



AAPC Member Views on Artificial Intelligence in 2024

A Study for the AAPC Foundation

AI is transforming political consulting, with members leveraging it to save time, enhance creativity, and streamline operations. Creative professionals are leading adoption, using AI for drafting content, generating visuals, and even voiceovers. While optimism is high, concerns remain over accuracy, ethical misuse, data ownership, and the challenge of integration. Despite these, AI is broadly seen as an enduring and evolving tool; not a job threat but a force multiplier. Looking ahead, consultants anticipate a surge in AI's role in media production and business strategy, with 2026 marking broader adoption and 2028 promising expanded use in predictive analytics and modeling.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Rapid but uneven adoption. Eighty-six percent of members have already tried AI for campaign work, with 59% using it at least weekly and one-third (34%) using it daily. ChatGPT dwarfs all other tools, while Gemini, Canva and Copilot form a distant second tier. Usage skews toward drafting, brainstorming and research, motivated chiefly by efficiency; non-users mostly cite lack of know-how or discomfort with the technology.

2. Perceived impact today and tomorrow. A bare majority (52%) say AI played a significant or moderate role in the 2024 cycle, but only 9% saw it as “very significant.” Looking ahead, 41% expect AI to “fundamentally transform” campaigning, while 54% foresee it becoming a useful, but not revolutionary, tool. GOP consultants (58% vs. 45% of Democrats) and heavy AI users (65% among daily users) are more likely to say AI helped shape 2024 and forecast a transformational future.

3. Ethics hierarchy takes shape. Consultants draw a bright line around undisclosed synthetic content. For example, 96% label undisclosed fictional voter testimonials unethical, and 90% reject undisclosed context-changing edits to video. By contrast, 77% deem minimal, disclosed edits ethical, and 85% accept AI-optimized ads trained on past campaign data. Disclosure consistently makes borderline practices more acceptable. In addition to accuracy and reliability, consultants are most concerned about using AI to deceive voters.

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Interviewees reaffirm that the main appeal of AI is to off-load drudgery and accelerate creative drafts, especially in digital and mail. They worry most about hallucinations, data ownership and creative originality. Importantly, they do not fear mass job loss; instead, they envisage AI freeing staff for higher-value tasks.

EMERGING TRENDS TO WATCH.

Partisan gap. Republicans are ~20 pp more likely than Democrats to say AI's impact has been positive and to predict a transformational future, suggesting partisan branding of specific AI vendors and data-privacy narratives could matter.

Experience and scale effects. Veterans and staff at larger firms are both more optimistic about AI's future value than newcomers and small shops indicating institutional capacity may speed successful integration.

Usage drives optimism. Daily users show a +23 pp net-positive attitude toward AI's 2024 role versus non-users –56 pp, implying that hands-on familiarity mitigates fears and shapes narrative.

Ethical norms are crystallizing. There is consensus that disclosure of generative content is needed though questions remain around how best to disclose. Limited edits and data optimization are broadly embraced.

About the Project: The AAPC Foundation 2024 AI Member Survey provides the first bipartisan, systematic look at how political consultants are adopting, evaluating and governing AI in their consulting practices. The bipartisan mixed-methods study, online survey of 200 current or lapsed U.S. members and 15 in-depth interviews conducted in two waves, was conducted by Normington Petts and 3D Strategic Research, April 22–May 4 2025. The survey has a margin of error of ±6.8 pp. Thank you to Microsoft for their sponsorship.