



# The Executive's Guide to How Media Agencies Win with AI in 2025

Akkio, the AI-Native Analytics  
Powering Media Agencies

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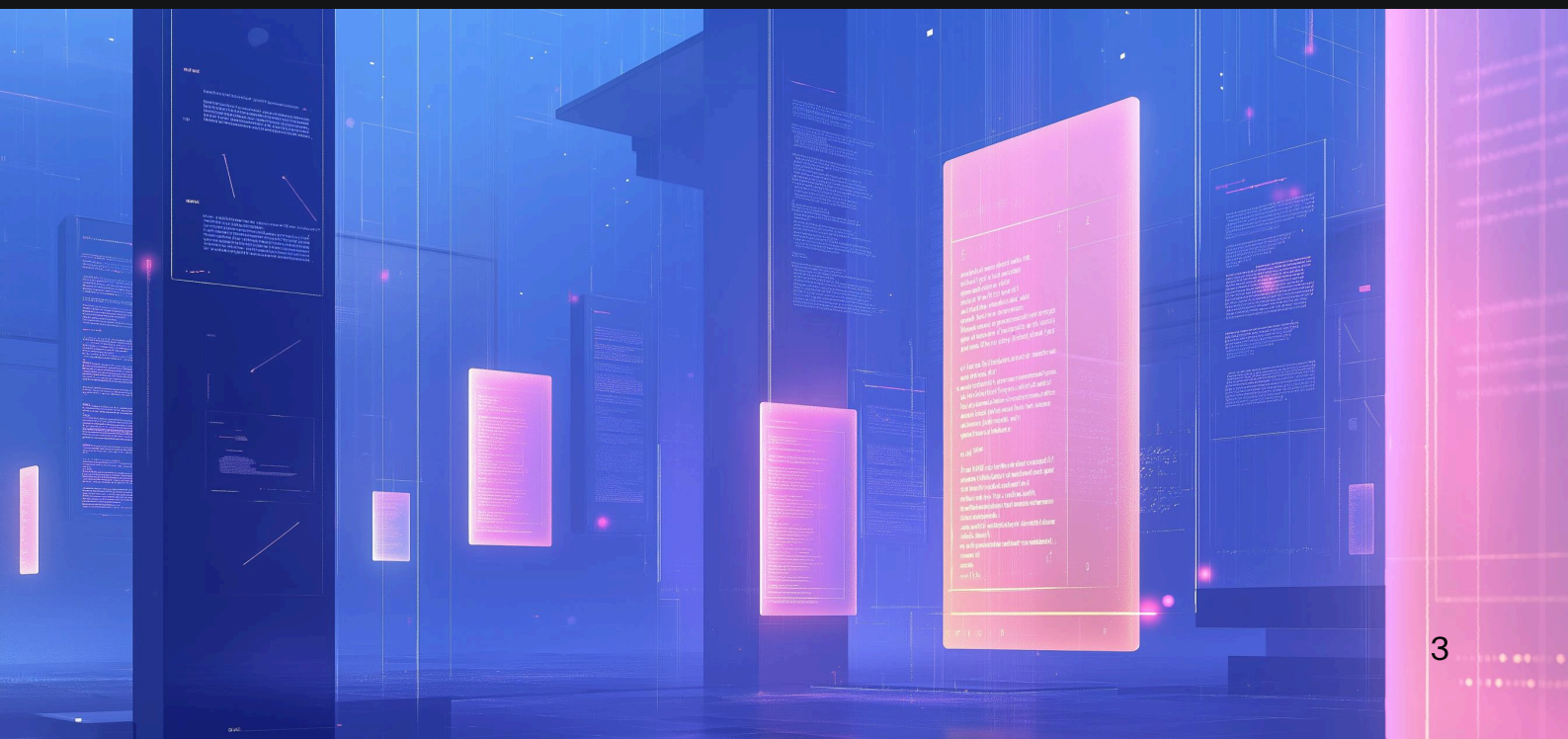
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# Executive Summary

The media agency landscape is undergoing its most profound transformation in decades. Artificial Intelligence, once viewed as a specialized tool for data processing and automation, has evolved into a fundamental force reshaping every aspect of agency operations, client relationships, and competitive dynamics.

As we approach 2025, agency leaders face critical decisions about AI investment, workforce development, and strategic positioning. The stakes are unprecedented: agencies that successfully harness AI will unlock new levels of performance and value creation, while those that lag behind risk losing relevance in an increasingly technology-driven marketplace.

This guide provides a strategic framework for navigating this transformation. Our expert panel, combining decades of experience in agency operations, technology integration, and AI implementation, offers practical wisdom for agencies at every stage of their AI journey. The insights and recommendations that follow will help agency leaders make informed decisions about AI investment, implementation, and optimization in 2025 and beyond.



# Meet Our Expert Panel



## Mari Kim Novak

Mari Kim Novak is the founder/CEO of MKnCo Advisory Inc., with 20+ years in digital advertising and emerging technologies. She helps ad tech companies navigate transformation and mentor marketing teams.

A former CMO at Yieldmo and Rubicon Project (now Magnite), she also led global marketing at Microsoft Advertising. She has held senior roles at Millward Brown, Jupiter Media Metrix, and Grey Group.



## Jon Reilly

Jon Reilly is the Co-Founder and CEO of Akkio. He has over 20 years of experience in product management, business development, marketing, and operations.

Prior to Akkio, Reilly was VP of Product and Marketing at Markforged, where he drove key growth initiatives. He has also held leadership roles at Sonos and started his career at Sony Electronics as a product manager and electrical engineer.



## Tyler Pietz

Tyler is a 15-year veteran of the marketing and advertising industry, having held a variety of global leadership roles across both services and technology firms including Interpublic Group and Rakuten.

Most recently, he founded and led the global data practice at MediaMonks / S4 Capital—managing a \$100M+ P&L and over 500 employees globally—and signing clients such as Amazon, Coca-Cola, Diageo, LG, Mondelez, Salesforce, SC Johnson and many more.

# 1. The Evolution of AI in Advertising



"AI is going to just not be in the back room. But it's going to be in the front room... it's going to touch every aspect of the ecosystem of advertising."

- Mari Kim Novak

AI is rapidly evolving from a back-office tool to a strategic imperative that will reshape the entire advertising ecosystem. This transformation is forcing agencies to reconsider their fundamental role in the industry, with many questioning traditional business models and service offerings. The democratization of AI technology is creating unprecedented opportunities for agencies of all sizes, allowing specialized boutique agencies to compete effectively with larger firms. A key focus for the next few years will be process standardization and outcome measurement, extending across creative, business, and analytics functions.

## 2. Data and Competitive Edge



"The goal of the media company is to improve the return on advertising spend for the client or the brand... and to maximize that. And so therefore, the company that can perform that job the best will generally win."

- Jon Reilly

The industry has evolved past the era of simply accumulating data. Modern AI tools are transforming how agencies handle complex data sets, automating routine tasks and allowing professionals to focus on strategic thinking rather than technical implementation. Despite the power of AI, human oversight remains crucial, requiring concrete feedback loops and clear understanding of how natural language requests translate into technical implementations. Success in this new era requires both sophisticated data capabilities and the ability to translate that data into actionable client insights.

# 3. Investment Strategies for 2025



**"Every single role will definitely need to evolve in order to be able to appreciate the speed and the technical output that is happening within these organizations."**

- Mari Kim Novak

Success in AI implementation requires both organizational leadership and ground-level innovation. Agencies must focus on workforce transformation, challenging the common fear of job displacement by emphasizing how AI will augment rather than replace human capabilities. The most effective approach combines top-down strategic initiative with bottom-up practical implementation, focusing on tasks that are currently arduous but require human oversight. This ensures that AI implementation remains grounded in practical business needs while fostering innovation throughout the organization.

## 4. Choosing the Right Technology Partners



**"You need to be leveraging the best partners that are out there and figuring out how to build value for your organization."**

- Tyler Pietz

In today's rapidly evolving AI landscape, attempting to build proprietary AI infrastructure is a costly distraction that diverts resources from an agency's core mission. Mari Kim Novak puts it plainly: "Partner makes a lot more sense if you've started from nothing... I don't think that's cost efficient." The pace of AI advancement, the complexity of implementation, and the need for continuous innovation make technology partnerships not just the best choice, but the only practical path forward.

The real strategic focus should be on selecting the right technology partners and maximizing the value of these partnerships. Agencies that try to build their own AI infrastructure risk falling behind while their competitors focus on what really matters: using proven AI tools to deliver superior client outcomes.

# 5. Future Client Relationships



"I think your model of actually how agencies get paid and what they get paid for will change."

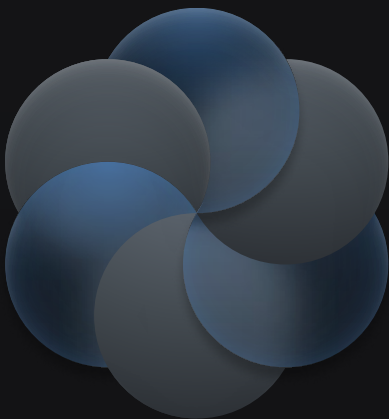
- Mari Kim Novak

The traditional agency model is undergoing fundamental change, driven by both technological capabilities and evolving client needs. While global agency models won't disappear entirely, there will be significant experimentation with different partnership structures. A significant shift in power dynamics is occurring as clients develop their own AI capabilities, particularly in core operations and marketing. Successful agencies will need to balance technological capability with consumer comfort and brand relationships, recognizing that restraint in implementation can be as important as capability.

# Key Action Items for 2025

## 1. Invest in Training

Prioritize workforce development to ensure teams can effectively leverage AI tools, focusing on both technical skills and strategic thinking.

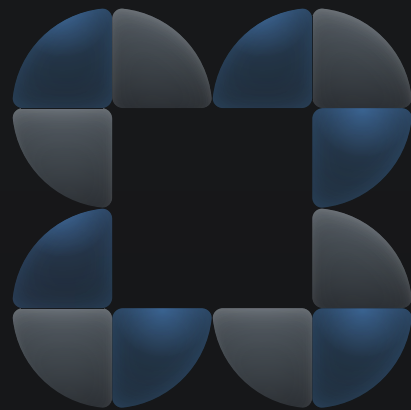


## 2. Build Feedback Loops

Create systems for continuous learning and optimization of AI implementations, ensuring that both human input and AI outputs are properly evaluated.

### 3. Strategic Partner Selection

Identify and leverage the right technology partners to accelerate capabilities and maintain competitive advantage.



### 4. Focus on Outcomes

Shift from output-based to outcome-based client relationships, emphasizing measurable results over traditional metrics.

### 5. Maintain Agility

Create incentive systems that encourage experimentation with new technology while ensuring that adoption enhances rather than hinders team agility.



# Conclusion



Success in 2025 will depend on agencies' ability to embrace AI while maintaining their strategic value to clients. The transformation required is substantial, but it's about evolution rather than replacement. The future belongs to agencies that can harness AI through strategic partnerships while developing new capabilities and service models that deliver measurable value to clients.

As Jon Reilly notes, "The pace of play is accelerating... in a state of constant change, I don't think a winning strategy is to sit back and let it play out, you will really get left behind." The winners will be those who can move quickly to adopt and leverage AI technology while maintaining their core value proposition to clients.

To learn how Akkio can help your agency accelerate adoption of AI analytics, check out our free eBook [AI, Your Way.](#)

Connect with us to learn more:



Akkio is the AI platform built for modern media agencies, enabling them to work faster, smarter, and more efficiently across the entire campaign lifecycle. Instead of layering AI on top of outdated processes, Akkio reimagines agency operations from the ground up, transforming workflows, insights, and execution for better client impact and stronger business outcomes.