

Marketing Vanguard at Cannes: Human Ingenuity Still Runs the Game ft. Dara Treseder



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This episode of Marketing Vanguard comes straight from Cannes Lions 2026. Join host Jenny Rooney to catch up with Dara Treseder, chief marketing & commercial officer at Autodesk.

Together, they explore why this AI era is also the “golden era” for creatives, why human ingenuity still runs the game while AI raises the floor and why trust is the one thing that isn't up for debate. She raises a valid point: knowing what not to do with AI is just as important as knowing what to do with it.

What you'll learn:

- How to balance AI integration with authentic brand storytelling
- The “Facts and Feelings” framework for B2B marketing that moves beyond boring product specs
- Why hands-on AI fluency as a CMO is non-negotiable for strategic vision and system design
- How to operationalize workforce development as a competitive advantage by investing in AI knowledge transfer
- The time-optimization secret weapon: using AI-powered calendar analytics and briefing tools to reclaim hours daily
- How to execute big strategic swings like Autodesk's sports marketing partnerships with LA28 Olympics and NFL teams

This episode is part of a special vidcast series that was recorded live during Cannes 2026 and presented in partnership with Edelman.

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About our guest:

Dara Treseder is chief marketing & commercial officer at Autodesk, renowned for her expertise in B2B brand storytelling and AI-integrated marketing strategy. With a background in transforming major enterprise organizations including GE and Carbon, she has pioneered approaches that balance human creativity with technological innovation.

Her leadership in establishing Autodesk as the official design and make platform for the LA 2028 Olympics and her commitment to a \$350 million initiative for AI workforce credentialing demonstrate her ability to align business growth with meaningful societal impact—a model of particular relevance for enterprise marketing leaders seeking to drive both

profitability and purpose.

Episode Highlights:

[01:55] B2B Marketing Requires Facts AND Feelings – Dara challenges the outdated belief that B2B marketing must be transactional and fact-focused, arguing instead that buyers are emotionally invested in how purchases impact their business outcomes. This shift from specifications-only messaging to emotional storytelling is critical because B2B purchase decisions carry massive organizational consequences: Wrong software choices can lead to layoffs, divisional failures, and company-wide performance issues. CMOs should develop customer narratives that highlight real business impact and build trust through consistent delivery on promises made across every customer touchpoint.

[04:33] Know When NOT to Use AI – Dara reveals that strategically staying away from AI use can actually be a differentiator. She warns that brands indiscriminately deploying AI for social media and customer communication risk becoming indistinguishable noise—or worse, perpetuators of “AI slop.” This principle matters urgently for CMOs because trust, once broken through perceived deception or inauthentic communication, requires exponential effort to rebuild. Her advice is to resist organizational pressure to automate everything in the name of efficiency and focus on maintaining the authentic human voice that audiences increasingly crave.

[08:00] Invest in AI Academies and Workforce Development – Dara shares Autodesk’s \$350 million commitment to AI training, access and credentialing across current and next-generation workers in design and make industries, elevating workforce development from a corporate social responsibility afterthought to a core business strategy. This investment reflects a fundamental CMO responsibility: preparing employees for career resilience in a disruption-heavy era, whether they

stay with the company or move on to new opportunities. This approach simultaneously strengthens internal team capabilities, builds brand reputation as a responsible employer and positions the company as a leader in an industry grappling with massive disruption.

[13:42] Earn Your Place Before Amplifying Your Story – Dara's decision to become the official design and make platform for the LA28 Olympics, NFL teams, and Team USA was bold for a B2B brand but grounded in a critical principle: Autodesk's software had already been used to design stadiums and Olympic games globally, but the company had never told that story. This "walk track, talk track" philosophy of doing the work first, then communicating it is powerful for CMOs because it eliminates the credibility gap between marketing claims and deliverable reality.

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