



Editorial: “We’re building a Cathedral...”

Re-editing the popular metaphor about the three workers in a rock quarry who were each asked “what are you doing?” we can look at the CM3A as merely 100 students working on 20 projects and two events per year, and advancing three research papers for publication, and reply quite simply “we’re cutting stones,” or we can consider the over 7,000 students and 360 classes at Rutgers involved in experiential learning and community engagement and claim “we’re making blocks,” or we can look at the big picture, to be contained in the upcoming article “Experiential Learning at Rutgers: Measuring impact and projecting best practices,” and say proudly “we’re building a Cathedral” that will reach 2,000,000 students nationwide, involve 100,000 classes, and benefit over 500,000 nonprofit organizations, firms, and government agencies. Indeed, our first impact metrics are extremely encouraging. The students give us mostly A’s; 94.2% of our clients want long-term relationships with Rutgers; and even our faculty evaluations spiked over 24 points. With the EL/CE strategy mapping process in full-swing at New Brunswick, we hope to create a blueprint for other colleges and universities to bring the real world into the classroom and push their students career skills to new heights. An experiential learning and community engagement badge or certificate should represent a quantum in their job readiness.

Come join us on this wonderful journey!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Francisco J. Quevedo". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a long, sweeping underline.

Francisco J. Quevedo
Executive Director

Feedback: Experiential learning at Rutgers: Student Metrics

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (<https://www.nacweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/career-readiness-defined/>) proposes a composite indicator for measuring the impact of experiential learning that covers from career readiness to critical thinking to the development of technical skills. Using a scale of 1 to 5, we ran a survey among the students that took project-based classes; the scale scored the equivalent of 91.6% on the reliability index (Cronbach's Alpha), with near perfect statistical significance, as shown on the tables below, and obtained the following initial metrics:

NACE Criteria

- **Career readiness:** **4.63**
- **Communication skills:** **4.61**
- **Critical thinking:** **4.73**
- **DEI intelligence:** **4.44**
- **Leadership skills:** **4.56**
- **Teambuilding:** **4.54**
- **Professionalism:** **4.63**
- **Technical skills:** **4.59**
- **Recommends EL:** **4.66**

Survey Statistics

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.915	9

Model Summary^a

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.707 ^a	.499	.374	.548	2.136

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9.597	8	1.200	3.990	.002 ^b
	Residual	9.622	32	.301		
	Total	19.220	40			

a. Dependent Variable: Please rate your degree of agreement or disagreement with the

When converted to percentages, the results show that 93.2% of students would recommend experiential learning classes, while critical thinking earned an impressive 94.6%. These findings are especially encouraging, as they represent our first set of survey metrics.

For our next survey, we will include additional questions to measure student satisfaction and perceived value. We will also report separate indicators for undergraduate students, who represented 68% of this survey's sample. We will continue striving to improve these metrics across the board.

The CM3A at Work: Summer 2026 Projects

This is the first time we take on Summer projects. Although we have guided Independent Studies into publication, time constraints had kept us from bringing clients into the classroom during these months. However, we are off to a great start with two:

- **Businesses:**

- **PeDul:** <https://pedul.com/>

- *PeDul is an alternative to traditional employment portals, it helps employers earn attention and trust from modern talent by transforming social distribution into a scalable hiring advantage.*

- **Nonprofits:**

- **LAEDA:** <https://laeda.com/>

- *The Latin American Economic Development Association is an incubator of new businesses and entrepreneurs.*

Our Summer projects were structured as follows:

I. Due Process:

1. Discovery meetings and orientation
2. Market research
 - a. Segmentation and target definition
 - b. Benchmarking and best practice analysis

II. Fieldwork:

1. Interviews and/or focus groups
 - a. Choice, satisfaction, and retention criteria
2. Validation Survey

III. Analysis and Recommendations:

1. Discussion and validation of findings
2. Strategic recommendations

IV. Deployment (optional): Fall semester

1. 12-month AOP (Annual Operating Plan): Kick-off



Thank you for giving our students the opportunity to learn experientially, and kudos to the teams for their fine work.

Spotlight: *Intuitive Advertising* ***by Francisco J. Quevedo, DPS***

Abstract

Consumers decisions are mostly **intuitive**, but when their choices and preferences are challenged or questioned in any way, consumers will tend to defend decisions by rationalizing what were from the beginning quick follow-your-nose choices. However, in spite of this, advertisers insist on following 20th Century models of consumer behavior, based on the logic of consumption, thereby wasting as much as **\$667 billion** annually (worldwide) trying to argue against gut-feelings.



Marketers should aim instead at triggering quick decision-making up front, focusing on **cues** and **symbols** more than words and arguments, using rational criteria only to support otherwise intuitive choices, if deemed necessary, in a way to help customers justify their preferences post-facto, rather than focusing on logic first. This paradigm shift might be the key to future marketing communications success.

Quevedo, F. J., & Gopalakrishna, P. (2026). Intuitive Advertising. Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 9(3), 01-09.

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Francisco-Quevedo/publication/403880507_Intuitive_Advertising/links/69e0d5d92fdc6418cb6b42d2/Intuitive-Advertising.pdf

CM3A Tips: *Should we disallow the use of AI in the classroom, or teach it?*

There is growing debate in academia about the uses and abuse of AI on the part of students. Some professors question whether they should be allowed to use it or not. Immigration agents monitor generic content, frequently issuing RFEs or denying applications that rely too heavily on "slop" AI drafts. Even The Vatican has called for controlling it.

We would ask instead, why not teach them to use it better and more effectively, as part of the college experience? The job market will demand graduates to use AI in ways they cannot imagine. Consider Analytics, as an example, they require well-developed skills handling IBM SPSS, R, Tableau, Amos, and other tools. If teaching them is our responsibility, will universities send them off to work without the skills to handle the tools they'll need, like Gemini, ChatGPT, Claude, and others, or will we just let them teach themselves?

AI seems unstoppable, and soon will become indispensable. It is a time-saving tool that knows more than any of us. It might not be intuitive, it may be naive at times, but properly prompted, it can be immensely productive. It is our job to validate the outcome, and we must teach students how. The same message applies to your workers. Do not let them use it without knowing how to use it properly!



References:

- Kapoor, M. (2026) The largest study of AI use by undergrads is in, revealing disparities in access — and in cheating. UC Berkeley News
- Investor Visas PC (2026). USCIS AI: How Government Bots are Reading Your Petitions.
- Legal Group (2026). USCIS Artificial Intelligence: What It's Doing to Your Immigration Case Right Now.
- Reuters (2026) Pope Leo urges AI regulation and warns that some weapons are now beyond human control. CNBC.

The Academic Corner: *The AI Inflection Point: Navigating Ambiguity, Authenticity, and Activism in the New Marketing Paradigm* by Can Uslay, Ph.D.

It is no exaggeration to state that marketing is evolving at a breakneck pace, much faster than other business disciplines such as accounting, finance, or supply chain management. While a balance sheet or a logistical route operates on relatively stable, enduring principles, marketing sits at the volatile intersection of consumer psychology, cultural shifts, and bleeding-edge technology. Today, as SEO (search engine optimization) gets overtaken by AEO (AI engine optimization), the rules of engagement are being rewritten, rendering traditional playbooks obsolete almost overnight.

As a potential remedy to this dizzying change, and to critically reskill on the latest and greatest applications of AI for both strategic research and classroom pedagogy, I spent the first week of June embedded in the industry. Through the Visiting Professor residency program in NYC, superbly organized by the Association of National Advertisers (ANA) Educational Foundation (AEF), I had the privilege of looking under the hood of the modern marketing machine.

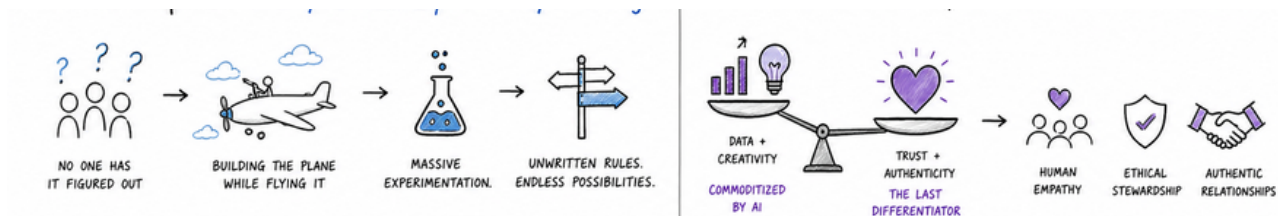
Over five intensive days, we visited and heard from industry leaders at Proto, McCann, Amazon, Horizon Media, the NFL, Mastercard, iHeartMedia, IBM, and Google. We received incredible insights, reviewed candid case studies, and witnessed startling demos. While the technological capabilities were awe-inspiring, the true value of the residency lay in the strategic undertones. Below are my top three takeaways for the future of our discipline:



1. The Great Equalizer: Nobody Knows Exactly What They Are Doing

Perhaps the most refreshing and terrifying realization is this: nobody has it all figured out. Everyone is exploring. There is an illusion from the outside that tech giants and mega-agencies possess a crystalline roadmap for GenAI integration. The reality is much more akin to entrepreneurial bricolage, building the plane while flying it.

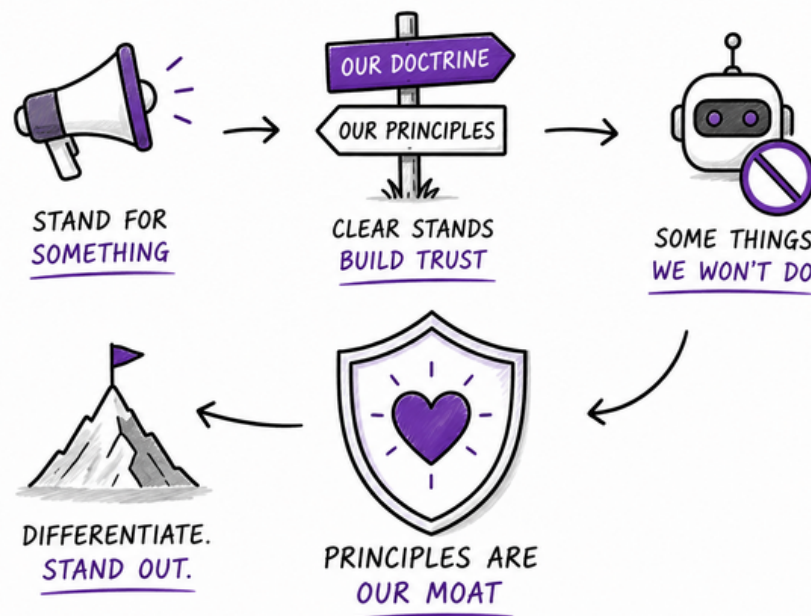
Industry leaders are in a phase of massive experimentation. The traditional boundaries of what constitutes an agency, a tech vendor, or a media platform are blurring. This widespread ambiguity shouldn't induce panic; rather, it should be viewed as an invitation. In an era where the rules are unwritten, agility and a willingness to test, fail, and iterate are vastly more valuable than rigid adherence to legacy models.



2. The Commoditization of Competence: Trust as the Ultimate Differentiator

Historically, the twin pillars of marketing excellence have been quantitative rigor (data analytics, programmatic targeting) and creative genius (copywriting, design). AI is rapidly turning not only the former but also the latter into table stakes. In a world where AI is taking over most structured tasks, quantitative skills are no longer the ultimate moat. Even more surprisingly, neither is baseline creativity. While perhaps difficult to admit, independent judges increasingly rate AI-generated outputs as matching or exceeding human performance on various standardized creative tasks. When infinite, highly targeted, and aesthetically pleasing content can be generated at negligible marginal cost, what is left for the marketer?

The answer is trust and authenticity. Except for the top echelons in a given craft—the rare visionaries whose lived experiences inform paradigm shifts—the mechanics of marketing are being commoditized. The premium now lies in human empathy, ethical stewardship, and the authentic relationships a brand cultivates with its stakeholders. If AI can fake everything, authenticity becomes the most precious asset on a balance sheet.



3. Principled Stands: Activism and Doctrine as Strategic Moats

When tactical execution is outsourced to algorithms, a brand's foundational doctrine becomes its primary defense mechanism. As laid out in *Navigating Brand Activism* (Sheth and Uslay 2025), a brand is no longer just what it sells; it is what it stands for. Marketing doctrines, brand manifestos, and principled stands are evolving from corporate communications exercises into essential survival tools.

Consider the case of iHeartMedia, which has taken a firm stance by refusing to air any AI-generated content, even if developed and paid for by advertisers. In a sea of synthetic media, this friction is a feature, not a bug. By drawing a hard line in the sand, they are leveraging their marketing doctrine to differentiate and stand out from the competition. It is a powerful reminder that sometimes, what a brand refuses to do is more defining than what it embraces.

Primary Implications for Marketing Business Leaders

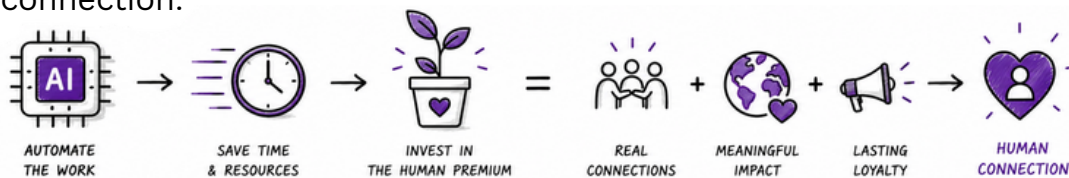
The transition from a labor-centric marketing model to an AI-augmented one requires a fundamental shift in leadership philosophy. To navigate this inflection point, leaders must internalize the following:

Shift from Doing to Curating and Editing: Leaders and their teams must pivot from being primary creators of content and analysis to becoming elite arbiters of taste, accuracy, and brand alignment. The value of a marketer will now be found in the quality of the prompt and the critical evaluation of the output.

Codify the Brand Manifesto: If autonomous agents and AI tools are going to be making micro-decisions on behalf of your brand thousands of times a second, your brand doctrine must be explicitly codified. Vague mission statements will result in schizophrenic AI outputs. Executives must establish non-negotiable guardrails, like iHeartMedia's AI content refusal, which dictate how AI is allowed to represent the firm.

Invest Heavily in the Human Premium: Automation will inevitably lead to efficiency, but efficiency does not equal connection. Leaders must reinvest the time and capital saved by AI into hyper-authentic, high-touch human experiences. Whether through community building, high-stakes experiential learning, or tri-sector social impact initiatives (Amin et al 2024), the future of mainstream brand loyalty belongs to those who use AI to scale operations but use humans to scale the soul.

Bottom Line: Marketing is moving incredibly fast, but the ultimate destination hasn't changed. We are trading old tools for new ones to solve the eternal challenge of human connection.



A Crucial Bonus Caveat: Experimentation will inevitably lead to rationalization: I attended a different event organized by FuseMachines earlier this week where I mentioned that while GenAI is constantly improving, it is not yet where we need it to be for critical tasks. As our research indicates, we found it to be inconsistent, only about 80% accurate for True-False questions, and much worse when it has to disconfirm a user's premise (Cicek et al. 2025). Other participants shared cases of executives burning through hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of tokens just to perform menial tasks. These costs are currently being written off as the cost of adoption or experimentation. At some point, a not-so-radical concept will weave its way in—rationalization, aka ROI expectations. That is when we'll see the bubble burst and market convergence take its toll (Sheth and Uslay 2020).

References:

- Amin, Anjali, John Impellizzeri, and Can Uslay (2024), "Unlocking Macro-Value Through the Tri-Sector Mindset: The Case of the NJ CEO Council," Rutgers Business Review, 9 (2), 190-201.
- Cicek, Mesut, Sevincgul Ulu, Can Uslay, and Kate Karniouchina (2025), "Unstable Intelligence: GenAI Struggles with Accuracy and Consistency," Rutgers Business Review, 10 (2), 266-277.
- Sheth, Jagdish N., Can Uslay, and Rajendra S. Sisodia (2020), The Global Rule of Three: Competing with Conscious Strategy, Palgrave MacMillan.
- Sheth, Jagdish N., and Can Uslay (2025), Navigating Brand Activism, Routledge.

F.Y.I.: Rutgers News and Upcoming Events

Make time in your agenda for one or more of these activities:

- **ATS Office Hours: Hands-On Help with Canvas & Classroom Tools**
 - Date and Time: Fri, July 31, 2026, 10am to 11am
 - Location: Newark Office
- **Rutgers Community Arts Summer Camps**
 - Date and Time: Monday, July 06, 2026, 12:00 a.m.-Sunday, July 26, 2026, 12:00 p.m.
 - Location: TBA
- **Alternative Summer '26 Break Puerto Rico**
 - Sun, Jul 12-18, 2026 9am to 10pm
- **SOAR (Student Orientation Advisement & Registration)**
 - Fri, Jul 17, 2026 7:30am to 4:30pm
 - Fri, Aug 7, 2026 7:30am to 4:30pm
 - 350 Martin Luther King Boulevard, Newark, NJ, 7102
- **World Cup Watch Party at The Yard: Final**
 - Sunday, July 19, 2026, 3:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m
 - The Yard, New Brunswick
- **Fresh Roots: FREE Produce Distribution**
 - Wed, Jul 8, 2026 11am to 2pm,
 - Wed, Jul 22, 2026 11am to 2pm,
 - Wed, August 12, 2026 11am to 2pm
 - 350 Martin Luther King Boulevard, Newark, NJ 7102
- **New Jersey Film Festival (Fall 2026)**
 - Date and Time: September – October 2026 (Fridays and Sundays), 5:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m.
 - Location: Voorhees Hall #105, College Avenue Campus, New Brunswick
- **2nd Marketing Career Day**
 - Date and Time: October 23, 2026, XX:00 p.m.-xx p.m.
 - Location: 100 Rock, 2nd floor lounge and meeting rooms
- **9th Annual Marketing Summit**
 - Date and Time:, November 13th, 08:00 a.m.– 04:00 p.m.
 - Location: 1WP 7th Floor, Newark



Why Partner with Rutgers CM3A?:

If **93.2%** of our students recommend taking experiential classes, **94.2%** of our clients among businesses, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies would want long-term relationships with Rutgers. A survey launched at the end of the Spring semester showed the following metrics, based on a 1 to 5 scale:

- | | |
|-------------------------|------|
| 1. Quality and value: | 4.53 |
| 2. Applicability: | 4.53 |
| 3. Professionalism: | 4.72 |
| 4. Time demands: | 4.53 |
| 5. Price/Quality ratio: | 4.72 |
| 6. Technology: | 4.43 |



These client-centric metrics are highly encouraging and motivate us to reinforce our experiential learning efforts. Indeed, we are helping the Vice-Chancellor's Office (New Brunswick) create a strategy map that brings together close to 100 faculty members who are in some way or another involved in the process. We hope to present and publish "**Experiential Learning at Rutgers: Measuring impact, and projecting best practices**" early next year.

Come join us in this wonderful journey. If you have a business, nonprofit, community, or government project to propose, please write us via cm3a@business.rutgers.edu.

Let's connect via:



Feedback: Please send us your comments and events via cm3a@business.rutgers.edu

The RBS Center for Marketing Advantage, Advancement, and Action (CM3A)

<https://www.business.rutgers.edu/cm3a>