

# Call for Papers: Customer Relationships in an Age of Generative AI – Special Issue of Registered Reports

Martin Klarmann and Udo Wagner

It has been less than ten years since we (could have) learned that “Attention is all you need” (Vaswani et al. 2017) to enable a gigantic leap in the performance of machine learning algorithms for analyzing and interpreting all types of human creative output. Coupled with the increasing availability of data for machine learning – possibly accelerated through the sharp increase in digital activities during the Covid 19 pandemic – this has made algorithms possible that can generate text, visuals, and sound at a fantastic quality.

Only future generations will be able to honestly tell whether these new algorithms are nothing more than “Stochastic Parrots” (Bender et al. 2021) or whether Sam Altman’s (2025) prediction will be accurate that they are the stepping stone needed for reaching “Gentle Singularity”. However, it is clear already that the advent of generative AI strongly affects how firms interact with their customers. Examples are everywhere:

- The costs of creating highly personalized content have dramatically decreased – opening paths to something some of our clever students call “hyper-personalization.”
- Creating creative content for advertising or customer information can become highly automated – marketers becoming content controllers instead of content creators.
- Interactions with customers in sales and service processes can be delegated to chatbots or video avatars, providing new flexibility and availability at the cost of reducing human-to-human interaction.
- New forms of customer co-creation become possible because customers can experiment with virtual prototypes much more easily, for instance, by visualizing changes in the setting of their choice (e.g., testing out a new look in a Gen AI mirror). Coupled with AI-enabled, faster innovation cycles, this can accelerate product lifecycles and fashions.

In sum, these new possibilities allow firms to improve their customer relationships. However, these innovations also raise important questions about trust, privacy, ethics, and the evolving role of the customer in the marketing process. Will customers respond to AI content in the same manner as they respond to “authentic” human content? Will relationships become more fragile if human-to-human interaction is replaced with human-to-bot interaction? Will the importance of brands increase – in a world where it becomes more challenging to trust messages?

Therefore, this special issue of Marketing ZFP: Journal of Research and Management (<https://rsw.beck.de/zeitsschriften/marketing>) invites submissions that explore questions surrounding firm-customer relationships in the age of generative AI. It is open to a broad set of topics embracing diverse perspectives on B2B or B2C relationships, reflecting the opportunities and challenges of this technological revolution.

We ask authors interested in contributing to this special issue to do so in the form of a registered report (e.g., Bricker and Gerpott 2024). Registered reports are a publishing format in which the study protocol – including research questions, hypotheses, and methods – is peer-reviewed and accepted “in principle” before data collection begins. In doing so, we believe that such a process ensures that publication is based on the rigor of the methodology rather than the results, reducing publication bias. Initial evidence suggests that registered reports may be effective in this regard (Soderberg et al. 2021).

Specifically, when submitting such a registered report to Marketing ZFP, we ask authors to adhere to the guidelines for registered reports developed for the “Nature” journals (“Registered Reports Nature Human Behaviour” n.d.). More details on our policy regarding registered reports can be found in the *editorial of Marketing ZFP* 47 (2).

The deadline for submitting first-stage proposals for this special issue is **December 1, 2025**. To submit your manuscript, please email it to [martin.klarmann@kit.edu](mailto:martin.klarmann@kit.edu). We aim to provide reviewer responses in January 2026 and final decisions on the first stage proposals in March 2026. We intend to publish this Special Issue at the end of 2026, giving authors about six months to conduct the experimental study described in the registered report and write up the results. If you are unsure about whether your research idea fits our special issue, please feel free to email us at [martin.klarmann@kit.edu](mailto:martin.klarmann@kit.edu) or [udo.wagner@univie.ac](mailto:udo.wagner@univie.ac).

## References

- Altman, S. (2025). “The Gentle Singularity.” *Sam Altman*. <https://blog.samaltman.com/the-gentle-singularity>.
- Bender, E. M., Timnit Gebru, McMillan-Major, A., & Shmargaret Shmitchell. (2021). “On the Dangers of Stochastic Parrots: Can Language Models Be Too Big?” In *Proceedings of the 2021 ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency*, 610–23. FAccT ’21. New York, NY, USA: Association for Computing Machinery. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3442188.3445922>.

Briker, Roman, & Fabiola H. Gerpott. (2024). "Publishing Registered Reports in Management and Applied Psychology: Common Beliefs and Best Practices." *Organizational Research Methods* 27 (4): 588–620. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10944281231210309>.

"Registered Reports Nature Human Behaviour." n.d. Accessed June 11, 2025. <https://www.nature.com/nathumbehav/submission-guidelines/registeredreports>.

Soderberg, C. K., Timothy M. Errington, S. R. Schiavone, Julia Bottesini, Felix Singleton Thorn, Simine Vazire, Kevin M. Es-

terling, & Brian A. Nosek. (2021). "Initial Evidence of Research Quality of Registered Reports Compared with the Standard Publishing Model." *Nature Human Behaviour* 5 (8): 990–97. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-021-01142-4>.

Vaswani, Ashish, Noam Shazeer, Niki Parmar, Jakob Uszkoreit, Llion J., Aidan N Gomez, Łukasz Kaiser, & Illia Polosukhin. (2017). "Attention Is All You Need." In *Advances in Neural Information Processing Systems*. Vol. 30. Curran Associates, Inc. <https://proceedings.neurips.cc/paper/2017/hash/3f5ee243547de91fbd053c1c4a845aa-Abstract.html>.

ISSN 0344-1369

**MARKETING**  
ZFP – Journal of Research and Management

**Editors-in-Chief:** Prof. Dr. Martin Klarmann, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT), Institute for Customer Insights (CIN), Kaiserstraße 12, D-79181 Karlsruhe, Germany, Phone: +49 721 608 43726  
Prof. Dr. Udo Wagner, Modul University, School of International Management, Am Kahlenberg 1, A-1190 Wien, Austria, Phone: +43 1 320 3555 431  
E-Mail: [marketing-zfp@beck.de](mailto:marketing-zfp@beck.de)

**Senior Editors:** Prof. Dr. Daniel Baier, University of Bayreuth, Prof. Dr. Yasemin Boztuğ, University of Göttingen, Prof. Dr. Heribert Gierl, University of Augsburg, Prof. Dr. Andrea Gröppel-Klein, Saarland University, Prof. Dr. Lutz Hildebrandt, Humboldt-University of Berlin, Prof. Dr. Joerg Koenigstorfer, Technical University of Munich, Prof. Dr. Hans Mühlbacher, International University of Monaco, Prof. Dr. Henrik Sattler, University of Hamburg, Prof. Dr. Bernhard Swoboda, University of Trier, Prof. Dr. Dirk Temme, University of Wuppertal.

**Manuscripts:** We ask all authors who would like to submit a paper to send this paper to the Editor-in-Chief Martin Klarmann and Udo Wagner via email: [marketing-zfp@beck.de](mailto:marketing-zfp@beck.de). Neither the publisher nor the editors assume any liability for unsolicited manuscripts. Unsolicited manuscripts will only be returned if accompanied by return

postage. The acceptance of a contribution has to be in writing.

**Copyright:** Upon acceptance for publication the author transfers to C.H.Beck the exclusive copyright of his or her contribution for the duration of the copyright as laid down by law. The copyright covers the exclusive right and licence to reproduce, publish, distribute and archive the article in all forms and media of expression now known or developed in the future, including reprints, translations, photographic reproductions, microform, electronic form (offline and online) or any other reproduction of similar nature. The author's second window right after the expiry of 12 months after first publication, as laid down in article 38/4) German Copyright Law, remains unaffected. All articles published in this journal are protected by copyright law. Without first obtaining permission from the publisher, no material published in this journal may be reproduced, distributed, performed or displayed publicly, or made accessible or stored in electronic databases or reproduced, distributed or utilized electronically, outside the narrow limitations of copyright law. The Publisher also reserves the right to use the work for automated analysis including, but not limited to, patterns, trends and correlations.

**Publisher:** C.H.Beck GmbH & Co. KG, Wilhelmstraße 9, 80801 Munich, Germany; postal address: Postfach 40 03 40, 80703 Munich, Germany; [www.beck.de](http://www.beck.de); phone: +49 (0)89 3 81 89-0, fax: +49 (0)89 3 81 89-398, [info@beck.de](mailto:info@beck.de)  
Bank account: Postbank München IBAN: DE82 7001 0080 0006 2298 02, BIC: PBNKDEFFXXX  
Registration Court (Registergericht): Local Court of Munich (Amtsgericht München), HRA 48045

Managing partners: Dr. Klaus Weber and Dr. Christian Kopp, Local Court of Munich, HRB 43483.

**Subscription:** An annual subscription to the journal comprises four issues.

**Subscription rates 2025:** € 305 (VAT incl.) annual subscription rate, campus licence € 459 (VAT incl.). Single Issue: € 93 (VAT incl.), shipping charges have to be added to the rates. Subscription and rate include print issue and a licence for the online archive. The components cannot be cancelled separately. Complaints about copies not received must be lodged within 6 weeks starting at the end of the quarter. Information on price increases are available in the beck-shop general terms and conditions (AGB) under 10.4.

**Subscription service:** Please order with either the publisher or any book shop.

**CustomerServiceCenter:** Phone: +49 89 38189 750, Fax: +49 89 38189 358, E-Mail: [kundenservice@beck.de](mailto:kundenservice@beck.de)

**Cancellation:** The subscription may be cancelled in writing 6 weeks before the end of a calendar year.

**Citation:** Marketing ZFP – Journal of Research and Management, number of volume(number of issue), year, page.

**Typesetting:** FotoSatz Pfeifer GmbH, 82110 Germering.

**Printing:** Druckerei C.H.Beck Nördlingen (publisher's address).

 **myclimate**  
shape our future  
[chibeck.de/nachhaltig](http://chibeck.de/nachhaltig)  
[produktsicherheit.beck.de](http://produktsicherheit.beck.de)