaging** due to the geopolitical climate, while 42% say they are **responding with campaigns tailored for the current environment**.

Furthermore, significant disruption to campaigns and internal re-prioritization is evident. Over a third indicated that recent geopolitical events have led to either **campaign cancellations/adjustments or changes in team goals/areas of focus**.

Widespread budget and spend reductions are also evident with **30% reviewing 2025 budgets, 24% decreasing marketing/comms budgets, and 20% are decreasing media spend**. This strong emphasis on budget scrutiny places marcomms teams under direct pressure to justify every expenditure and operate with fewer resources.

Finally, a clear focus on efficiency is also apparent. Over one in five (22%) are **reducing extra projects**, concentrating on core activities.

A cautious approach to innovation is also seen, with 12% **testing new tools/partners**, likely seeking efficiencies within tight constraints. AI's role in efficiency and employee productivity may gain significance here, as it likely helps marcomms manage decreased budgets and limited resources.

This data confirms the economic and geopolitical climate as the primary driver of executorial changes. Messaging acts as the frontline response, directly validating the high communication priority on 'Trustworthiness and stability in uncertain times', while budget realities underscore a strategic squeeze for many respondents.

Impact of current economic and geopolitical climate



What are some of the shifts that you're making in messaging and what do you think will resonate with your audiences?

“

Reinforcing cost effectiveness of products / long term security aspects of good finance using products.

”

“

More focus on what keeps people up at night, i.e. tariffs, geopolitical concerns, stubborn inflation.

”

“

Increased focused on assuring our audiences, and proving our agility / flexibility / resilience

”

Market volatility, budget limitations and regulatory pressures present key challenges for Marcomms professionals

To contextualise these communication goals, we explored the internal and external factors influencing FS marcomms campaigns and decision-making, along with the barriers professionals currently face in their roles.

Financial pressure

The most prevalent barrier reported is an **insufficient budget** (52%). This not only necessitates more focus on measurable ROI but also directly impedes the ability to achieve ambitious strategic objectives, such as 'getting existing clients to spend more' or 'stealing share from competitors' as we saw in the previous section.

Ongoing volatility

A **market downturn** (40%) and **constant priority shifts** (36%) stemming from macro uncertainty, regulatory changes and political instability. This volatile environment may partly explain why communicating stability, prioritising client growth and stealing competitive share is such a strategic imperative for the year ahead, despite the challenge it poses.

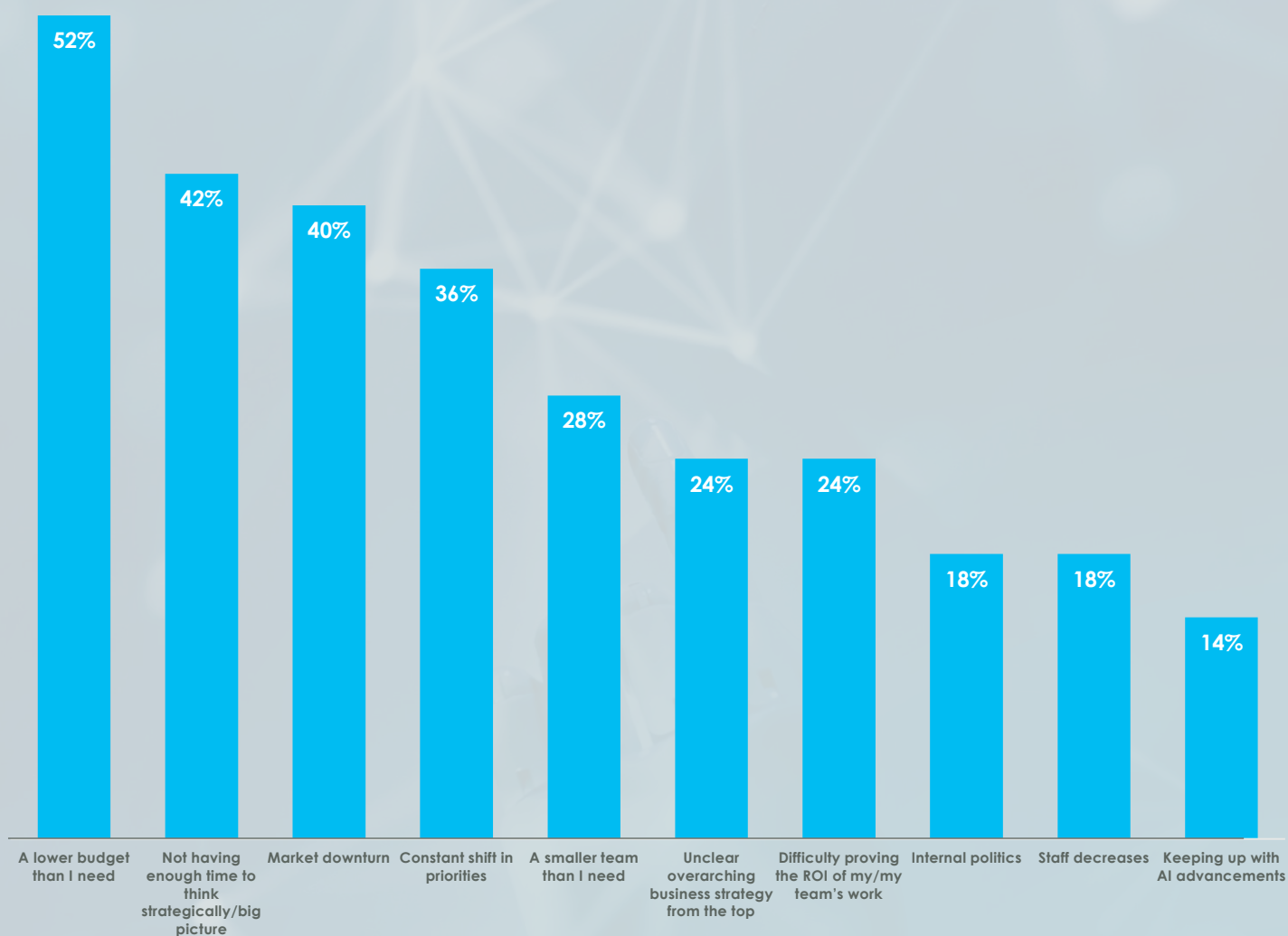
Resource strain

We found that marcomms teams often operate with **insufficient staffing** (28%), resulting in **a lack of time for strategic/big picture thinking** (42%).

Interconnected challenges

The **constant shift in priorities**, (36%) alongside low budgets and small teams, creates a challenging environment for FS professionals to meet their goal of communicating trust and stability. The increase in volatility, regulatory pressures and packed news agendas is leading to a 'risk averse client'. This combination is making it more difficult to prove ROI and secure future budget increases. Coupled with evolving consumer behaviours, there has never been a more critical time for FS Marcomms to communicate their value propositions clearly to the market.

Top 10 challenges faced by FS marcomms professionals



Growth in advertising spend aligns with communication priorities

Social media advertising (+53%) and **online advertising** (+23%) has seen significant increases over the last 2 years, driving measurable growth and competitive gains.

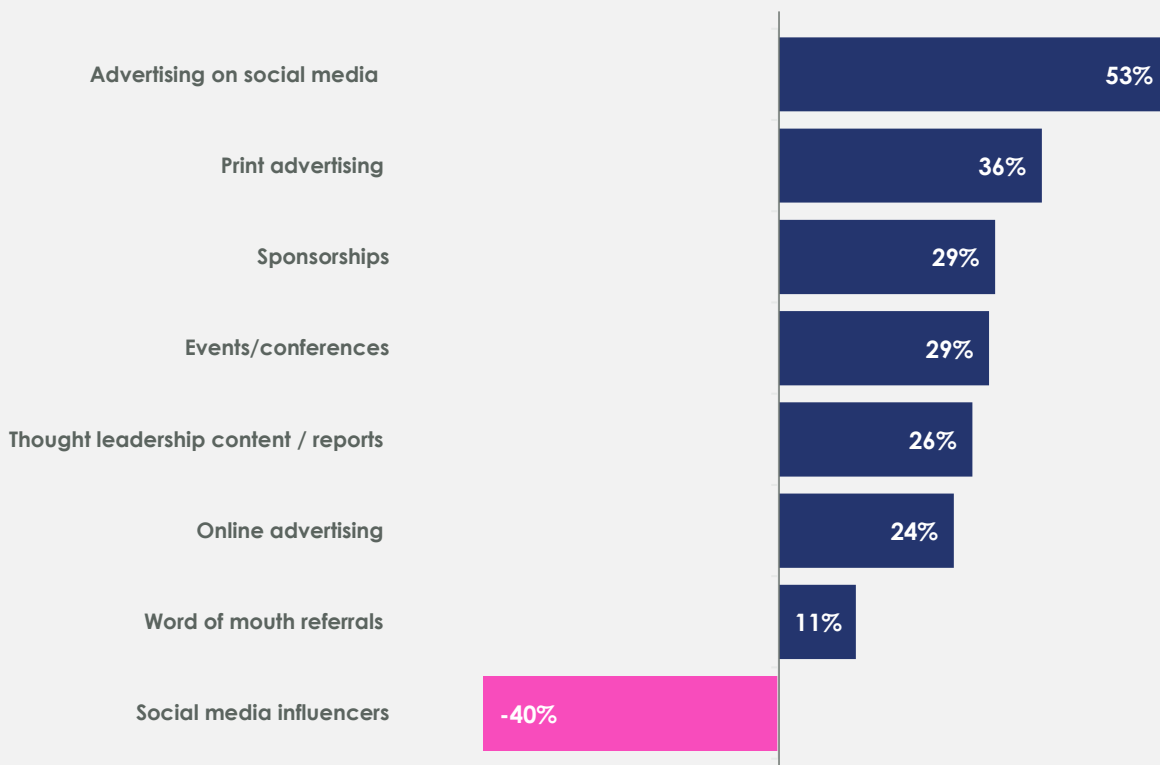
Investment also grew in **thought leadership**, **events** and **sponsorships**. Surprisingly, **print advertising** also increased, perhaps for gravitas or specific audience reach.

Conversely, **social media influencer spend sharply declined**, suggesting a pragmatic pivot away from channels with a stronger consumer focus.

Increased spend on digital advertising is perhaps unsurprising given the strategic growth objectives like customer retention, increased client spends, and competitor share.

The continued investment in thought leadership, events, and sponsorships likewise aligns with communication priorities of establishing value propositions, trustworthiness, and authenticity. The unexpected rise in print advertising also suggests leveraging its authority to reinforce trust, which was the second most important communication objective of those surveyed.

Net Increase in spend in advertising over the last 2 years



Looking further afield, AI offers untapped potential

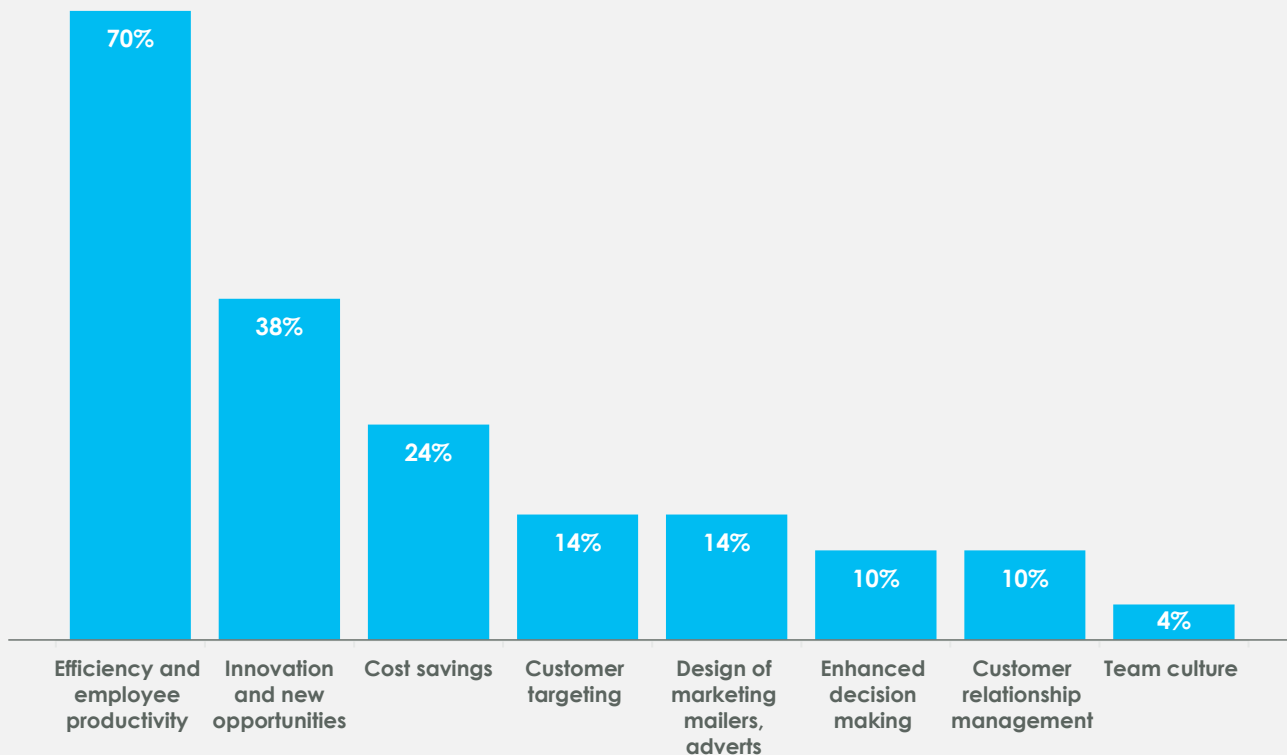
AI's impact on FS marcomms primarily centres on driving efficiency and cost savings. Specifically, **efficiency and employee productivity** and **cost savings** are top 3 cited impacts, directly addressing common barriers such as limited budgets, time, and team size.

While AI contributes **to innovation**, its current impact on customer-facing areas like **targeting** or **CRM** is notably less prominent, indicating significant untapped potential. AI's minimal impact **on team culture** further highlights its current role in FS Marcomms as a tool rather than a cultural transformer.

AI appears to currently serve as a direct response to key barriers, enabling FS marcomms teams to pragmatically 'do more with less' by automating tasks and alleviating resource constraints. This focus on cost savings further reinforces the sector's overarching drive for ROI.

Our survey also showed that AI is beginning to influence **content creation, particularly in areas like marketing mailers and adverts** which would benefit the already elevated spend on digital advertising seen this year.

Areas AI is impacting marcomms teams the most





About Opinium

Opinium is an award-winning strategic insight agency built on the belief that in a world of uncertainty and complexity, success depends on the ability to stay on pulse of what people think, feel and do. Creative and inquisitive, we are passionate about empowering our clients to make the decisions that matter.

We work with organisations to define and overcome strategic challenges – helping them to get to grips with the world in which their brands operate. We use the right approach and methodology to deliver robust insights, strategic counsel and targeted recommendations that generate change and positive outcomes.



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