

# Francesco Federico

## *Pre-Approved Q&A for Press, Podcast, and Stage*

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### **01. What does “agentic” actually mean — and why does the distinction matter?**

Agentic AI is software that perceives, decides, acts, and learns within bounded autonomy. The distinction matters because the operating models, governance, and skills required to deploy agents differ from those required to deploy tools. Treating an agent as a tool is the most common, and most expensive, organisational mistake of this decade.

### **02. What is the central argument of The Agentic CMO?**

Marketing leaders are buying AI capability faster than they are redesigning the function that consumes it. The result is pilot purgatory — small wins, no compounding, no return that scales. The book argues that the gap is organisational, not technological. Operating model, governance, and skill mix come first; tools come last.

### **03. Why a second edition so soon?**

The first edition was published in June 2025. By the end of that year, three things had changed enough to require a rewrite: the cost curve of frontier models, the maturity of agent orchestration, and the regulatory posture in Europe and the United States. The original frame held. The implementation detail did not.

### **04. What is the most common mistake CMOs make with AI right now?**

They run procurement before they run organisational design. They buy a stack, then ask the team to absorb it. The successful pattern is the opposite: redesign the workflow, define the human-agent split, set the governance — then buy. Three CMOs in five tell me they regret the order.

### **05. How does this differ from the wave of AI marketing books from 2023 and 2024?**

Most of those books were about prompts. The Agentic CMO is about the operating model around the prompts. Prompts are a craft skill. Operating models are an executive responsibility. Confusing the two is why so many marketing functions are stuck.

#### **06. What is the Crawl-Walk-Run framework?**

A phased implementation methodology. Crawl: a single bounded use case with named owners and visible metrics. Walk: a connected portfolio of agents inside one workflow. Run: a redesigned operating model with embedded governance. Most organisations skip Crawl, fail at Walk, and call themselves Run.

#### **07. Cited. is a different kind of book. What is the through-line?**

The Agentic CMO is about the inside of the marketing function. Cited. is about the outside — what the world's AI assistants say about your brand when you are not in the room. The through-line is the same: discipline beats hype. Generative engine optimisation is not magic. It is a set of named techniques applied with rigour.

#### **08. What changes for the marketing function in the next two years?**

Three shifts. First, marketing operations becomes the most valuable team in the function — they build the orchestration layer. Second, brand teams shift from production to direction; the agents produce, the humans curate. Third, the CMO role widens to include AI governance as a first-order responsibility. The function shrinks in headcount and grows in influence.

#### **09. What separates the marketing leaders who get this right from those who do not?**

They run AI as a transformation programme, not a procurement exercise. They have a named owner. They have a written operating model. They have a governance baseline. They have a visible roadmap. None of this is exotic. It is the same discipline that has separated good operators from bad operators for thirty years — applied to a new substrate.

#### **10. What is the biggest risk you see ahead?**

Hollowing out. Companies cut headcount before they have built the orchestration capability to replace it. Output quality collapses, brand integrity erodes, and the cost saving turns negative inside eighteen months. The risk is real and is already visible in two or three Fortune 500 marketing functions I will not name.

#### **11. What do you tell CMOs who feel behind?**

Catch up by design, not by speed. Map your function. Pick one workflow that matters. Run it Crawl-Walk-Run with a named owner. Do that well in ninety days and you have lapped the half of the market still in workshops.

## **12. You are an Italian operating in London at an American firm — does the European perspective shape the argument?**

It shapes the regulatory chapters and the governance posture. European marketers have lived with GDPR for seven years; the AI Act is a similar shape of problem. The argument otherwise is global. Marketing as a function, and AI as a substrate, are not bounded by jurisdiction.

## **13. What is the role of Chronicles of Change in all this?**

It is the laboratory. The newsletter is where ideas are tested in front of fifteen thousand senior practitioners every week before they end up in a book. If a thesis survives that audience, it goes into the manuscript. If it does not, it dies in public — which is the right place for it to die.

## **14. What is next for you?**

Cited. publishes later this year. Then a third book on the redesign of the broader commercial function — sales, marketing, customer success — under hybrid intelligence. The thesis is already drafted. The evidence is the next eighteen months of practice.