Your Buyer Just Hired an Agent

Sometime in late 2024, a product marketer we know—let's call her Sarah—noticed something strange in her pipeline data. Sarah ran product marketing for a mid-market analytics platform, the kind of company that sells to data teams at Fortune 2000 firms. She was good at her job. She'd built the positioning, trained the sales team, published the battlecards, ran the launches. Her funnel metrics had been steady for two years. And then, over the course of about six weeks, three things happened simultaneously.

First, her website traffic went up—but her form fills went down. More people were visiting the product pages, but fewer were downloading the white papers and requesting demos. Second, her sales team started reporting that prospects were showing up to discovery calls already knowing things they shouldn't have known—competitive pricing, technical limitations, integration details that lived in documentation Sarah's team hadn't even promoted. Third, and most unsettling, two enterprise deals closed in under three weeks. That had never happened before. The typical sales cycle for Sarah's product was eleven weeks.

Sarah's first instinct was that something was broken in the analytics. Maybe a tracking pixel had died. Maybe the CRM had hiccuped. But the data was clean. What had actually changed was something far more interesting: her buyers had started using AI agents to do the research, the comparison shopping, and the vendor pre-qualification that used to take human buying committees weeks of meetings, spreadsheets, and hallway conversations to accomplish.

The agents weren't doing anything magical. They were reading her product documentation—all of it, including the stuff buried three clicks deep that no human prospect ever found. They were pulling her pricing from G2 and Gartner Peer Insights and running it against competitors. They were synthesizing analyst reports and customer reviews into concise briefs for their human principals. They were, in effect, doing the job of a procurement analyst, a technical evaluator, and a competitive intelligence researcher all at once, and they were doing it in hours instead of weeks.
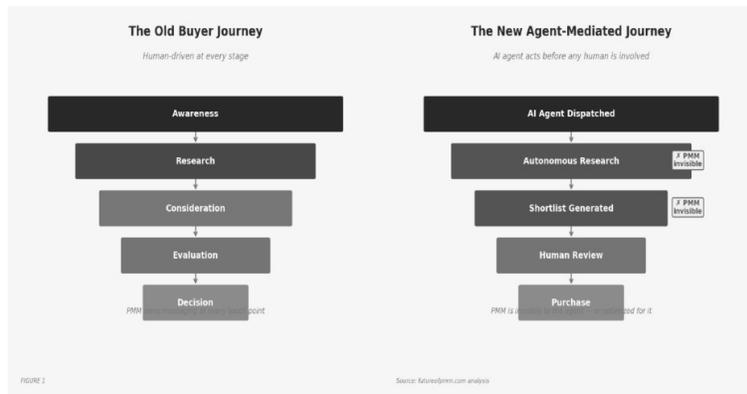
Figure 1: The Old Buyer Journey vs. The New Agent-Mediated Journey. PMMs are invisible during the stages that now matter most.

Figure 1: The Old Buyer Journey vs. The New Agent-Mediated Journey

Sarah's content hadn't changed. Her positioning hadn't changed. Her product hadn't changed. But her buyer had fundamentally changed—or rather, her buyer had hired an intermediary that didn't care about brand affinity, didn't respond to emotional storytelling, and couldn't be schmoozed over a steak dinner. And that intermediary was making decisions—or at least dramatically shaping the decisions—that determined whether Sarah's product made it to the shortlist.
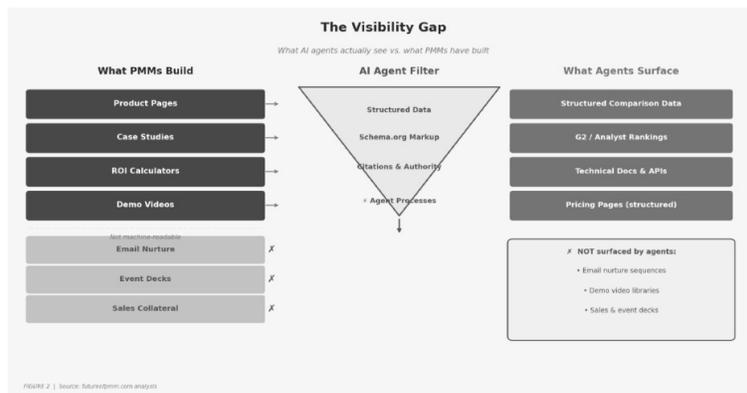

Figure 2: The Visibility Gap. Most PMM content investment is invisible to AI purchasing agents. The assets that agents weight most heavily have historically been treated as operational, not strategic.

Figure 2: The Visibility Gap

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This book is about what happens next.

If you're a product marketer—whether you carry the title of PMM, Director of Product Marketing, or VP of Go-to-Market—you already feel the

ground shifting. You've probably been told that AI will "supercharge" your workflow. You've been handed a ChatGPT license and told to figure it out. Maybe your company has an "AI task force" that meets biweekly and produces PowerPoint decks about the art of the possible. None of that is what this book is about.

This book is about the structural transformation of product marketing as a discipline. Not "how to use AI tools"—though we'll cover the tools, because you need to know what's actually good and what's vaporware. The real story is that the economics, the workflows, and the buyer dynamics that have defined product marketing for the last twenty years are all changing at once. The Pragmatic Institute has a framework with thirty-seven discrete PMM activities. Within three years, the majority of those activities will be performed primarily by AI agents—or they'll be so heavily augmented by agents that the human contribution shrinks to judgment, strategy, and taste. The PMM who could do all thirty-seven at a B-minus level was perfectly employable in 2023. By 2027, that person has been replaced by a person with an agent stack who does eight of those activities at an A-plus level and lets the machines handle the rest.

That's the "10x yourself" thesis of this book, and we want to be precise about what it means. It does not mean "work ten times faster." It means that the output gap between a PMM who has internalized the agentic shift and one who hasn't is going to widen to a factor of ten—in quality, in speed, in strategic impact. The PMM who builds an always-on competitive intelligence system that monitors fifteen competitors in real time is not just "faster" than the PMM who updates battlecards quarterly. They are operating in a fundamentally different category.

willing to state plainly: approximately six percent of B2B marketing organizations are operating in a way that is meaningfully adapted to the agentic buyer environment. The rest are somewhere on a spectrum that runs from 'unaware the transition is happening' to 'has purchased AI tools but hasn't changed the underlying strategy.' The six percent who are thriving share a specific set of characteristics — they have made all three of the moves described in Section 4 — and they are pulling away from the field in ways that will be very difficult to close once the gap compounds for another twelve months.

> "Approximately 6% of B2B marketing organizations are meaningfully adapted to the agentic buyer environment. The rest are optimizing for a buyer who no longer exists."

The PMM Readiness Spectrum

Where does your organization sit? After analyzing 180 articles over 35 editions — the distribution is clear.

Only 6% here →

Figure 3: The PMM Readiness Spectrum

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A Word About Who We Are

We've spent our careers at the intersection of data, marketing, and

enterprise software—and between us, we've seen every era of this evolution from the inside. Chris O'Hara, my co-author, was there for the DMP era—he ran global data strategy at Krux, the data management platform that Salesforce acquired in 2016. He was there for the CDP era— he co-authored the book on customer data platforms with Martin Kihn while they were both at Salesforce. And we've both been watching the agentic era take shape from inside SAP, where we lead the product marketing organization for SAP Business Data Cloud. Chris has written three books about the evolution of data-driven marketing, and every one of them was really about the same thing: what happens to business when a new data architecture changes the rules of engagement.

This time, though, the architecture isn't just changing how companies manage data—it's changing who makes decisions, how buying happens, and what it even means to "go to market." That's not a DMP-to-CDP kind of upgrade. That's a wholesale rewiring of the discipline.

As CMO of SAP Business Data Cloud, where we run one of the largest product marketing organizations in enterprise software, we bring the view from the person who has to build the team, approve the tools budget, justify the headcount, and deliver the pipeline numbers in a world where the playbook we learned is being rewritten in real time. Chris brings the practitioner's lens—he's been in the trenches across every era of data-driven marketing, from Krux to Salesforce to SAP. Together, we've tried to give you both angles: the executive's operating reality and the practitioner's playbook. The "CMO Perspective" sections throughout each chapter are where those two views converge—what each topic looks like from the leadership seat, along with the key takeaways we think matter most.

They have made three specific moves — what this chapter calls the PMM Response Framework — that, taken together, mean they are visible to the agent layer, competitive in the data layer, and irreplaceable in the narrative layer. The moves build on each other, but they can be sequenced. The mistake most organizations make is trying to start with Move 3.
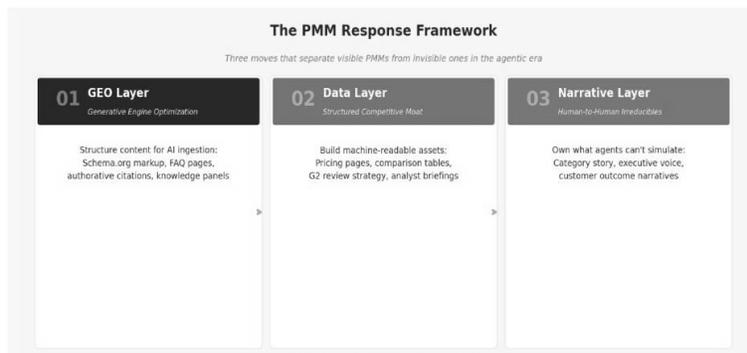
The PMM Response Framework

Three moves that separate visible PMMs from invisible ones in the agentic era

01 **GEO Layer** *Generative Engine Optimization*	02 **Data Layer** *Structured Competitive Moat*	03 **Narrative Layer** *Human-to-Human Irreducibles*
Structure content for AI ingestion: Schema.org markup, FAQ pages, authoritative citations, knowledge panels	Build machine-readable assets: Pricing pages, comparison tables, G2 review strategy, analyst briefings	Own what agents can't simulate: Category story, executive voice, customer outcome narratives

Figure 4: The PMM Response Framework

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The Structure of This Book

Part I gives you the macro context. If you've followed the evolution of enterprise data from warehouses to lakes to whatever we're calling the current thing, you'll recognize the pattern—a new data architecture emerges, it reshapes the go-to-market motion, and the marketers who ride the wave early build careers while the ones who wait get commoditized. Chapter 1 tells that story quickly. Chapter 2 takes the Pragmatic Institute's PMM framework—the closest thing the discipline has to a canonical job description—and subjects it to an honest audit. Which of those thirty-seven activities are about to be automated? Which ones become radically more efficient? And which ones become more valuable precisely because they're the activities that machines can't do?

Part II is the meat of the book. Eight chapters, each covering a major cluster of PMM activities: competitive intelligence, positioning and messaging, sales enablement, content and thought leadership, demos and product storytelling, pricing and packaging, launch management, and analyst relations. Each chapter follows the same basic pattern: here's how the activity works today, here's what changes when agents enter the picture, and here's what the best PMMs are already doing about it. These chapters are practical. Named tools, real workflows, specific guidance you can take into your Monday morning. They're also grounded in stories—real people at real companies solving real problems, because that's how we've always approached things and because abstractions are where good advice goes to die.

Part III zooms out to the organizational level. How do you build a PMM tech stack that's actually coherent? What skills should you be developing—and which ones should you stop worrying about? How should a CMO structure a product marketing team in 2027? And what does the PMM career look like in five years—is it bigger or smaller, more strategic or more operational, more specialized or more generalist?

Every chapter in Part II also includes a "Pragmatic Remix"—a mapping back to the specific Pragmatic Institute activities that the chapter addresses, showing concretely which activities are automated, augmented, or elevated. If you're a Pragmatic-certified PMM, you'll see your training reflected back at you through an agentic lens. If you're not, you'll learn the framework as you go.

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One More Thing Before We Start

This book was written with AI.

Not in the way you might think. We didn't hand Claude a prompt and publish what came back. But we used AI tools extensively in the research, the synthesis, the competitive analysis, and the early drafting of every

chapter. We did this deliberately, because the thesis of the book demands it. If we're going to tell you that a product marketer can 10x themselves with the right agent stack, we should probably demonstrate what that looks like. The stories are ours. The judgment is ours. The bad jokes are definitely ours. But the process of creating this book is itself an example of the agentic workflow we're describing—and we think being transparent about that is more honest than pretending we wrote every word in a cabin in Vermont with nothing but a legal pad and a pot of coffee.

Alright. Let's get into it.

THE CMO PERSPECTIVE

The conversation about AI inside marketing departments right now is almost entirely wrong. It's focused on efficiency—how do we produce the same outputs with fewer people, or the same people in less time. That's a CFO question, not a CMO question. The CMO question—the one we wrote this book to answer—is how do we produce fundamentally different outputs? How do we shift from quarterly competitive reviews to continuous intelligence? How do we move from static messaging frameworks to dynamic positioning that adapts to what agents are surfacing in real time?

What we've seen firsthand, running a product marketing organization of fifty-plus people at SAP, is that the PMMs who are thriving aren't the ones who adopted AI tools first. They're the ones who rethought their workflows first and then found the tools that matched. That distinction matters, and it's one of the organizing principles of everything that follows. Throughout this book, we'll toggle between the practitioner's view and the executive view—what a 10x PMM looks like from the inside and what a CMO is looking for when they see it happening.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The agentic shift is a structural transformation of the PMM discipline, not just a toolkit upgrade.
- Buyer behavior has already changed—AI agents are compressing research cycles from weeks to hours.
- The "10x" thesis isn't about speed. It's about the widening output gap between PMMs who internalize the shift and those who don't.
- This book covers every core PMM activity through the lens of what's automated, what's augmented, and what becomes more irreducibly human.