

Cision Report Warns Brands Are Falling Into Costly 'Data Fragmentation Trap'

New analysis shows how disconnected search, social, and AI signals create blind spots, delay decisions, and escalate risks

CHICAGO, Aug. 5, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- Cision, a global leader in consumer and media intelligence, today released **The Data Fragmentation Trap: Why More Data Isn't Helping Brands See Clearly** a new report examining why brands struggle to turn high volumes of data into meaningful business intelligence.

"Brands don't have a data problem; they have a connection problem," said Jim Daxner, Chief Product Officer at Cision.

As AI transforms how information is created, discovered, and consumed, organizations are gathering more signals than ever, from search engines and social media to news coverage and AI-generated answers. Yet, many organizations fall into a data fragmentation "trap," still relying on an old, channel-by-channel model based on gathering signals separately. This approach can be costly for organizations. It creates critical blind spots, slows decision making, and limits their ability to understand and influence brand

perception.

These elements add up to what the report calls a "fragmentation tax" for brands: The steep hidden costs brands pay when search, social, media, and AI signals are interpreted in isolation rather than as interconnected parts of the same narrative.

It's not the data, it's how you connect it

Brandwatch's Marketer of 2026 research found that 40% of marketing professionals identified "integrating data from multiple sources" as their biggest challenge. The new report explains why more dashboards, data sources, or AI tools will not solve the problem unless the underlying signals are connected.

"Brands don't have a data problem; they have a connection problem," said Jim Daxner, Chief Product Officer at Cision. "Media, social, traditional search, and AI search are shaping perception at the same time, but most organizations still see those signals separately. That leaves teams reacting after the narrative has already moved."

The report identifies three immediate consequences of fragmented intelligence:

- **Blind spots:** Different teams interpret different datasets and reach conflicting conclusions about the same market, customer, or brand.
- **Slower decisions:** Organizations spend critical time agreeing on what is happening while risks escalate, conversations move, and commercial opportunities disappear.
- **Narrative drift:** Inconsistent information across media, social, search and AI creates a growing gap between a brand's intended position and the way it is understood externally.

For brands, the business impact can include slower crisis response, missed demand signals, duplicated work, and lost opportunities to shape the market before competitors do.

AI alone will not solve fragmentation

The report also warns that AI cannot compensate for disconnected systems.

"AI can help teams move faster, but speed alone does not create clarity," added Daxner. "When the underlying signals remain disconnected, the data arrives faster, but the decisions remain incomplete."

When AI is applied across connected signals, however, it can identify patterns across channels, surface emerging risks and opportunities, and reveal insights that would take teams much longer to spot. This becomes increasingly important as AI answer engines shape how people research and understand brands, products, and issues.

The signals appear before the story becomes obvious

Fragmented data often masks critical trends until it's too late: By the time a trend, issue, or reputational threat becomes visible in one channel, it may already have been building elsewhere for weeks or months.

To illustrate this point, the report includes an analysis of the rise of Dubai chocolate between December 2023 and September 2025, showing how attention moved across social media, search, and online news at different stages of the trend.

Social attention and search interest provided early indications of the trend long before it became established in mainstream retail and media coverage.

Social data showed discovery and cultural momentum. Search revealed growing consumer interest and intent. Later media coverage gave the trend wider credibility and reach.

Brands relying on media monitoring alone would have seen the trend much later, once much of the early-mover

advantage had already been captured.

"The brands that connect their signals will see what's coming and act on it. The ones that don't will keep being surprised by it," said Daxner.

Moving from fragmented monitoring to connected intelligence

Fragmented monitoring gives teams separate pieces of the story. Connected intelligence brings those pieces together, combining media, social, traditional search, and AI search signals into one view so organizations can understand how narratives are forming, where they are moving, and where action can make a difference.

That moves teams beyond reporting the past. Marketing, communications, social and search teams can spot meaningful changes earlier, align around the same evidence and act while there is still time to shape the outcome.

The report shows what connected intelligence enables organizations to do:

Understand earlier: Detect emerging risks, trends, and opportunities before they become obvious.

Influence faster: Align teams and shape the story while it is still forming.

Amplify with authority: Put informed, credible narratives into the market with greater confidence.

Together, these capabilities give organizations earlier warning of reputational risk, a clearer view of emerging demand, and more time to act before competitors or external narratives define the opportunity.

The brands that pull ahead will not be those collecting the most data. They will be the ones connecting the right signals early enough to see what is changing, decide what to do, and shape what happens next.

Download [The Data Fragmentation Trap: Why More Data Isn't Helping Brands See Clearly](#) to identify where disconnected signals may be creating blind spots across your organization.

[Learn more](#) about how Cision connects intelligence across media, social, search and AI visibility.

About Cision

Cision is the global leader in consumer and media intelligence, engagement, and communication solutions. We equip PR and corporate communications, marketing, and social media professionals with the tools they need to excel in today's data driven world.

Our deep expertise, exclusive data partnerships, and award-winning products, including [Trajaan](#), [Brandwatch](#), [CisionOne](#), and [PR Newswire](#), bring together signals from search, social, and media so teams can better understand what's happening, shape the conversation, and amplify their impact.

Over 75,000 companies and organizations, including 84% of the Fortune 500, rely on Cision to make better decisions and achieve their goals.

For media inquiries, please contact: Cision Public Relations at CisionPR@cision.com

SOURCE Cision Ltd.

Additional assets available online:  [Photos \(1\)](#)