

THE
TIPPING
POINT:

*2026,
THE YEAR
REALITY GETS
REMIXED*

As we enter 2026, the line between what's real and artificial isn't just blurring; it's disappearing. We are stepping into an era where the digital and social landscape feels less like a mirror of reality and more like a remix of it.

This marks a profound inflection point. Until now, artificial intelligence has been a fascinating tool, something we bolted onto existing workflows. In 2026, it will become the foundation—the operating system for marketing, communications, and even culture itself.

As AI-powered answer engines and agents replace search bars and synthetic influencers compete with human creators, the very nature of how we discover, trust, and communicate is being rewritten.

And this technological leap is creating a powerful, deeply human counter-reaction. As our lives grow more automated, we will see a renewed, urgent search for authenticity. A world of flawless fakes will proliferate. Brands' most valuable currency will be trust. The real flex will be human insight, genuine connection, and emotional intelligence.

This collection of 26 predictions for 2026 explores multiple sources of tension and opportunity:

- The total integration of AI and the simultaneous rise of authenticity
- Businesses navigating a polarized, uncertain world, where reputation is no longer reactive but strategic
- Purpose shifting from a slogan to a measure of accountability
- New economic corridors in Asia and massive cultural events creating new arenas for innovation
- The complex web of new stakeholders, priorities, sales channels, and definitions of value

The future belongs to those who adapt the fastest and those who can marry machine efficiency with human creativity—and never forget which one truly matters.

FOREWORD: NAVIGATING WHAT COMES NEXT

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THE AI OPERATING SYSTEM: HOW AI MOVES FROM TOOL TO FOUNDATION

For years, the chatter around AI has been about what's possible. In 2026, that conversation is over. AI has graduated from experimental to transformational—the operating system for how brands plan, create, and measure their work.

It's a tectonic disruption that goes far beyond efficiency. The traditional customer journey is disappearing into the algorithm as AI answer engines mediate how we find information. The goal shifts from ranking in search to being recognized and trusted by AI.

In this new landscape, the challenge isn't tech adoption; it's human literacy. The organizations that win in the age of synthetic media and hyper-personalization face fierce competition. There are the agile organizations, but also anyone who knows how to use the tools better.

The authors in this section explore what it means to lead when AI is no longer an add-on, but fundamental to how brands operate.

- **The Rise of AI-Native Marketing in 2026**
- **The Future of Social: Synthetic, Surreal, and Still Deeply Human**
- **The Power of Personalization: AI's Defining Role in Travel and Communications in 2026**
- **From Ranking to Recognition: AI-Mediated Trust in Digital Marketing**
- **AI Moves from Experiment to Expectation: The New Baseline for Communicators**
- **The Disappearing Funnel: Designing for Discovery as AI Co-pilots Proliferate**

THE RISE OF AI-NATIVE MARKETING IN 2026


BY: ALEXIS PRATSIDES,
MANAGING PARTNER,
GLOBAL HEAD OF DIGITAL

In 2026, the single most important development for marketing will be the mainstream adoption of AI-native platforms. Until now, AI has been a tool, something bolted onto existing workflows. This year will mark the tipping point at which AI becomes the foundation for how brands plan, create, distribute, and measure their campaigns.

For businesses, this will mean a new level of personalization at scale. AI-driven customer insights will enable the delivery of not just the right message at the right time, but also the right experience across markets, channels, and languages. Culture will shift too: consumers will increasingly expect hyper-relevance, seamless interactions, and brand voices that adapt in real time to their context.

For marketers and communicators, the challenge will be how to harness this power responsibly. As regulators sharpen their focus on transparency and the ethical use of AI, trust will become the critical differentiator. Companies that master AI while embedding accountability, cultural sensitivity, and human creativity will lead the next chapter of innovation.

In short, 2026 is the year when AI stops being an experiment and becomes the operating system of marketing. Those who adapt fastest will not only capture attention but also shape culture itself.



In 2026, the digital and social media marketing landscape is going to feel less like a mirror of reality and more like a remix of it. With generative AI powering everything from short-form videos to full-blown synthetic influencers, and smartglasses making real-time content creation seamless and hands-free, the line between what's real and what's made up is about to disappear completely.

We're entering a new era where anyone can star in their own AI-generated show, post deepfaked cameos with celebrities, and build entire identities that never actually exist offline. The tools are powerful, accessible, and evolving faster than most people or brands can keep up with.

That's why the most important thing marketers and communicators can do in 2026 is invest in digital and AI literacy. Not just how the tools work, but how they're shaping culture, creativity, conversions, and credibility.

At the same time, we'll see a renewed need for real people in the feed. Human influencers will become more valuable than ever. Not just as content creators, but as cultural translators. As guides. As trusted sources who can cut through synthetic noise and help audiences feel something real.

THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL: SYNTHETIC, SURREAL, AND STILL DEEPLY HUMAN

BY: GREG SWAN, SENIOR
PARTNER, DIGITAL LEAD




If there's one development poised to reshape the travel industry in 2026, it's the acceleration of personalization—especially with AI. Travelers today expect more than seamless bookings; they want experiences that feel tailor-made. AI is making that possible at scale. From predictive itineraries based on past behavior to hyper-targeted content that adapts in real time, personalization is no longer a luxury—it's becoming the new baseline.

For businesses, this means rethinking how we engage audiences. Marketing and communications strategies must evolve to become more dynamic, data-informed, and emotionally intelligent.

Culturally, this shift is redefining trust and relevance. Consumers are gravitating toward brands that get them—and are quick to disengage from those that don't. In 2026, the key players will be those who use AI not just to automate, but to humanize.

THE POWER OF PERSONALIZATION: AI'S DEFINING ROLE IN TRAVEL AND COMMUNICATIONS IN 2026

BY: DEBBIE FLYNN, FINN GLOBAL TRAVEL PRACTICE LEAD



The biggest shift to watch in 2026 is the rise of AI-native search—where decision-makers turn to generative AI for insights instead of traditional search engines. With Google, Microsoft, and new platforms integrating 'answer engines' into everyday workflows, the way people discover, evaluate, and trust information is being rewritten.

For marketers, that changes everything. It's no longer about ranking high or shouting loud—it's about being recognized, referenced, and trusted by AI. The brands that win will be the ones whose expertise is machine-readable: credible data, consistent messaging, and authentic thought leadership that algorithms can understand and cite.

This evolution shifts marketing from chasing attention to earning authority. In a world where AI mediates what audiences see and believe, trust becomes the true currency of influence. The goal isn't to outsmart the algorithm—it's to help it tell your story accurately.

In 2026, success won't be defined by how often we're seen, but by how faithfully we're represented when AI speaks for us.

FROM RANKING TO RECOGNITION: AI-MEDIATED TRUST IN DIGITAL MARKETING

BY: JOYCE LIONG,
SENIOR PARTNER,
FINN SINGAPORE

AI MOVES FROM EXPERIMENT TO EXPECTATION: THE NEW BASELINE FOR COMMUNICATORS

BY: RYAN BARR,
GLOBAL FINANCIAL
SERVICES PRACTICE LEAD

The conversation around AI in communications is shifting from “what’s possible” to “what’s required.” In 2026, the leaders in communications and marketing will not be the ones testing AI, they will be the ones who have fully integrated it into everyday activities, strategic planning, speed of execution, and real-time enhanced storytelling.

But this won’t be about replacing human communicators. It will be about using AI to amplify human intelligence: delivering insights faster, personalizing narratives more precisely, and responding to breaking moments in minutes, not days or even hours. That’s the baseline clients and stakeholders will expect.

To compete in this environment, companies should:

- Build AI literacy across their communications teams, not just among a few early adopters.
- Create governance frameworks that ensure accuracy, ethics, and brand consistency, so speed never comes at the expense of trust, humanity, and empathy.
- Pair AI-driven insights with human judgment, ensuring technology enhances, not erases, the brand’s voice and purpose.

In 2026, communicators won’t be competing against AI tools; we will be competing against organizations that know how to use them better. The differentiator will be how human the message still feels, even when the process behind it becomes increasingly automated.

THE DISAPPEARING FUNNEL: DESIGNING FOR DISCOVERY AS AI CO-PILOTS PROLIFERATE

BY: NEBY EJIGU, SENIOR PARTNER,
DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

As AI copilots become a constant presence across search, shopping, and everyday communication, the traditional customer journey is being rewritten in real time. In 2026, the marketing funnel won't just collapse, it will disappear into the algorithm. The brands that win will be the ones that design for discovery, not persuasion. In this new landscape, success won't be measured by impressions or reach, but by how naturally a brand fits into the flow of intelligent decision-making.

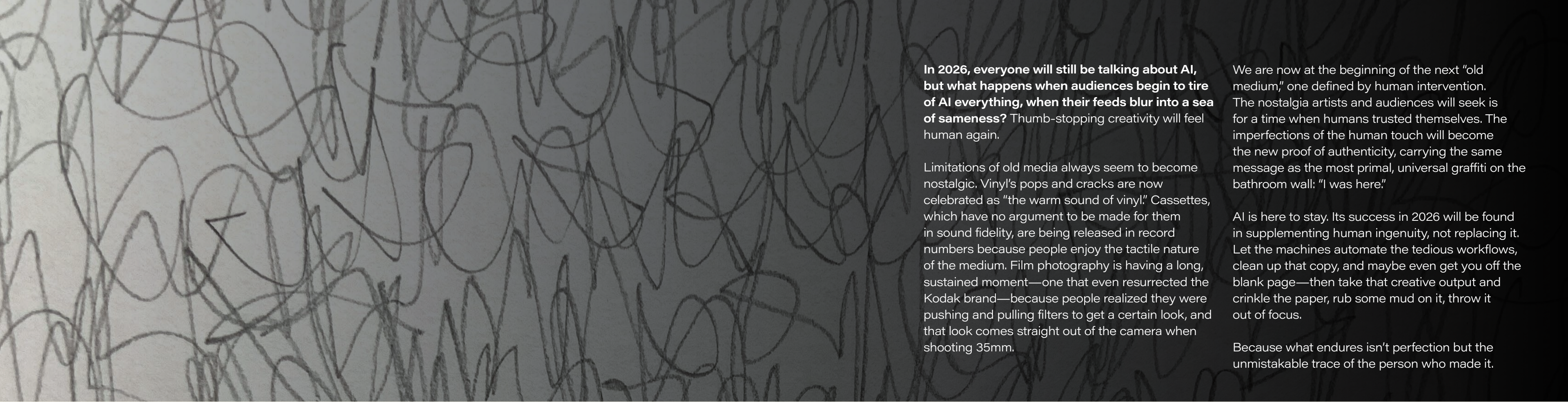
THE SEARCH FOR AUTHENTICITY: WHY THE HUMAN TOUCH IS THE NEW PRIORITY

As AI-driven automation and synthetic “noise” become the default, a powerful cultural counter-movement is taking hold: the analog, the tactile, and the real.

In 2026, the search for authenticity is reshaping consumer behavior. The wellness sector is recognizing that true well-being is shaped by social connection, equity, and community. In health, this manifests as a new appreciation for face-to-face interactions. Luxury consumers are placing a premium on experiences—the hotel stay, the retreat, the cruise where a brand’s world is lived, not just consumed.

The brands that win in 2026 will be those that cut through the synthetic to help audiences feel something real.

- **Imperfection is the New Proof of Life**
- **Trust and the Analog Uprising in Health**
- **Authenticity in PR and Communications in the AI Era**
- **Luxury Rooted in Experience in 2026**
- **Beyond Individual Self-Care: The Redefinition of Wellness**



In 2026, everyone will still be talking about AI, but what happens when audiences begin to tire of AI everything, when their feeds blur into a sea of sameness? Thumb-stopping creativity will feel human again.

Limitations of old media always seem to become nostalgic. Vinyl's pops and cracks are now celebrated as "the warm sound of vinyl." Cassettes, which have no argument to be made for them in sound fidelity, are being released in record numbers because people enjoy the tactile nature of the medium. Film photography is having a long, sustained moment—one that even resurrected the Kodak brand—because people realized they were pushing and pulling filters to get a certain look, and that look comes straight out of the camera when shooting 35mm.

We are now at the beginning of the next "old medium," one defined by human intervention. The nostalgia artists and audiences will seek is for a time when humans trusted themselves. The imperfections of the human touch will become the new proof of authenticity, carrying the same message as the most primal, universal graffiti on the bathroom wall: "I was here."

AI is here to stay. Its success in 2026 will be found in supplementing human ingenuity, not replacing it. Let the machines automate the tedious workflows, clean up that copy, and maybe even get you off the blank page—then take that creative output and crinkle the paper, rub some mud on it, throw it out of focus.

Because what endures isn't perfection but the unmistakable trace of the person who made it.

JASON MCCAFFREY, PARTNER,
FINN INTEGRATED MARKETING

**IMPERFECTION
IS THE NEW
PROOF OF LIFE**

TRUST AND THE ANALOG UPRISING IN HEALTH

BY: ERICA OLENSKI,
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In 2026, AI will not only be integrated into everything but also be everywhere. When that happens, trust will begin to decline.

As our lives grow more automated, people will increasingly seek what feels authentic, human, and grounded. This shift is already underway. Younger generations are turning to what's tactile and low-tech: paper planners, in-person events, movement, sunlight, and whole foods. This isn't about rejecting technology; instead, it's about choosing when and how to engage. For those with the time and resources to unplug, living "analog" becomes a status symbol. Being able to step away from the algorithm won't indicate a lack of access, but rather a sense of freedom.

Healthcare is particularly vulnerable here. It's based on human experiences, and as AI continues to expand into this area, the importance of face-to-face interactions will only increase. People want to feel cared for by someone, not just processed by a system.

Simultaneously, the idea of wellness is being reshaped. This looks like less blue light, structured water, real food, and sleep without screens. These cues are becoming shorthand for a more deliberate and healthier lifestyle. This isn't a trend driven by nostalgia but is a response to overload, and for brands, it will demand a smarter, more human way to present themselves both online and offline.

In a world filled with flawless fakes and algorithmic content sludge, the real flex will be authenticity. The platforms may evolve and the content may be surreal, but the most powerful signal will still come from the humans we trust.

The most important development for the communications sector in 2026 will be the widespread operationalization of AI, not just as a tool, but as a workflow transformer. By automating research, summarization reporting and even early-stage drafting, AI will free PR professionals from the time drains that traditionally tethered us to the back office. Instead, we'll spend more time doing the work clients actually value: creative storytelling, strategic counsel and trust-building with media.

This shift will elevate the role of communicators within organizations. We'll move faster, go deeper and bring more insight to the table, becoming not just amplifiers, but architects of business momentum.

That doesn't mean PR becomes robotic. In fact, it's the opposite. As generative AI takes on the mechanical, human insight becomes more essential. The agencies that win in 2026 will be those that marry machine efficiency with emotional intelligence and show clients how to do the same.

AUTHENTICITY IN PR AND COMMUNICATIONS IN THE AI ERA

BY: JEFF SEEDMAN,
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LUXURY ROOTED IN EXPERIENCE IN 2026

BY: GREGORY COLE,
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FINN LUXE, EMEA

2026 will be the year when the split between luxury goods and experiences becomes impossible to ignore. Bain & Company's June 2025 outlook with Altagamma confirmed that turbulence is the new baseline: growth is uneven, consumer sentiment fragile, and younger audiences are questioning whether higher prices still equal value.

Within that backdrop, hospitality and wellness are pressing ahead with confidence. Luxury hotels, branded residences, retreats and cruises are growing faster than personal goods, and in doing so they are becoming stages where brand worlds are lived, not just consumed. Consumer brands, meanwhile, are under pressure. Rather than standing still, they are diversifying into supplements, devices, food, and homeware in a bid to capture more of the lifestyle wallet.

In 2026, success will depend on weaving together these two growth narratives: the ambition of hospitality and the diversification of goods. Brands that can connect a stay, a product, and a piece of content into one coherent story will resonate most strongly. In a year when value and meaning are being questioned, the winners will be those that communicate with clarity, imagination, and cultural truth.

In 2026, the biggest shift in wellness won't be a new superfood craze or fitness trend, it'll be a redefinition of what wellness means. For years, the conversation has centered on individual self-care: sleeping better, eating healthier, prioritizing mental health, finding work-life balance, moving daily, maintaining gut health, identifying skin routines, and much more.

However, we're hitting a cultural shift where individual wellness is no longer enough. The most forward-thinking brands are starting to realize that real wellness isn't just personal—it's collective. It's shaped by social connection, workplace culture, access to care, equity, and even the environment.

This evolution is generational. Gen Z and millennials aren't just buying wellness products, they're asking what companies stand for in the wellness equation. They're demanding brands take a stand on systemic issues that shape well-being. In a recent study, nearly 70% of Gen Z and millennials said they are more likely to support wellness brands that prioritize social and environmental issues, including mental health, DEI, and climate action.

That means the question for businesses in 2026 isn't just: "How does your product support individual health and wellbeing?" You need to be asking:

- What are you doing to build a culture of wellness for your team members, consumers, and communities?
- Are your campaigns inclusive of all bodies and backgrounds?
- Do your policies support mental health and work-life balance?
- How transparent are you about your environmental impact?

For marketing and communication pros, the takeaway is simple: wellness storytelling has to evolve. The brands that will win in 2026 are the ones moving past surface-level wellness to make real, systemic commitments for their consumers, their teams, and their communities. The brands that shift from marketing wellness to meaningfully contributing to it—with transparency, inclusivity, and real action. It's not about selling wellness anymore. It's about building it.

BY: BLAKE BELLUCCI, VICE PRESIDENT,
CONSUMER LIFESTYLE AND SPORTS

BEYOND INDIVIDUAL SELF-CARE: THE REDEFINITION OF WELLNESS

THE BUSINESS OF TRUST & PURPOSE: NAVIGATING A POLARIZED, MORE ACCOUNTABLE WORLD

The geopolitical, trade, and diplomatic uncertainty that defined 2025 will continue into the new year. Consumers, employees, trade partners and more are looking at how companies respond.

This new era demands less talk, more action. Companies are being held accountable not only for their own actions but for those of their entire supply chain. They can't risk empty signaling without real commitment.

To succeed in 2026, brands must lean into a blend of agility and authenticity. It requires leaders who can differentiate between superficial internet background noise and genuine, credible scrutiny. Reputation management will fully evolve from a reactive defense into a proactive, strategic necessity.

- **Navigating Uncertainty with Agility and Authenticity**
- **Less Talk, More Action in Climate-based Corporate Communications**
- **Reputation 2026: Active Positioning in a Polarized, AI-Driven World**
- **Purpose Beyond Profit: Accountability in Action**

NAVIGATING UNCERTAINTY WITH AGILITY AND AUTHENTICITY

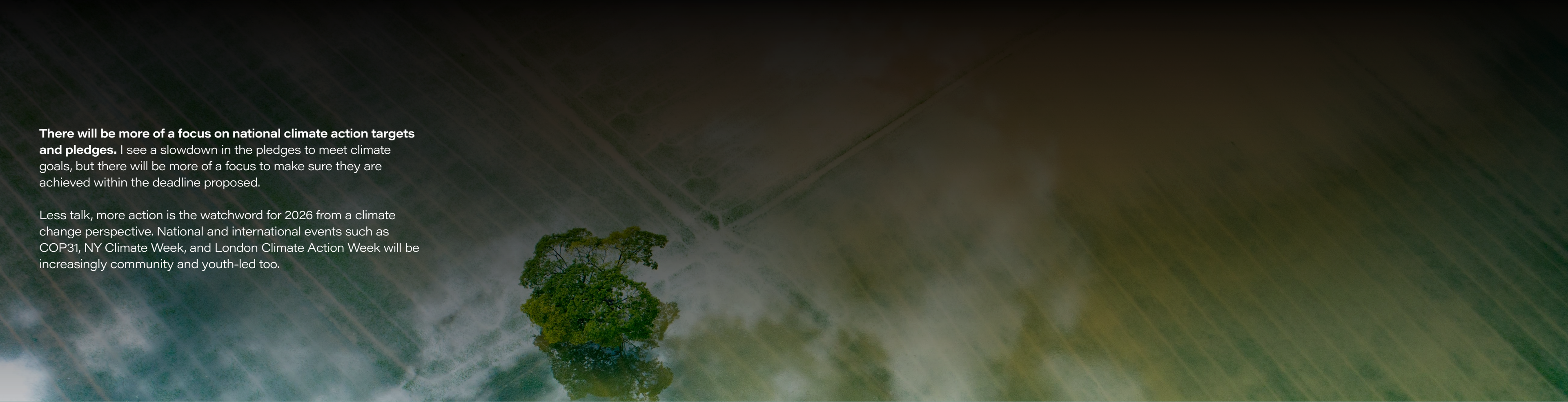
BY: PADDY O'DEA,
SENIOR PARTNER,
FINN IRELAND

Communications is at a pivotal inflection point. The landscape going into 2026 will be shaped by a continued backdrop of geopolitical, trade, and diplomatic uncertainty. This presents significant strategic and communications challenges, especially for organizations with an international footprint, globalized supply chains, and export markets.

To navigate this uncertainty, agility and authenticity will be paramount. Corporates that are comfortable in the uncomfortable, possessing the conviction and insight to act and communicate decisively during periods of adversity or uncertainty will outmaneuver their competitors.

From a communications perspective, cutting through the noise requires both conviction and authenticity, and a hyper-targeted strategy. This means meeting audiences where they are, as opposed to hoping they will come find you, utilizing the most relevant channels—social, earned media, or in-person—with a clear message. Crucially, leadership must avoid panicking in the face of criticism, maintaining the ability to differentiate between superficial internet background noise and genuine, credible scrutiny.

Ultimately, this blend of agility, conviction, and genuine substance, accepting that you're not going to appease everyone, is what will define genuine communications leadership in 2026.

An aerial photograph of a single, large, green tree standing in the middle of a vast, flat, green field. The field is divided into sections by thin, light-colored lines, possibly roads or irrigation channels. The sky is a pale, hazy blue. The overall scene is serene and emphasizes the isolation of the tree.

There will be more of a focus on national climate action targets and pledges. I see a slowdown in the pledges to meet climate goals, but there will be more of a focus to make sure they are achieved within the deadline proposed.

Less talk, more action is the watchword for 2026 from a climate change perspective. National and international events such as COP31, NY Climate Week, and London Climate Action Week will be increasingly community and youth-led too.

BY: TERRI BLOORE, MANAGING PARTNER, SUSTAINABILITY
AND CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS, FINN EMEA

LESS TALK, MORE ACTION IN CLIMATE-BASED CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

Societies are fragmenting, and polarization is intensifying worldwide.

In this charged environment, companies can quickly come under scrutiny, their reputation exposed to public debate and social media amplification. It is therefore no surprise that throughout 2025 we saw an increase in client inquiries around issues management in Germany.

AI adds another layer of complexity: As AI increasingly shapes content and decision-making, public trust is being tested. While the upcoming EU AI Act in 2026 promises greater transparency and regulatory oversight, this alone is not enough to secure credibility. The true differentiator will be clear positioning, human-centered storytelling, and consistent demonstration of values.

To date, many organizations have still approached this topic reactively, responding only when challenges arise. Looking ahead to 2026, proactive reputation management and strategic messaging will be essential. By taking deliberate stances, communicating authentically, and reinforcing trust, companies can mitigate risk while establishing themselves as credible, resilient leaders. In a world defined by societal polarization and AI-driven scrutiny, reputation is no longer reactive. It is strategic, human, and indispensable.

REPUTATION 2026: ACTIVE POSITIONING IN A POLARIZED, AI-DRIVEN WORLD

BY: ANETT WITTMANN,
SENIOR PARTNER,
FINN GERMANY

PURPOSE BEYOND PROFIT: ACCOUNTABILITY IN ACTION

BY: CHERYL TAN,
VICE PRESIDENT,
FINN SINGAPORE

In the coming years, companies will need to pay attention not just to what they do, but how they do it. Purpose and profit can no longer be treated as separate goals, and increasingly, organizations are being held accountable not only for their own actions but also for those of their suppliers, vendors, and partners.

This interconnected responsibility is becoming an unstoppable force—employees want to work for values-driven organizations, customers want to buy from ethical brands, and vendors want to avoid being linked to harmful practices.

But as the focus on purpose grows, so does the risk of “goodwashing”—the empty signaling of values without real commitment. The solution lies in transparency, measurable impact, and consistency. Companies that embed values into decision-making, operations, and accountability will not only build trust but also ensure that doing good is inseparable from doing business.

THE GLOBAL STAGE: NEW CENTERS OF GRAVITY IN CULTURE, COMMERCE, AND ENERGY

The coming year will see massive events and regional power shifts that set the stage for the next chapter of global commerce and culture. In 2026, all eyes will turn to new, and newly redefined, centers of gravity.

The FIFA World Cup will undoubtedly be one of the biggest events of 2026. On a scale not seen before, it represents a colossal stage for brands, geopolitics, and new forms of fan engagement. At the same time, the sports broadcast landscape itself is being reinvented, as streaming giants like Netflix and Amazon acquire major league rights and leagues experiment with innovative animated broadcasts to reach new demographics.

Asia's energy and economic story is entering its most complex chapter. The push to meet decarbonization targets is driving major collaboration to connect entire systems across borders. This regional integration is crystallized by Shenzhen's selection to host the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meetings, signaling a new era of innovation and opportunity.

- **Strategic Focus: China's Role on the Global Stage**
- **Bridging the Bay: Shenzhen and Hong Kong's APEC Moment**
- **Powering Growth, Protecting the Planet: Asia's Energy Evolution**
- **All Eyes on the FIFA World Cup 2026**
- **Innovating Sports Content Distribution in 2026**

The public relations sector in China is advancing toward an era defined by increased specialization, expertise, and technological integration.

As the industry segments further, demand will be growing for professionals with domain-specific knowledge who can provide deeper, more nuanced industry insights. In the realm of corporate communications, success will increasingly depend on the ability to interpret policy trends and identify strategic opportunities, and PR practitioners will increasingly need to operate with a macro-level perspective, crafting and communicating strategies that account for broader geopolitical, diplomatic, and economic contexts.

Concurrently, China's role on the global stage will continue to expand. A notable example is Shenzhen's selection to host the APEC meetings in 2026, making it the third Chinese city—after Beijing and Shanghai—to welcome this gathering of world leaders. This milestone not only underscores China's rising stature but also represents a pivotal moment of diplomatic visibility and public engagement.

Beyond this global visibility and influence, such state-level forums—including the annual China International Import Expo, Supply Chain Expo, Carbon Expo, and Services Trade Fair—also offer unique opportunities for firms to demonstrate leadership within China and enhance brand influence in key sectors against the backdrop of China's ongoing global integration.

STRATEGIC FOCUS: CHINA'S ROLE ON THE GLOBAL STAGE

BY: JASON CAO, MANAGING PARTNER,
FINN PARTNERS GREATER CHINA

BRIDGING THE BAY: SHENZHEN AND HONG KONG'S APEC MOMENT

BY: ANNOUCHKA BEHRMANN,
MANAGING PARTNER,
FINN PARTNERS GREATER CHINA

The APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting November 2026 in Shenzhen is quietly becoming the moment to watch—and a natural focal point for Hong Kong's luxury, lifestyle, hospitality, and consumer scene. APEC is a forum where 21 economies advance trade, travel, and sustainable growth for Asia Pacific—so hosting it is as much about collaboration as it is about commerce.

China's choice of Shenzhen is meaningful. It spotlights the Greater Bay Area's blend of innovation and making—where design studios, manufacturers, and tech labs sit within easy reach of Hong Kong's international stage. It signals confidence in the region's ability to turn ideas into experiences at speed.

In the lead-up, expect smoother cross-border movement and closer coordination. For brands and hotels, that means easier itineraries for media, tastemakers, and executives, plus more seamless collaboration with creative and manufacturing partners just across the border. Shenzhen's pace of prototyping pairs well with Hong Kong's strengths in storytelling, hosting, and global-facing standards.

On a finance note, with more C-suite travel and attention on the GBA, we're likely to see richer banking dialogues—trade finance for cross-border supply, RMB-HKD solutions for events and pop-ups, and curated investor touchpoints that connect Shenzhen builds with Hong Kong capital.

Three areas to watch:

- **Hospitality and travel:** renewed executive and opinion leader travel should lift occupancy, F&B, and event calendars, with Hong Kong as the preferred base for international guests.
- **Luxury and design:** faster access to materials, makers, and innovation labs in Shenzhen will shorten concept-to-market timelines, while Hong Kong shapes the launch narrative.
- **Culinary and wellness:** cross-border pop-ups, residencies, and collaborations will feel more feasible, drawing new audiences into the region.

The gentle nudge for 2026: start piloting now. Line up cross-border partnerships, media routes, guest experiences and high-net-worth client programs that bridge Shenzhen's energy with Hong Kong's polish—so when the spotlight turns on, the story is already in motion.

In 2026, Asia's energy story will enter its most complex chapter yet, as transition meets transformation. The region faces a dual challenge: powering unprecedented growth while meeting aggressive decarbonization targets. This isn't just about adding renewables; it's about integrating entire systems—connecting power grids across borders, harmonizing regulations, and enabling the seamless flow of clean energy.


As the ASEAN Power Grid moves from ambition to implementation, collaboration will become the true currency of progress. Countries that align infrastructure investment with political trust will not only secure energy resilience but also unlock new economic corridors. At the same time, the region's transition will be increasingly shaped by digitalization. Yet this intelligence gap risks

widening the divide between digitally mature economies and those still reliant on legacy systems. Bridging that divide, through technology partnerships and capacity building, will be vital to ensuring a just and inclusive energy transition.

Ultimately, Asia's energy evolution demands not just innovation, but integrity. This is a communications challenge at its core, requiring a new kind of storytelling that moves beyond high-level promises to tangible progress. It's about building a narrative that showcases projects and people who are turning these huge, complex ideas into reality. The most resilient players will be those who see purpose and profit as a single, interdependent goal, building systems that not only power growth but also protect people and the planet.

POWERING GROWTH, PROTECTING THE PLANET: ASIA'S ENERGY EVOLUTION

BY: ELENA LIM, VICE PRESIDENT, FINN SINGAPORE

An aerial photograph of a lush green football pitch. Two players in red and white kits are positioned in the center of the field, near the halfway line. The pitch is marked with white lines, and the overall scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

The biggest event of 2026? It's only months away and it is undoubtedly going to be the FIFA World Cup 2026 in North America.

We all thought we knew the World Cup. It's played a part in most people's lives. But, next year, it's going to be on the biggest scale ever.

FIFA has made it bigger than ever with 104 games staged across five weeks, not four, while it's the first time that the tournament has been hosted by three co-nations—Canada, Mexico and the USA.

It's going to be a stage for some of the biggest names across social media too—Ronaldo with 1 billion followers, Messi with 700 million, and of course a certain somebody in the White House. Throw in geopolitics and the small matter of the USA's 250th anniversary and it really is the only game in town next year.

This spells a huge opportunity for brands and retailers. Most of the official UK partners like Adidas, Coca Cola, Marks & Spencer's and Walkers have already inked deals with FIFA, but it still leaves plenty of room for the creatively agile.

We won't really see excitement build until the end of the domestic season, that's when national fandom will take hold. While the IP might be snapped up by those with open checkbooks, the smartest strategy will see brands connect with fans by reacting to and engaging with significant moments in the World Cup. Brands that lean into the rhythms of football fandom and engage with smaller communities, from pubs, to parks, to school groups, as opposed to those splashing the cash on big deals, will also do well.

ALL EYES ON THE FIFA WORLD CUP 2026

BY: JONATHAN O'CONNOR,
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, FINN EMEA

INNOVATING SPORTS CONTENT DISTRIBUTION IN 2026

BY: ZACH GROEN,
VICE PRESIDENT,
CONSUMER LIFESTYLE
AND SPORTS

As we approach 2026, the sports broadcast landscape continues to shift dramatically with an increased demand for alternate broadcasts of live sports games and the continued arms race between digital platforms and streaming services for live sports broadcast rights and on-demand sports content.

Last year, Netflix made a major splash when it acquired the rights to broadcast NFL games on Christmas and struck a 10-year deal with the WWE to be the exclusive home of Monday Night Raw. The streaming giant has also continued to introduce major on-demand sports content to their platform, including a slew of successful sports documentaries like *America's Team: The Gambler and His Cowboys*, and a recent partnership with Spotify to bring The Ringer's video podcasts to the big screen. Amazon Prime Video has also been a major player in the space, securing the rights to the NFL's Thursday Night Football and a large package of NBA games as a part of an 11-year agreement.

At the same time, pro leagues like the NHL continue to innovate to find ways to connect with new audiences and untapped demographics, best embodied by the league's now annual 'NHL Big City Greens Classic' which leverages game tracking technology and animation to merge a live NHL game with characters from the kids show *Big City Greens*.

From a marketing and communications perspective, this new-age approach to sports content distribution opens the door for brands to connect with sports fans and alternate consumer audiences in a variety of fresh and exciting ways.

SECTOR SHOCKWAVES: HOW INDUSTRIES ARE REWRITING THE MARCOM PLAYBOOK

While macro trends like AI are redrawing the entire map, some of the greatest disruption is happening at the street level.

In education, the rise of AI tools and a teacher retention crisis are changing power dynamics, giving grassroots teacher advocacy more leverage than top-down mandates. The very idea of education as a fixed institution is diverging from learning as a fluid, lifelong process. This will force providers to prove their value against agile, skills-based alternatives.

In health, the model is shifting from siloed tactics to a single integrated engine where market access, communications, and policy must work in perfect sync to prove value to payers and regulators. And in cybersecurity, comms pros must fight to combat report fatigue with vertical-specific stories.

In 2026, success depends on navigating a complex web of new stakeholders, priorities, sales channels, and definitions of value. Explore the new rules of engagement.

- **The BioConvergence of Science, Technology, and Sustainability**
- **Health Access: The Integrated Engine of 2026**
- **Cybersecurity in 2026: Navigating the AI-Powered Information Ecosystem**
- **Education vs. Learning: Navigating Tectonic Disruption in 2026**
- **Education B2B Communications: Cultivating Teacher Advocacy**
- **Appetite for Gut Health Will Take Off in 2026**

THE BIOCONVERGENCE OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND SUSTAINABILITY

BY: GIL BASHE,
CHAIR GLOBAL HEALTH
AND PURPOSE

In 2026, health innovation will no longer be defined solely by molecules and smart technology, but by its value in closing gaps in access, affordability, and speed. Artificial intelligence and data exchange platforms will evolve from tools of efficiency into instruments of accelerated clinical design, evaluation, and application, helping drug developers, regulators, and clinicians see the whole person, not just their condition.

We'll witness greater conversation in policy and payer forums around moving from "sick care" to "health creation." Payers, policymakers, and providers, pressed by economic strain and

public expectations, will explore how to prioritize prevention, behavioral health, and chronic disease management as essential to economic productivity. Employers will invest in workforce well-being as a business strategy, not a benefits line.

Climate-linked and security concerns will necessitate deeper collaboration between product development and marketing, prompting investment in climate-sensitive manufacturing, tracking systems, and SEC communication. Responsible businesses that integrate sustainability into their operational planning will lead in both economic and customer

retention. Meanwhile, patients, empowered by transparency, community, and technology, will continue to elevate their voice of authority in medicine. The next significant advance won't be a molecule, device or campaign; it will be the realization that alignment among people, planet, and profit creates sustainable revenue flow.

The health sector's success in 2026 will hinge on honing its cognitive intelligence and its ability to match innovation with intention and data with societal impact.

In 2026, the health ecosystem will pivot decisively toward integrated 'go-to-market' strategies that bring market access, communications, and policy together into a single strategic funnel. This shift is being driven by escalating medical and pharmacy cost pressures, accelerating policy and regulatory change, payer demands for evidence-led value narratives, and the growing availability of real-time digital data on patient outcomes. The days of siloed tactics are over, clients will shortlist partners who can synchronize evidence generation, payer engagement, stakeholder narratives, and advocacy seamlessly.

Cost remains the sharpest driver. With medical and pharmacy expenses staying high, payers and employers are demanding value-for-money and outcomes evidence upfront, making it essential to weave pricing and market access strategies into communications and policy planning from the outset.

At the same time, regulatory volatility is increasing with governments revising drug pricing rules and data protection frameworks at speed, requiring companies to pair market intelligence with agile public affairs to safeguard launches and reimbursement. Evidence alignment is also happening earlier, with clinical and market access teams shaping endpoints and real-world data in Phase II/III, narratives must translate that evidence into trust for clinicians, payers, and patients. Meanwhile, digital platforms enable companies to own more of the value story by creating both opportunity and reputational risk that demands integrated comms and policy safeguards.

In this environment, clients will look for a single advisory team that can map clinical evidence to payer economics, craft stakeholder narratives, and execute advocacy simultaneously, supported by data frameworks that measure real impact, not just media metrics. In 2026, access will be defined by evidence, narrative, and policy, which will be delivered through one integrated engine.

HEALTH ACCESS: THE INTEGRATED ENGINE OF 2026

BY: AMAN GUPTA,
MANAGING PARTNER,
HEALTH PRACTICE ASIA LEAD

In 2026, GEO (GenAI Engine Optimization) will change how cybersecurity companies approach media outreach. As AI-powered search and recommendation engines increasingly mediate information discovery, being an authoritative voice featured in quality media coverage directly improves your algorithmic standing. Thought leadership isn't just about human readers anymore—it's about training the systems that surface expertise. Companies investing in substantive, well-crafted media presence gain compound advantages as GenAI platforms prioritize their content.

But within this landscape, report fatigue has reached critical mass. Journalists are drowning in cybersecurity studies—another press release on rising ransomware or phishing threats won't break through. What matters now is analysis: well-written narratives explaining why these numbers should alarm us and what they mean. Raw statistics without compelling storytelling will be ignored by both journalists and algorithms.

Amid all this, a less-tapped opportunity is vertical-specific storytelling. Generic cybersecurity messaging has saturated the market, yet few companies invest the effort required for truly niche, sector-focused narratives. Manufacturing needs IoT security solutions that differ vastly from healthcare or financial services. Companies articulating these nuanced challenges—what factories face versus hospitals versus retail—will capture attention that generalists miss.

Finally, cybersecurity remains a high-risk industry where organizations face threats from multiple vectors—whether through vulnerable vendors, compromised partners, or direct attacks. Companies need robust crisis plans to demonstrate preparedness when incidents inevitably occur: pre-defined leadership roles, clear workflows, recovery frameworks, and communications protocols. These plans must be regularly tested through scenario-based simulations to build “muscle memory” for a rapid, transparent response.

BY: JESSIE NG, DIRECTOR, FINN SINGAPORE

CYBERSECURITY IN 2026: NAVIGATING THE AI-POWERED INFORMATION ECOSYSTEM

EDUCATION VS. LEARNING: NAVIGATING TECTONIC DISRUPTION IN 2026

BY: MARINA STENOS,
MANAGING PARTNER,
FINN GLOBAL
EDUCATION PRACTICE

The Education sector—specifically, standardized, institutional structures—is undergoing a tectonic disruption, particularly the divergence between education and learning. As institutions with fixed curricula and formal credentialing struggle to match the rapid pace of technological innovation, political and cultural headwinds, learning—the lifelong, fluid, and personalized process of knowledge and skills acquisition—is meeting the moment at an unprecedented scale globally.

Across the K-12, higher education, and professional learning spaces, AI is supercharging this divergence and pushing instruction away from the one-size-fits-all classroom model toward hyper-specific, skills-based pathways. Learners and the job market are increasingly prioritizing real-time mastery and micro-credentials over the duration of study.

Ironically, we should anticipate that economic mobility and individual success will increasingly be measured less by traditional education compliance and more by the human skills AI cannot replicate. Traditional 'soft skills' (a term likely to disappear from our lexicon) like critical thinking, creativity, resilience, and problem-solving are vital for shaping and synthesizing AI output as well as innovating solutions to some of humanity's toughest challenges. The future will belong not merely to the educated, but to the agile and adaptive learner who is constantly curious, acquires new competencies, leverages creative intelligence, and asks better questions.

BY: EMILY EMBURY, MANAGING PARTNER, FINN GLOBAL EDUCATION PRACTICE

EDUCATION B2B COMMUNICATIONS: CULTIVATING TEACHER ADVOCACY

District and school administrators still have the final say on most purchase decisions, but teachers are gaining influence. Businesses selling K-12 products and services—especially classroom tools—need to increasingly reach and influence teachers.

In our recent survey, K-12 buyers indicated that teachers have more influence on purchase decisions than they did three years ago. We believe that this will accelerate in 2026, driven by two factors:

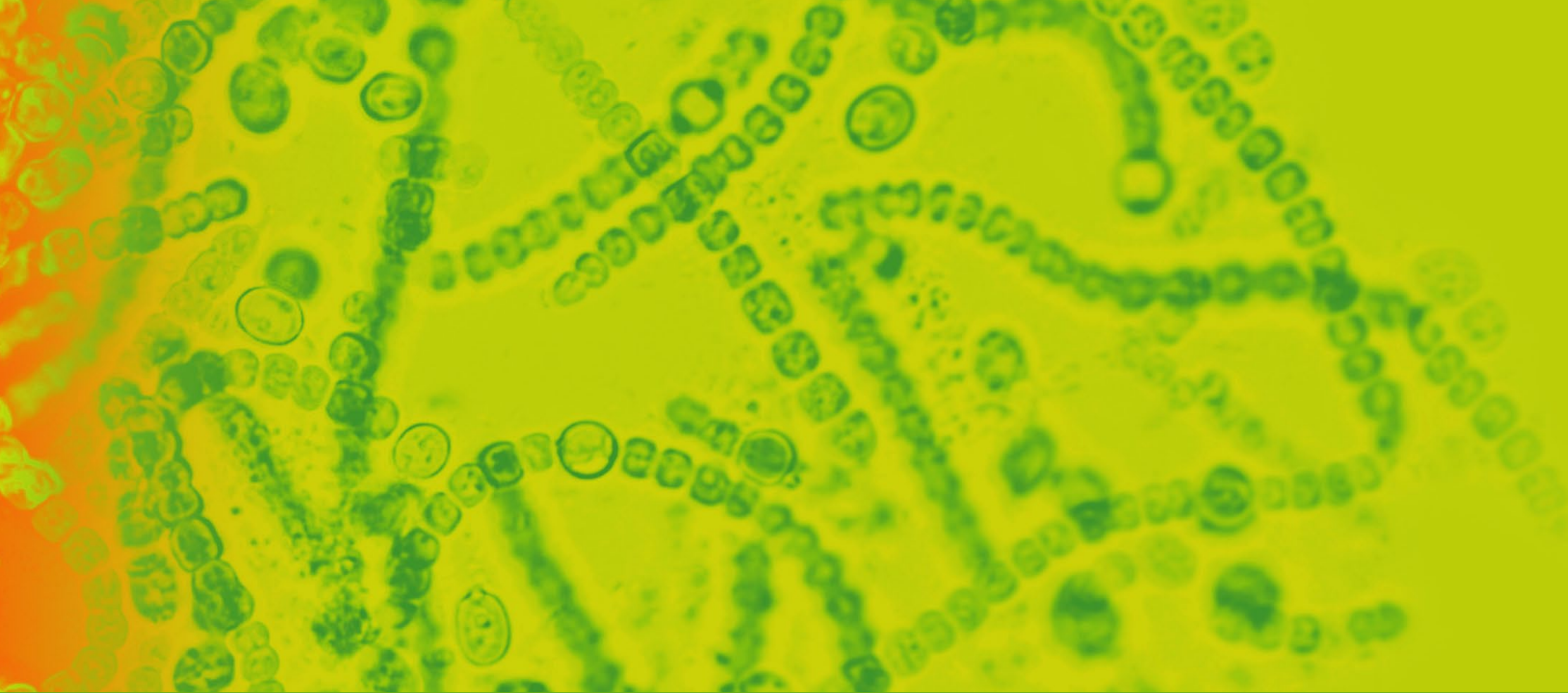
1. The ongoing teacher shortage and retention crisis, and
2. The rapid proliferation of new classroom tools, supercharged by AI.

As districts struggle to recruit and retain educators, leaders are more attuned to the impact new products have on staff job satisfaction. A top-down approach to selecting and implementing new tools is no longer an option. Companies will need to assure prospective buyers that their solutions have high teacher satisfaction and they have a seamless, proven implementation plan to avoid teacher pushback.

At the same time, the combination of Covid-funding and AI efficiencies has created an abundant marketplace of classroom tools. Teachers are racing to discover new tools, often using free versions without any guidance

or oversight from building and district leaders. Companies need to identify those under-the-radar users and leverage their enthusiasm in leadership-level sales conversations. Leaders will be more eager to consider new products if teachers are already having classroom success.

While education businesses should continue to cultivate administrator relationships, this era of teacher empowerment and fast-moving product development will require a complementary “bottom up” sales approach.



Gut health is not a new concept, but consumer interest will continue to grow in 2026, becoming a defining force in packaged food and beverage innovation. After years of focus on protein and sugar reduction, consumers are shifting their attention to how food makes them feel—energized, balanced, and resilient. The microbiome is at the center of that story.

Major brands and startups alike are reformulating around fiber, prebiotics, and fermented ingredients to support digestive and metabolic wellness. Expect to see beverages fortified with soluble fiber and snacks touting prebiotic benefits replace “high protein” as the go-to functional claim. Even frozen meals, pantry staples, and RTD coffees will lean into gut-friendly messaging, often linking fiber to better satiety and glucose control—especially relevant in the age of GLP-1 weight-management drugs.

This trend also reflects a broader “add, don’t restrict” mindset. Consumers weary of diets and ingredient bans are embracing the idea that better digestion equals better health overall. Retailers are carving out “gut-health” shelves, and social media is amplifying awareness through wellness influencers and microbiome-focused nutrition hacks.

The challenge will be execution: taste, texture, and credibility must match the promise. Brands that can integrate fiber and prebiotics seamlessly—without the “chalky” or “functional” stigma—will lead the next wave of clean, feel-good convenience foods.

In short, 2026 will be the year gut health becomes the new protein: a universal wellness currency reshaping what “healthy” means in every aisle.

APPETITE FOR
GUT HEALTH
WILL TAKE OFF
IN 2026

BY: RACHEL KAY, MANAGING PARTNER,
FINN GLOBAL CONSUMER PRACTICE

THE CALL TO ACTION FOR A REMIXED REALITY

2026 presents a challenging set of circumstances driven by the demand for swift adaptation. We are operating in a remixed reality founded upon AI, yet the human search for authenticity is the most valuable currency.

Success will belong to the agile—those who can marry machine efficiency with human creativity, emotional intelligence, and genuine substance. It is a time of implementation and integrity.

To thrive, you must:

- **Shore Up Your AI Literacy and Governance:** Transition from AI as a bolt-on tool to an operating system by building firm governance frameworks, ensuring ethical use and fluency among your marketing and communications teams.
- **Invest in the Human Flex:** Cut through the synthetic noise by prioritizing authentic connection. Make the 'imperfection of the human touch' your new proof of life and trust.
- **Shift from Reaction to Proactive Action:** Reputation management is a strategic necessity—meaning less talk and more measurable, transparent action across your entire value chain.

The industry leaders in 2026 will be those who decide today to lead not with technology alone, but with human conviction, agility, and authenticity. [Get started now.](#)

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