



Not Another State of Marketing Report

+ UK and Ireland Spotlight!

Data and trends from over 1,500 marketers around the world
paired with strategies + best practices for marketing success

2021

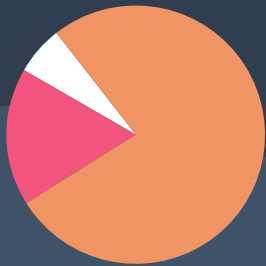


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Introduction

As marketers, with each year that passes, we take lessons from the previous year and apply them to our new strategy and marketing plan. We analyze data, keep our finger on the pulse of trends, and bookmark campaigns that we are inspired by. We are struck with inspiration in the shower or while walking the dog and share wins with coworkers when we have a great idea that works. Take a look inside our special [UK & Ireland edition](#).

2020 was unlike any other year. While many businesses struggled to move their strategy online overnight, many individuals struggled to navigate an emotionally challenging year. Along the way, innovation stalled and so did the plans we made at the end of 2019.

And that's okay.

Coming out of 2020, we can take away so many positives and look to the future having broken all the molds for the way that things are done. Each and every campaign in 2021 will have a virtual element, making educational offerings available online even more inclusive for a number of groups. Huge win.

We asked 1,500+ marketers around the world about their marketing strategies and plans for 2021, and it's clear that marketing, sales, and customer service priorities have shifted for the future.

We are excited to grow together as we adapt to rapidly changing consumer needs and help guide your marketing strategy in this monumental year. We hope you can use these benchmarks to guide your marketing efforts in 2021 and tackle your biggest challenges.



CHAPTER ONE

Overall Marketing Strategy + Marketing Campaigns

In 2021, marketing strategy is changing. The number one way that companies are approaching marketing is **social media**, suggesting that personalized marketing and conversational marketing is the preferred approach. A rising goal is brand awareness – it's the #3 overall marketing priority and the primary reason companies are running campaigns, narrowly surpassing sales as a goal.

Most marketers have an increased budget this year (63%) and plan to spend it on paid advertising, content creation (more details on what types of content later), and software. Speaking of software, marketing is the largest business area using automation, with marketers using automation 76% more than sales and 139% more than finance. (Go get 'em marketers – work smarter not harder!)

2021 is the year of growing brand authenticity and optimizing for the customer or prospect experience, building relationships rather than prioritizing sales or traditional marketing campaigns. Interestingly, 3 in 4 marketers (76%) say they're currently running campaigns, but only 35% plan on doing so in 2021. So what's next? What's the next iteration of campaigns?

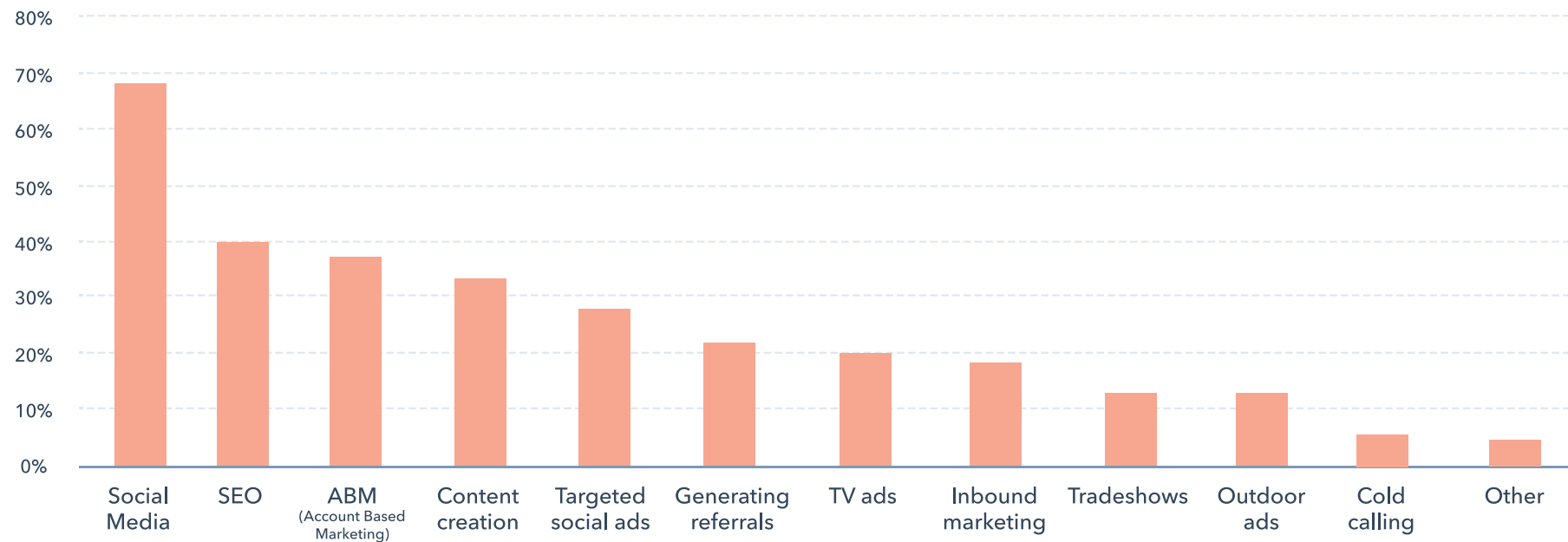
"Customer experience is the number one driver of growth in 2021 and beyond. This has been happening for a while, but 2020 really accelerated trends in digital transformation and buyer-seller relationships and there is no going back."



YAMINI RANGAN
Chief Customer Officer

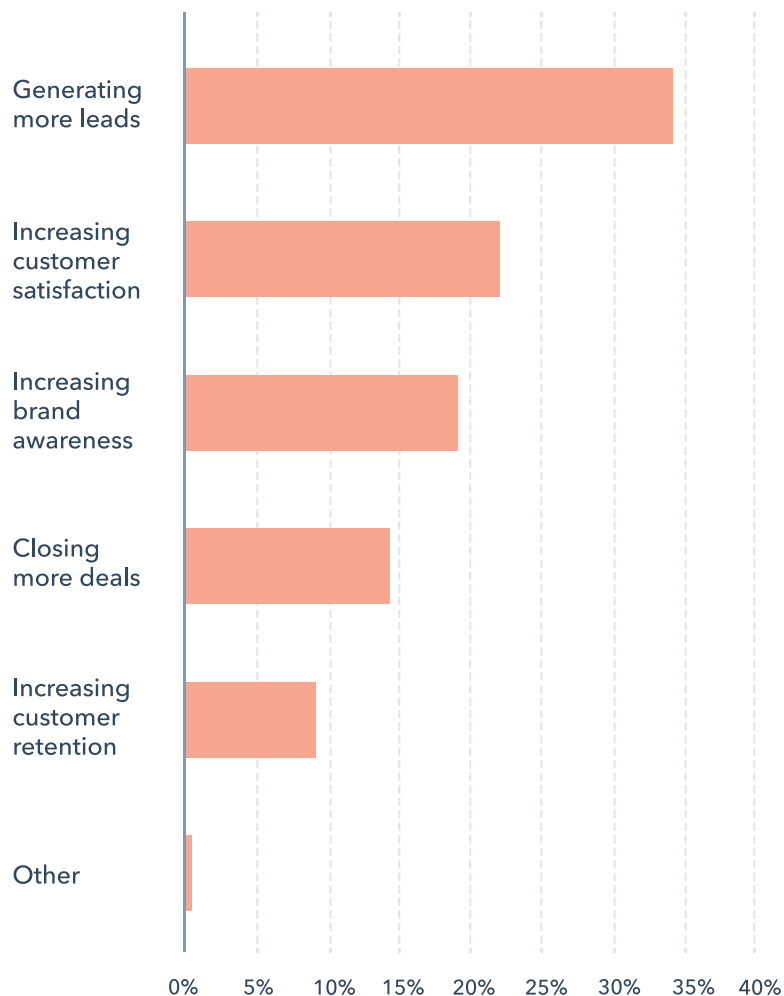


What is your organization's primary approach to marketing?



Marketing strategies that scale are on the rise in 2021.

What are your top marketing priorities in the next 12 months?

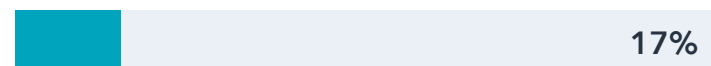


Does your company currently run marketing campaigns?

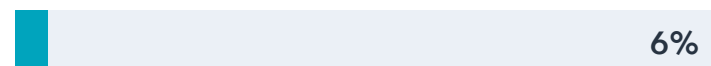
Yes



No



Not sure



While 76% of marketers report running marketing campaigns now, only 35% of those who don't plan on starting in 2021.

What are your primary goals for running marketing campaigns?

- #1** Brand awareness
- #2** Increase sales
- #3** Increase engagement
- #4** Lead generation
- #5** Increase revenue

Leads are a top marketing priority, but most campaigns are being run to generate brand awareness. Campaigns are now being associated with social media and influencer marketing, rather than just ebooks, events, or downloadable content.

This dynamic applies to every marketing channel – Blogs, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, Clubhouse. As a marketer, you have to remember:

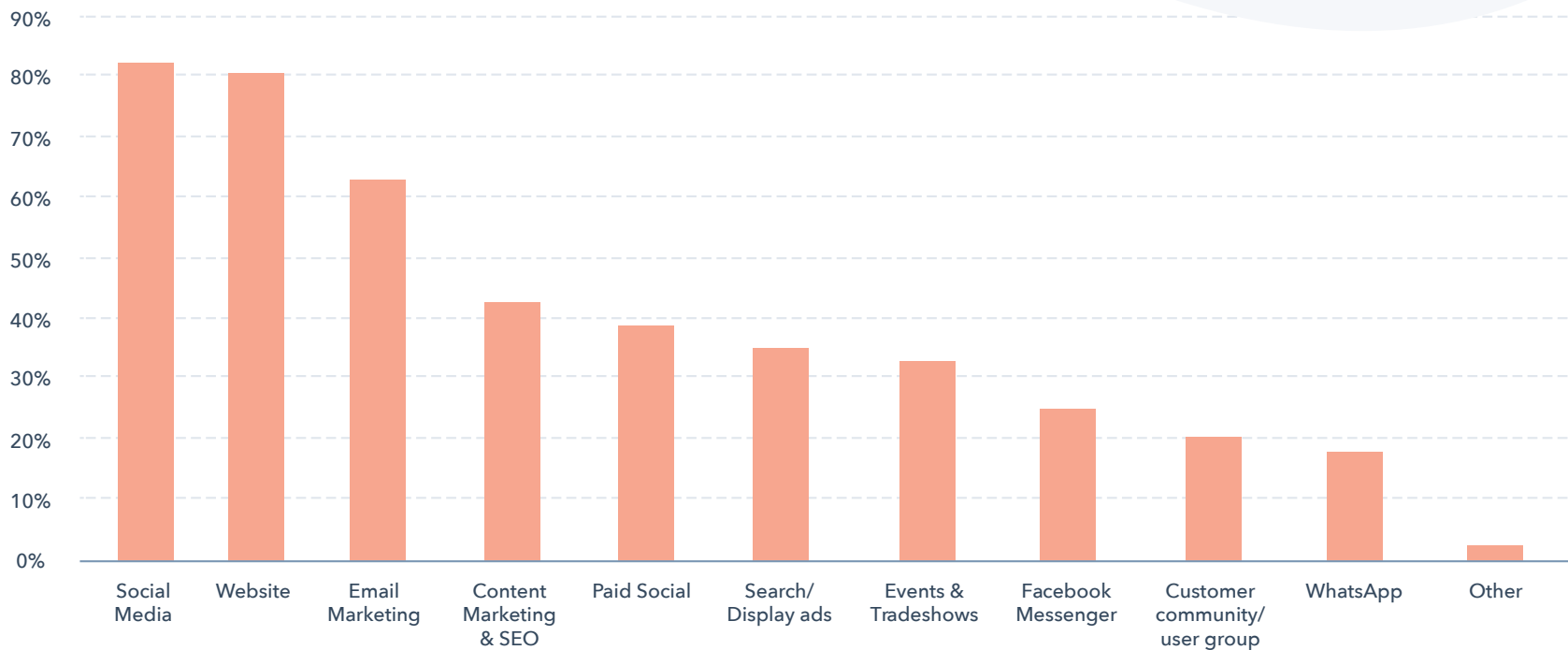
- Winning strategies have a lifespan
- Platform dynamics change all the time
- There's always someone coming to copy you

“The only way to have lasting success is to keep up with changes and master the channels that matter.”



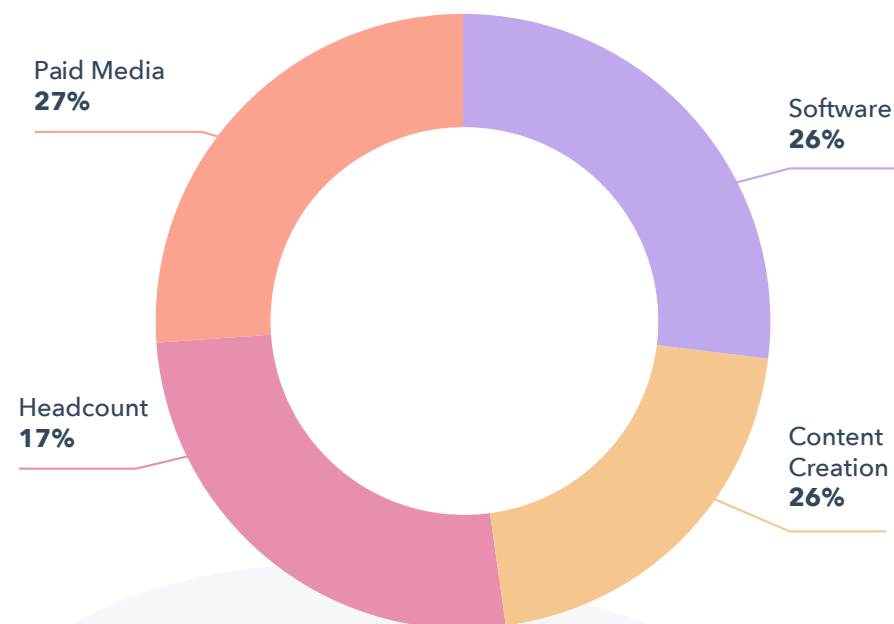
DAVID FALLARME
Asia Head of Marketing
HubSpot

Channels used in marketing



In 2020, website was the #1 channel used in marketing – this year social media pulled ahead.

How are you allocating your marketing budget in the next 12 months?



“What are the most under-valued skills that the best marketers excel at? 1. Persuasion (copywriting and sales). 2. Prioritization - knowing when to say no to things and what to over-invest in.”

Marketing Automation

76%

of companies in 2021 report using automation. Of those who don't, 26% plan on adopting automation in 2021.

What are marketers using automation for?

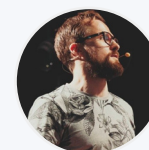
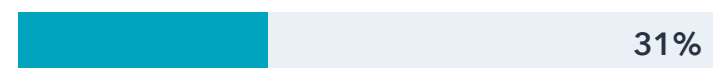
#1 Task management



#2 Content automation



#3 Chat bots



KIERAN FLANAGAN
SVP, Marketing

HubSpot

CHAPTER TWO

Content Marketing Strategy

What does content marketing look like in 2021?

Marketers are investing in content marketing more than they ever have before. 82% report actively using content marketing, up from 70% last year. But – 44% of those not investing in content aren't sure if they'll start in 2021.

Following a year of virtual everything, from school to job interviews to shopping, video reigns supreme yet in the content marketing space once again. Video is the primary form of marketing media being created in 2021, followed by blogs (used by more than half of marketing teams), and infographics.

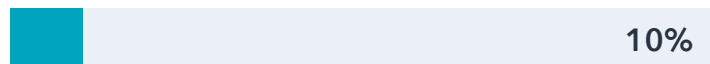
If you are part of the 21% of marketers dedicating budget to marketing headcount, consider candidates who are comfortable with multimedia content creation, video editing, and the latest best practices and trends in content strategy.

Does your company actively use content marketing?

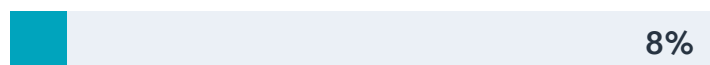
Yes



No

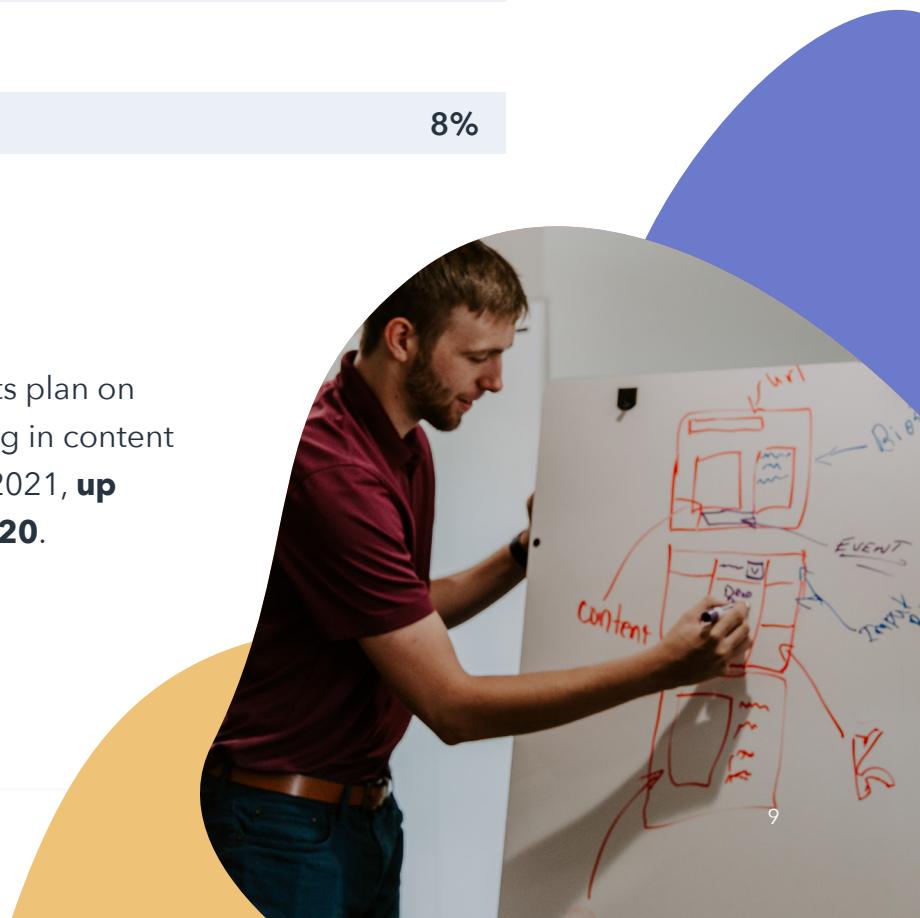


Not sure

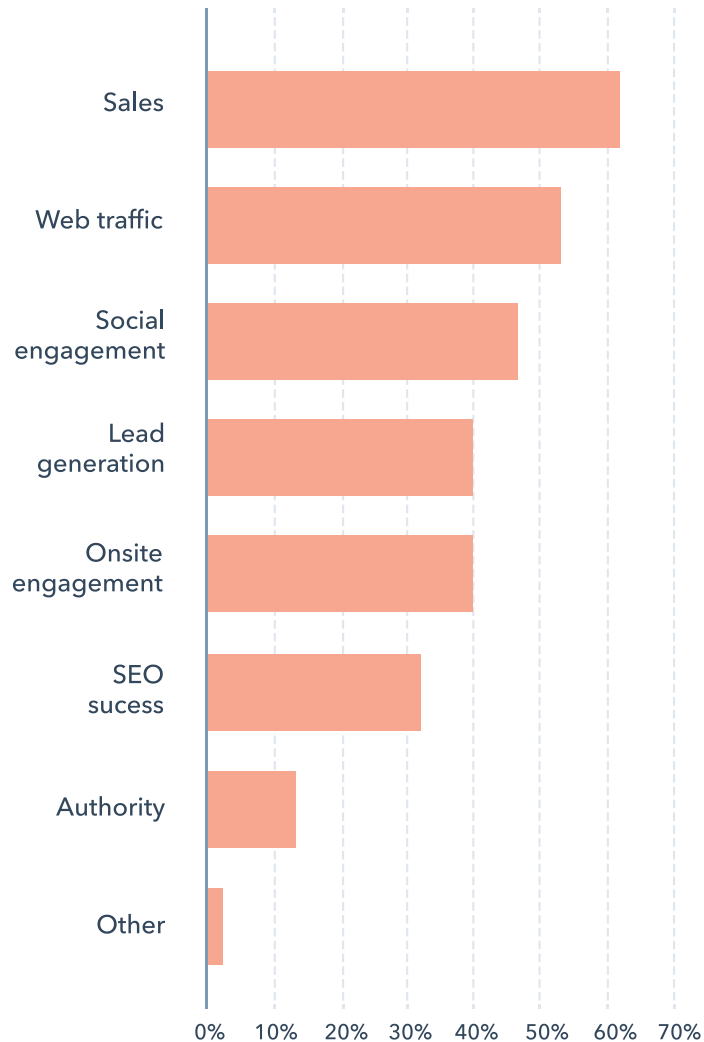


28%

of respondents plan on newly investing in content marketing in 2021, **up 17% from 2020.**

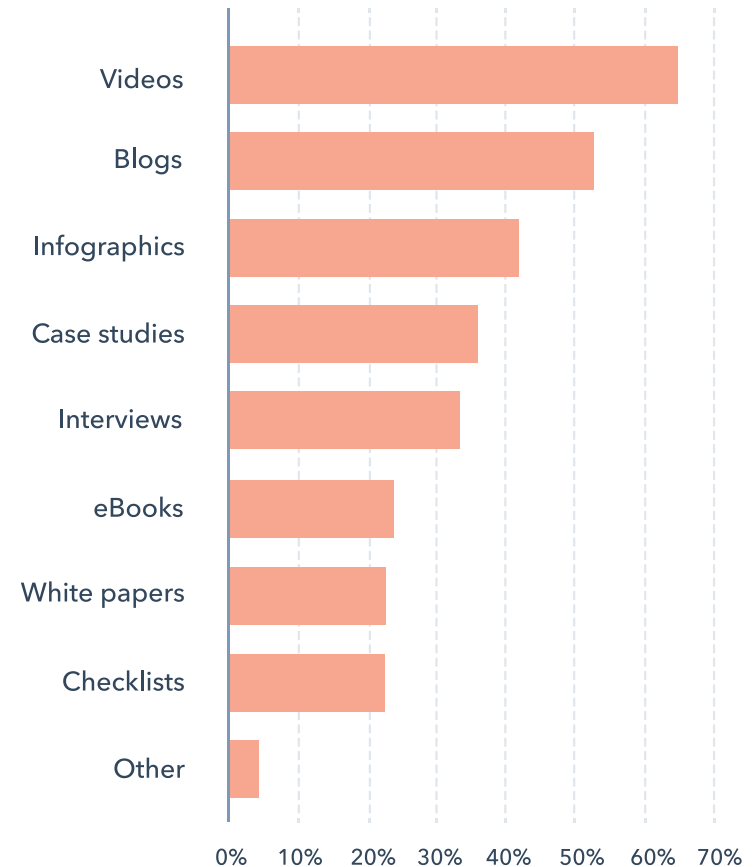


How do you measure the success of your content marketing strategy?



Social engagement as a success metric is on the rise! (+187% from 2020).

Primary Forms of Media Used Within Content Strategy in 2021



Video stays on top as the #1 content type two years in a row.

CHAPTER THREE

Social Media Marketing Strategy

Social Media is the #1 channel used in marketing in 2021. Social media use overall is at an all time high. In November of 2020, the [Baby Shark Dance video](#) (you know the song – do do doo doo do do ... sorry in advance for getting that stuck in your head) became the [most viewed video on YouTube with over 7 billion views](#).

8 in 10 companies are investing in social media marketing in 2021, and 39% plan to invest this year.

Over the past year, companies have had to rethink their entire strategy – many hired [chief customer officers](#) to support the customer experience. Marketing and leadership teams turned the mic over to their customers, listening to how prospects and clients feel about their interactions with the brand.

In 2021, the primary tactic for social media marketing is **social listening**. By establishing a direct relationship with your social media audience, you'll learn exactly how to support, engage with, and convert them into loyal brand advocates.

What are your company's tactics for social media marketing?

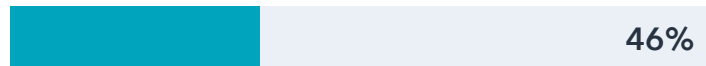
#1 Social listening



#2 Hashtags



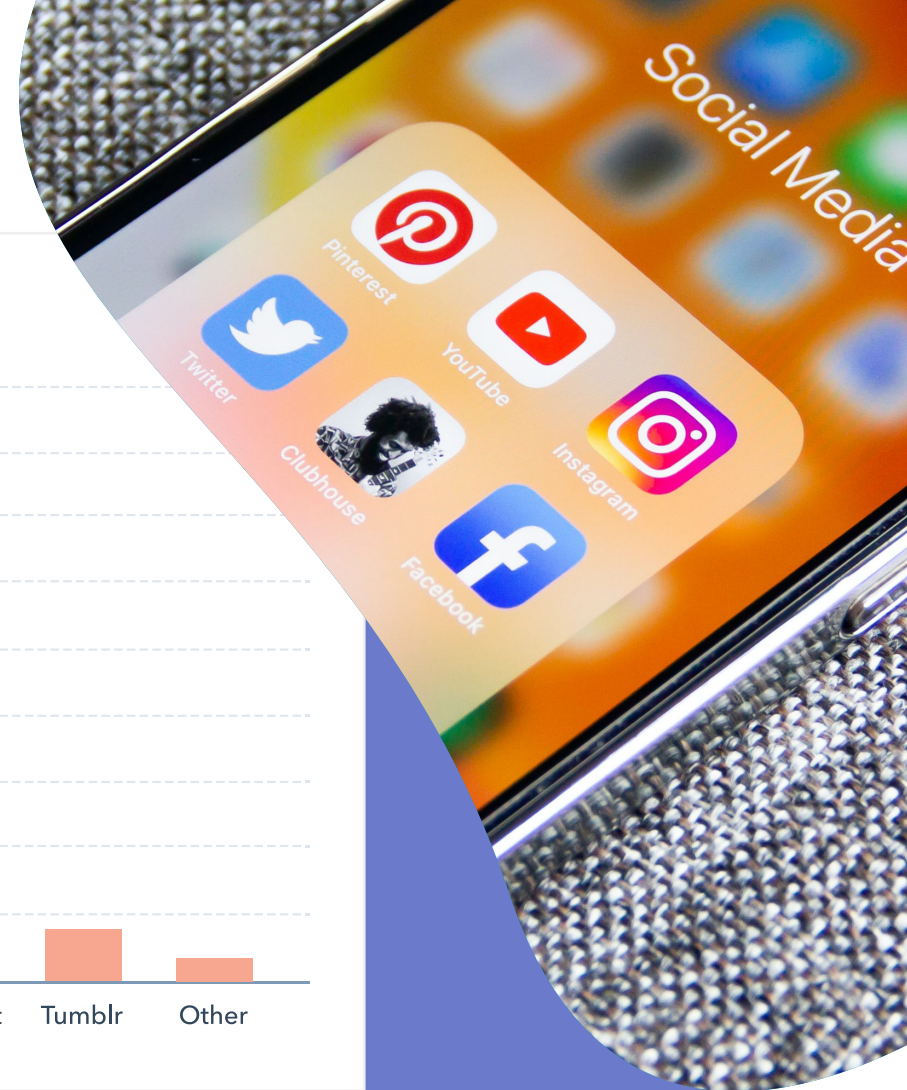
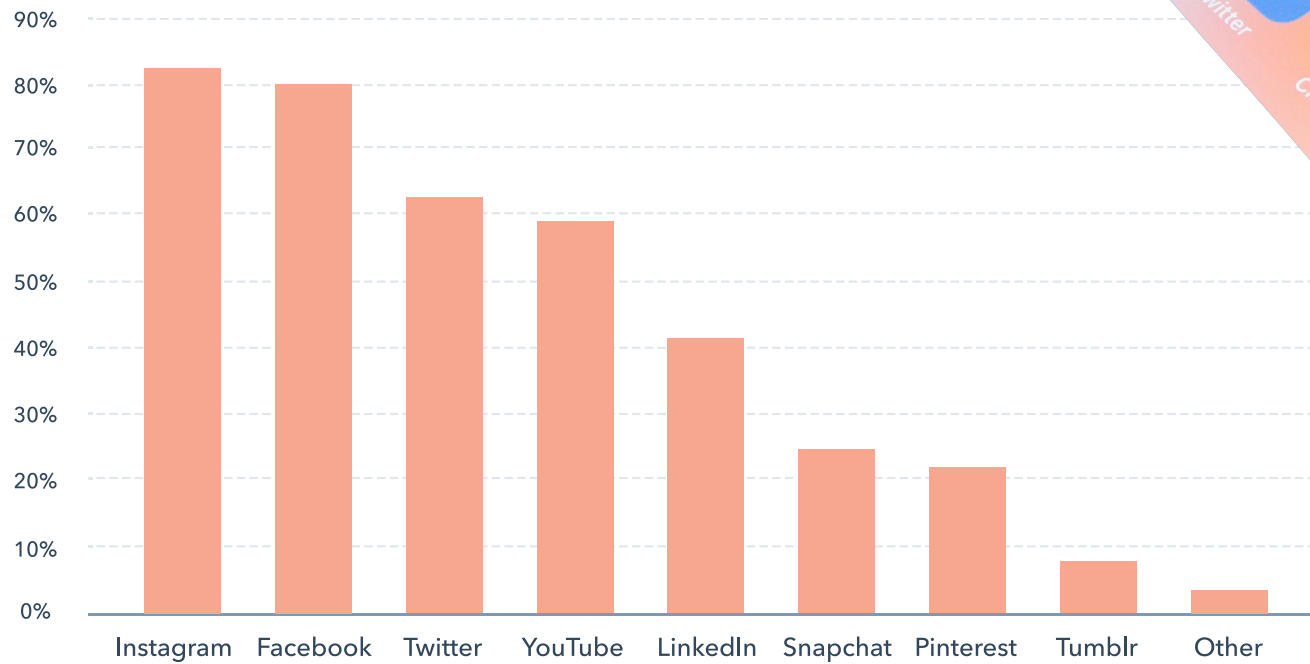
#3 Live video



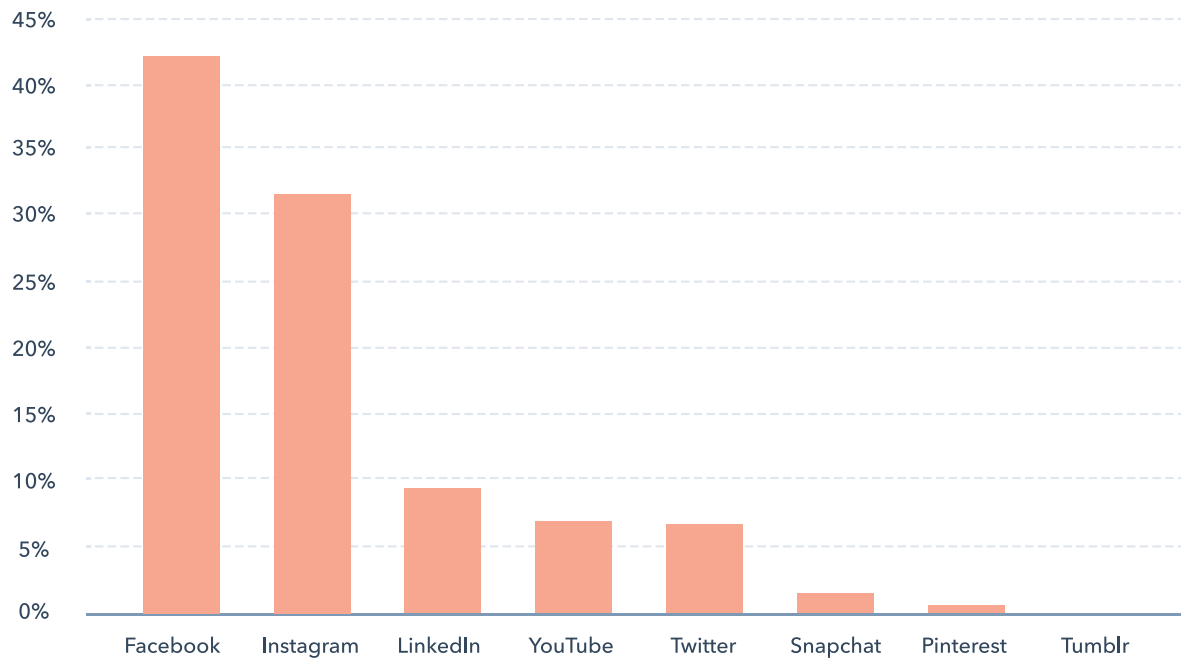
[19% are using augmented reality]



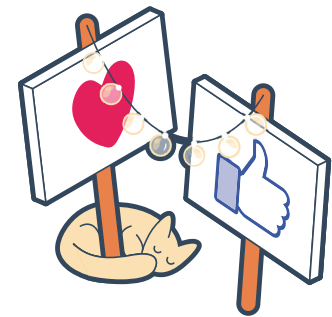
What social media platforms does your company use?



Which social media channels does your company see the most ROI from?



While the most popular platform for marketers to use is Instagram, teams are seeing the most ROI from Facebook. How do you report on social media ROI?



Social Media Management Software

HubSpot's Social Media software connects your social inbox to your customers and ROI. Showcase the impact of your social media efforts with reporting and custom dashboards.

[Learn more](#)

CHAPTER FOUR

Search Engine Optimization Strategy

Optimization is no longer a 'nice to have' when it comes to marketing strategy. In 2020, HubSpot SEO wiz and VP of Marketing Matthew Howells-Barby said he'd like to see the amount of marketers actively investing in SEO go up.

2020

64%

of marketers
invested in SEO

2021

69%

of marketers
invested in SEO

While we know Matt would want this number to keep rising, it's progress. Optimization is becoming more and more about creating the best possible tailored experience for users of your website and who interact with you online.

"The quality of the result is almost always a function of the number of iterations.

It's about going through the grind again and again and again. Even when you're only getting marginal improvements.

Remarkable work is the result of remarkable perseverance."



DHARMESH SHAH
Founder and CTO



What are your company's tactics for SEO?

#1 Strategic keywords



#2 Localization



#3 Optimize for mobile



The majority of marketers find that SEO and an optimized website help them achieve their marketing goals.

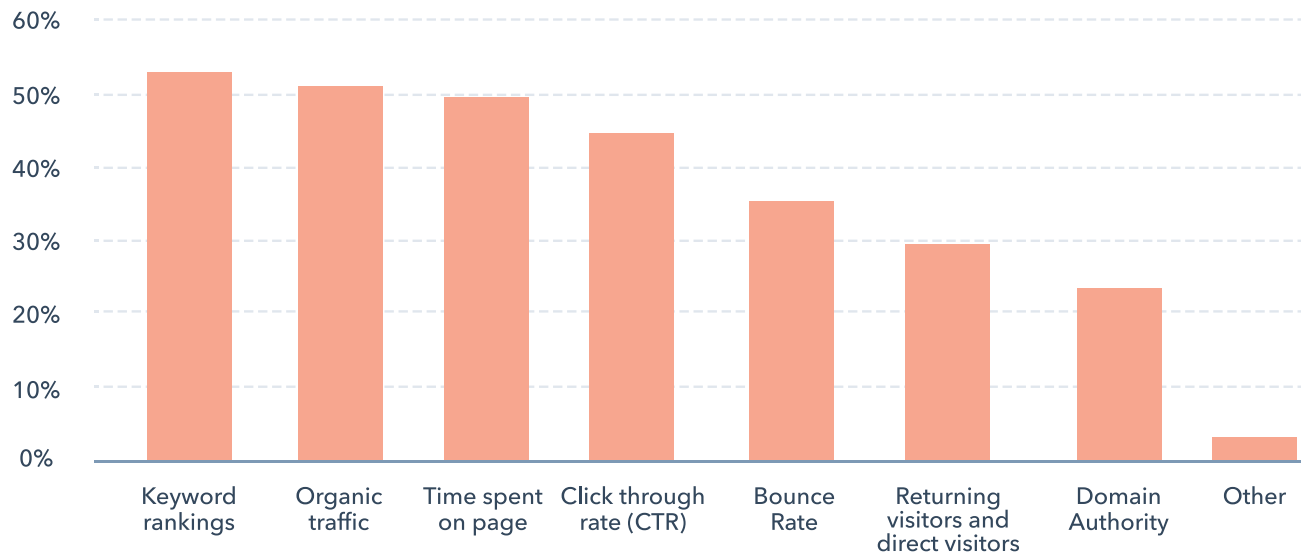
75%

feel their SEO tactics are 'extremely' or 'very effective' at helping them achieve their marketing goals

83%

of respondents are either 'very confident' or 'somewhat confident' that their website is helping them reach their marketing goals

How do you measure the success of your SEO strategy?



CHAPTER FIVE

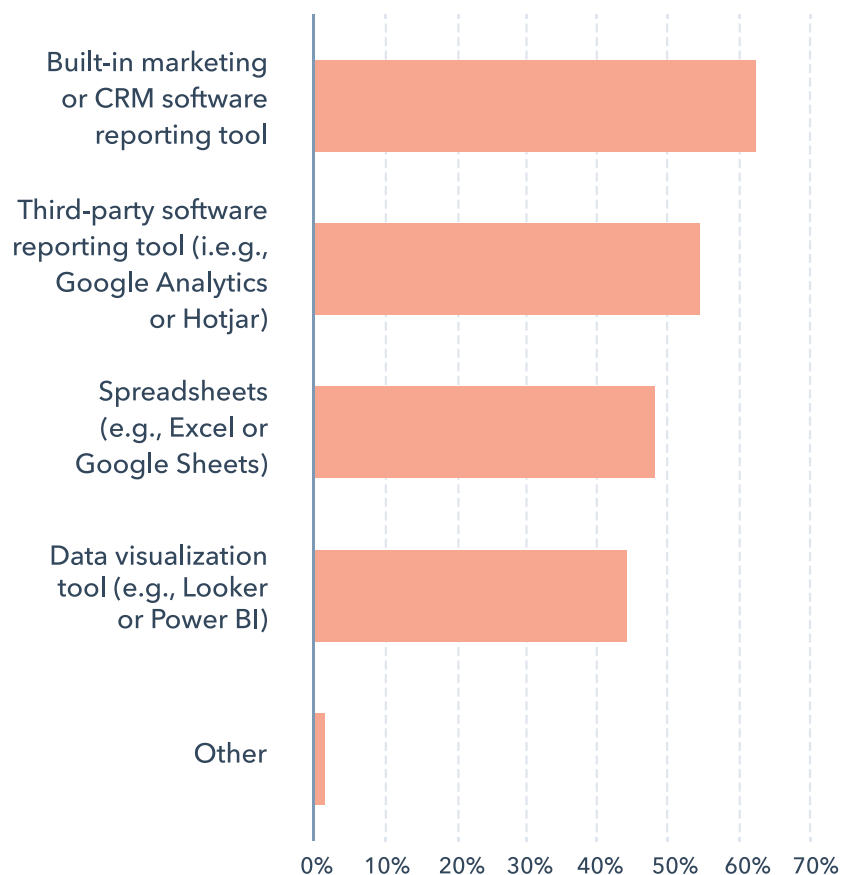
Reporting and Attribution Strategy

Think of reporting as the first step in creating a personalized marketing experience. Using demographic reports that help you understand your audience as a whole you can discover that your target buyer persona is a 25-45 year old who identifies as female and lives in or near large cities. This guides brand voice, tone, content formats, and gives your team a jumping off point for thinking about marketing strategy.

Attribution is the next level deeper, and should be a priority for experience-focused marketers in 2021. Attribution reporting takes a generalized idea of the customer journey and turns it into a detailed, data-driven path – leaving you to create an optimized, user-friendly flow with integrated human interactions.

While 72% of marketers say their company uses reporting tools, only 53% are using attribution reporting. Attribution is the key to personalized, high-converting interactions – at scale. Marketers do data analysis in their role constantly, and with attribution reporting and data collection/analytics tools, are empowered to iterate and optimize marketing efforts with the customer at the center.

Which of the following tools do you use for reporting?



Using data to drive marketing efforts is one piece of the puzzle – the other side is proving the success of your efforts in an organized way. (Sales and leadership teams refresh these reports constantly – at the end of the month, especially.) 4 in 10 marketers feel that understanding the ROI of marketing campaigns is ‘extremely important’ or ‘very important’. On the flip side, only 37% feel ‘very confident’ when making budget decisions for investing in programs that influence revenue.

The disconnect lies – you guessed it – in failing or nonexistent attribution reporting. By connecting the dots between what drives revenue or engagement, and putting aside what you’ve always done, your programs will be more cost effective, more successful, and more customer-centric.

Raise your hand if you’ve ever taken your previous year’s marketing strategy and copy and pasted it right into the new year’s doc, without thinking about it 🙄🙄 We’ve all been there. In 2021, we’re starting with a blank page and using the latest data to drive business decisions.

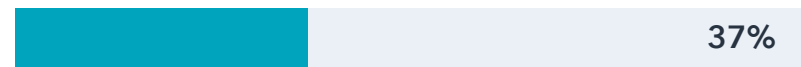
Attribution is the next level deeper, and should be a priority for experience-focused marketers in 2021. Attribution reporting takes a generalized idea of the customer journey and turns it into a detailed, data-driven path – leaving you to create an optimized, user-friendly flow with integrated human interactions.

How confident are you when making budget decisions for investing in programs that influence revenue?

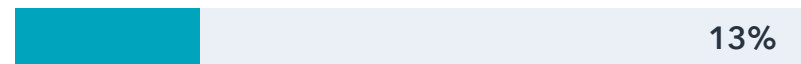
Somewhat confident



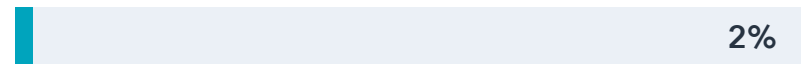
Very confident



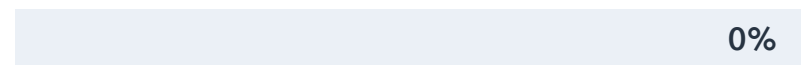
Neutral



Somewhat non-confident



Not confident at all



CHAPTER SIX

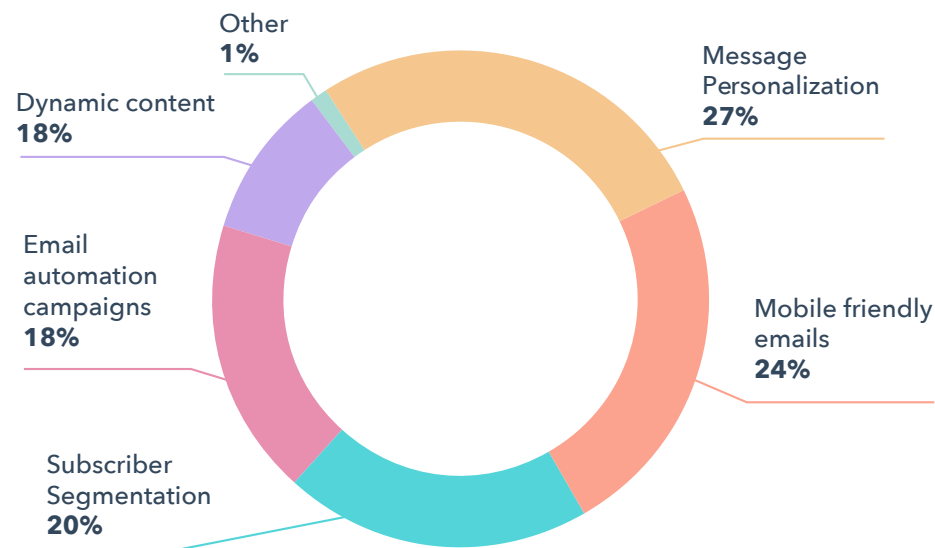
Email Marketing Strategy

Every year, people think email will go by way of Palm Pilots and CDs and every year, she rears her head and says – not this year!

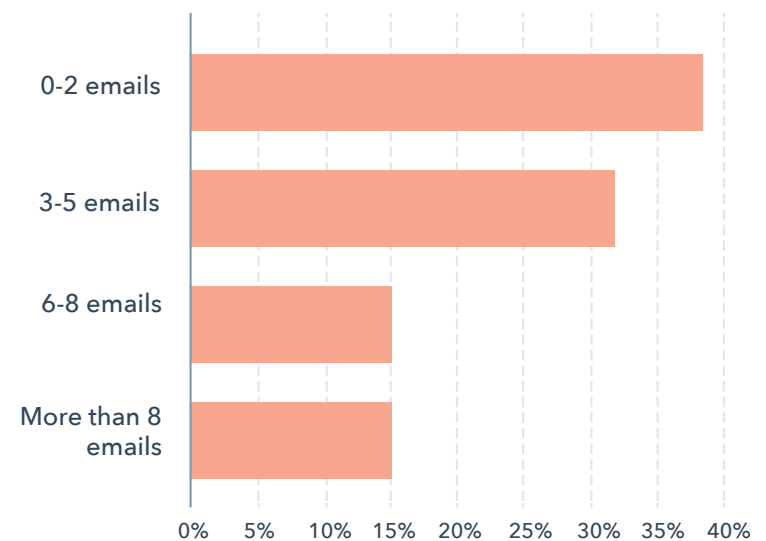
In 2021, 77% of marketers reported seeing more engagement with email over the past year. Email marketers are using hyper personalized messages, showing transparency and authenticity in a year where there was no choice but to be up front with customers and employees alike.

Marketers this year are sending less weekly emails than last year, but prioritizing segmentation, personalization, and automation.

What are your company's tactics for email marketing?

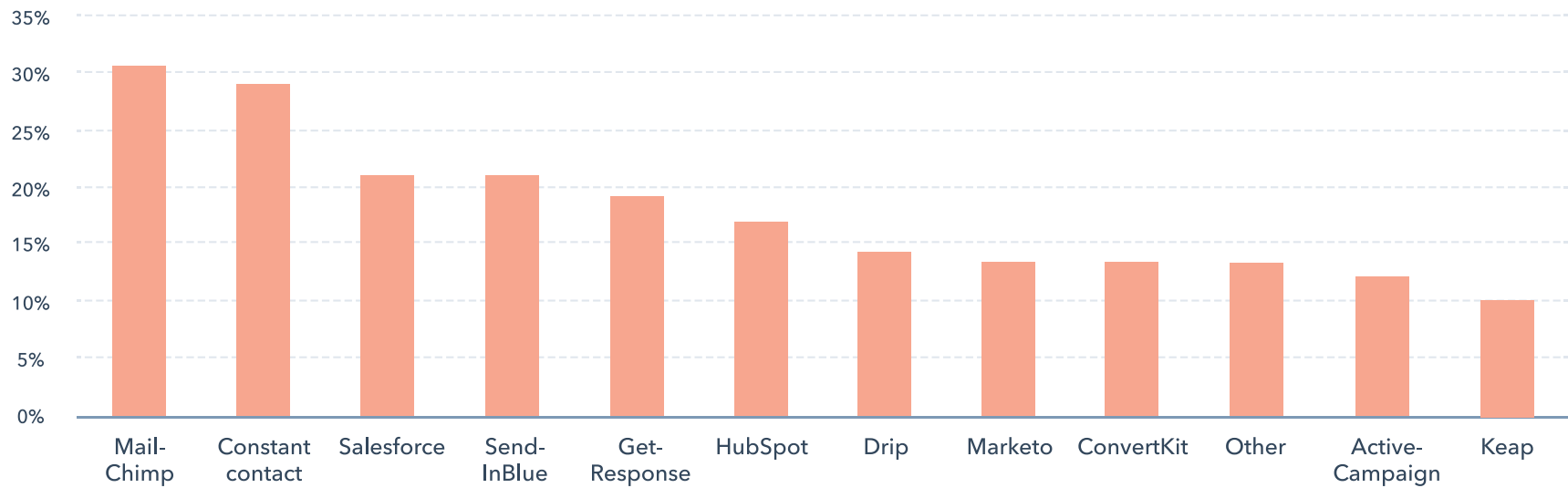


On average, how many emails do you send to customers per week?



77% of companies have seen more engagement with email marketing over the past 12 months.

Which tool(s) do you use to send emails?



Email providers are working year after year to serve their audience best. While tools like MailChimp and Constant Contact serve a wide range of SMBs, enterprise tools like HubSpot and Salesforce are typically used by enterprise businesses. Newer tools are also emerging for more niche use cases.

Email Marketing Strategy from Litmus

While email marketing appears to be in the [top three approaches for marketers like you](#), Litmus' State of Email report shows that no other channel can touch it when it comes to return on investment (ROI). In fact, it [delivers a whopping \\$36 for every \\$1 spent](#). And with third-party (3P) cookies going by the wayside in 2022, it's more important than ever to get your email house in order. One of the best ways to do this? Creating a subscriber experience that wins over the hearts (brand love), minds (you are the expert!), and wallets (they have to spend with you!) will set you up for success here.

Ways to Win Over Your Subscribers

The good news is that marketers can align their top three priorities this year – segmentation, personalization, and automation – with making their audience swoon. Let's dive in.

Segmentation & Personalization

Segmentation and personalization are two sides of the same coin. Getting to know your subscribers by their email behaviors and habits is a powerful way to hone your email strategy. But when you layer on any other information you have, you can create even better experiences. Some create personas to personalize emails. Combine that with the information your subscribers already give you, in your [preference center](#), through other content they're engaging with (open rates, click-through rates, read rates), and through information in their email landscape.

For example, there are tools like [Litmus Email Analytics](#) that can give you insight into what devices subscribers read your emails on and what email clients they use, just to name a few. When you know which email clients your subscribers use, you can optimize the experience for them. For example, what if the majority of your subscribers are on mobile and using Dark Mode? You'll want to incorporate that into your segmentation & design strategy, and [QA & testing process](#). There are many levels to personalization. Get tips from beginner level to advanced in the [Ultimate Guide to Dynamic Content](#).



Automation

Automating your emails might sound like the exact opposite thing to do in the quest to woo your subscribers, but rest assured it isn't. Many automated emails are also nurture emails.

Nurture emails – a sequence of emails designed to tell a specific story over a period of time fit into this category. They're designed to educate, create awareness, or nurture someone down a path, all while they get to know your brand. In two words, they create: trust and connection. And over time, that translates into customers for life. If you do it right, you'll create relationships vs. transactions. You might use this strategy for onboarding emails, transactional emails, and more.

If you're just getting started with automating emails, [check out this resource](#).

PRO TIP

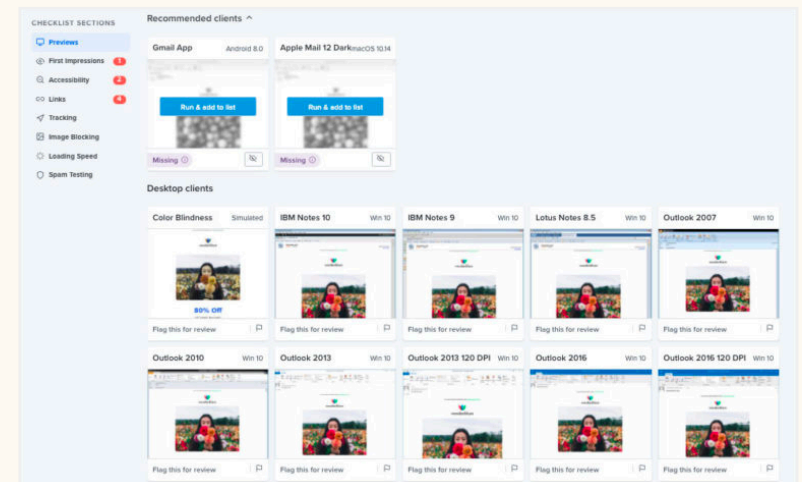
Don't fall into the trap of "set it and forget it" that many do with automated emails. Make sure you're monitoring results, and QA + testing all of your templates every 2 weeks.



Email clients update as often as every 2 days – how do your emails *really* look?

Email clients update their rendering algorithm as often as every two days. Make sure your email is on-brand and error-free every send – with Litmus.

Get your free trial



CHAPTER SEVEN

Conversational Marketing + AI Strategy

Bots, AI, and conversational marketing or live chat all still sound a little intimidating. If you immediately thought, I don't have a developer and kept scrolling – come back! (Welcome back.)

Chatbots have become fairly common marketing tools, particularly for industries offering live sales teams most hours of the day. By expanding conversation opportunities to being available 24/7, your team won't lose out on customers who are ready for information. This year, LiveChat and HubSpot are the top live chat bot tools of choice.

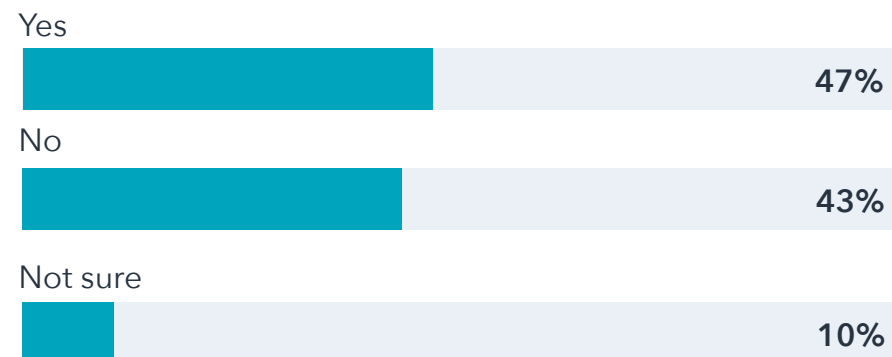
In 2021, 47% of marketers report using bots for marketing efforts, up from 45% last year. Bots are now much easier to use and add to websites, as well as AI. There's AI incorporated into every tool you use, getting smarter and helping to predict your needs and make your job easier.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly becoming a main tool for conversion and optimization, and [marketers' use of AI increased by 190%](#) from 2018 to 2020.

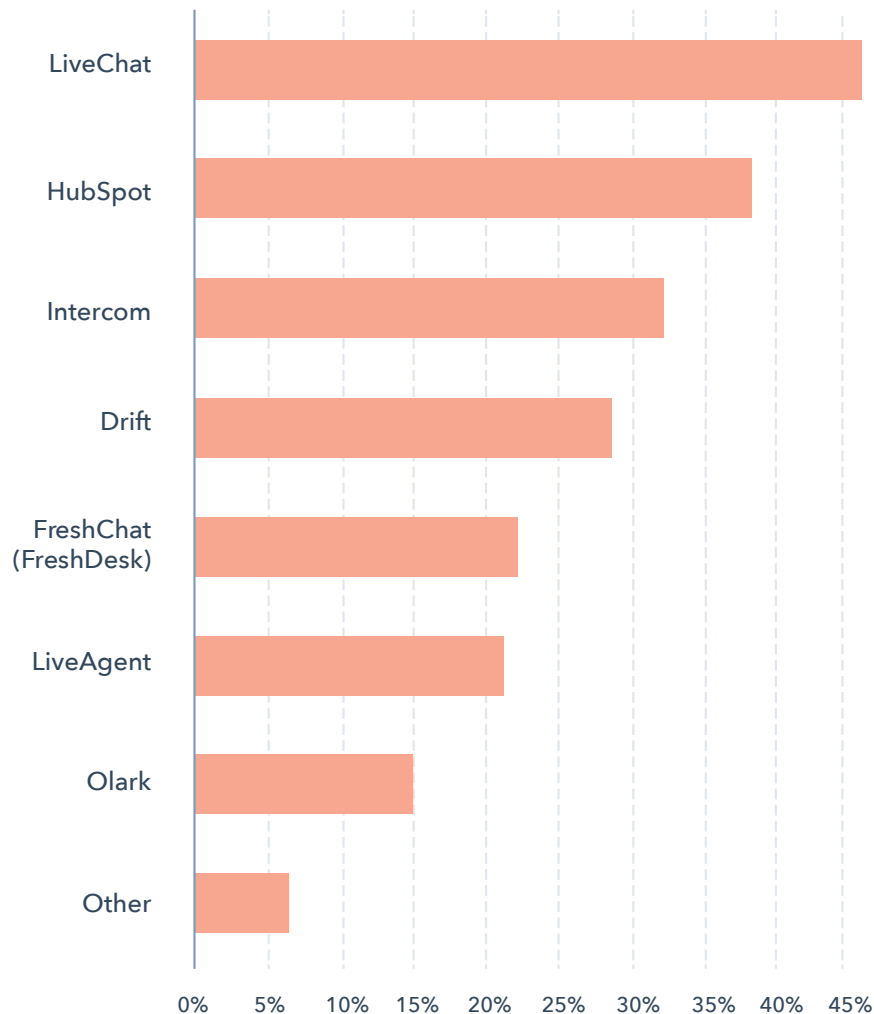
Marketers can expect to see AI being used in:

- Personalization and ad targeting
- Automation and conversion
- Driving revenue and repeat purchases
- Improving efficiency
- Customer support and upselling
- Campaign management
- Optimization
- Content creation

Does your company currently use bots in marketing?



What tools does your company use for bots?



"Easy. Achievable. Complicated.

One or more of these is normally at the core of bad/low impact marketing.

1. Easy

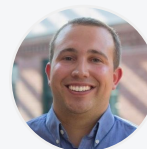
If it is easy everyone will do it. You won't be different and the strategy won't be effective.

2. Achievable

If you know you can do it then it isn't worth doing. Predictable returns from straight forward and achievable strategies will eventually have you falling behind the competition who has found a 10x better way.

3. Complicated

Whether it is automation or messaging. Complicated helps the marketer feel smart with their peers, but makes the customer experience way worse. So much time and money are wasted every day in the name of sophistication."



KIPP BODNAR
CMO



CHAPTER EIGHT

Account Based Marketing (ABM) Strategy

If you ended up at the next chapter because you thought you needed developer help to use AI and bots, scroll back!

Account based marketing (ABM) similarly sounds like it may be too much effort or that your team doesn't have the tools for. Think again – 70% of marketers report using ABM, up 15% from 2020. By targeting marketing efforts based on individual companies or accounts, your demographic targeting and other strategies get even more personalized. Using ABM strategies like identifying target contacts/roles and creating custom content, you can improve customer or prospect engagement by directly addressing their pain points.

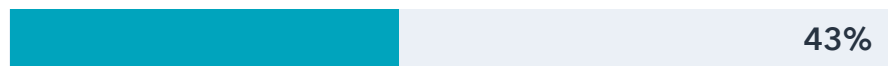
As a growing trend, the top way marketers are targeting accounts? You guessed it – social media. 2021 is the year of investing in social media experts and platforms, looking beyond the standard reporting and analytics.

How does your company measure ABM metrics?

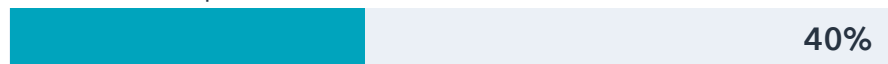
#1 Revenue won



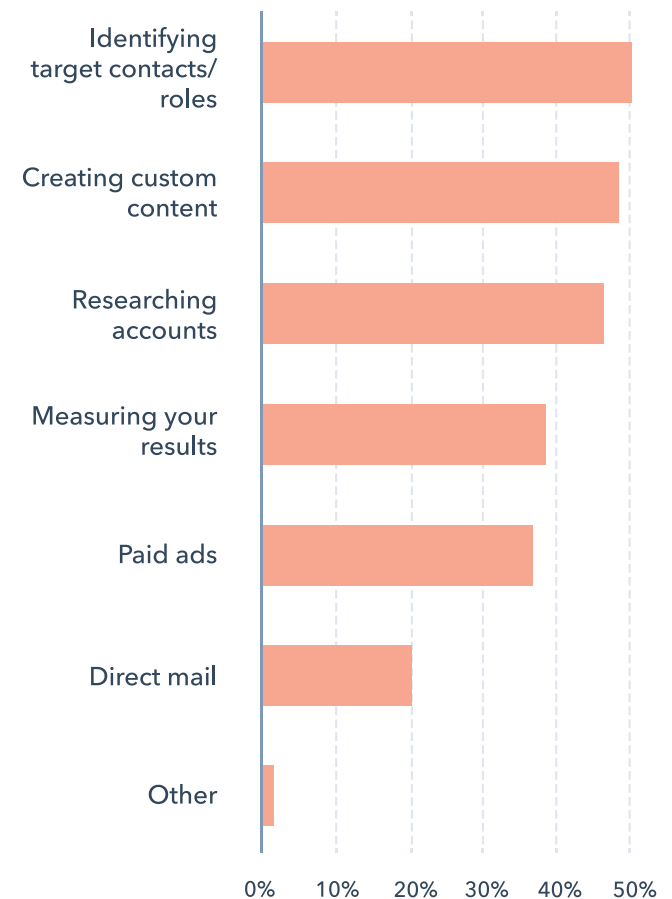
#2 Won accounts



#3 Revenue per account



What are your company's primary tactics around ABM?

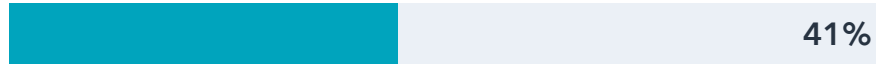


What challenges are you facing with ABM?

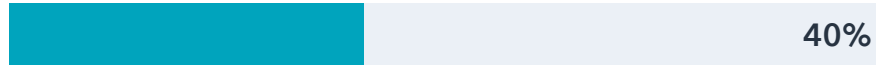
#1 Delivering a personalized customer experience



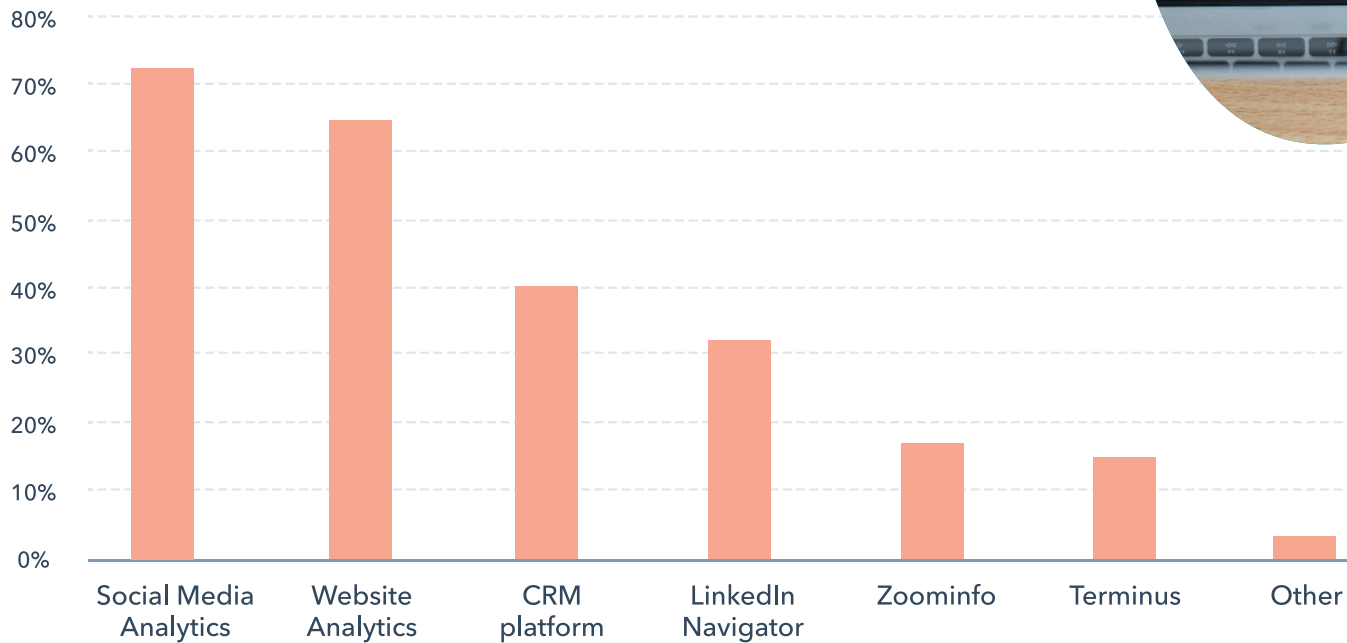
#2 Knowing how to choose target accounts



#3 Knowing what content to use



Which tools does your company use to target accounts?



CHAPTER NINE

Market + Customer Research Strategy

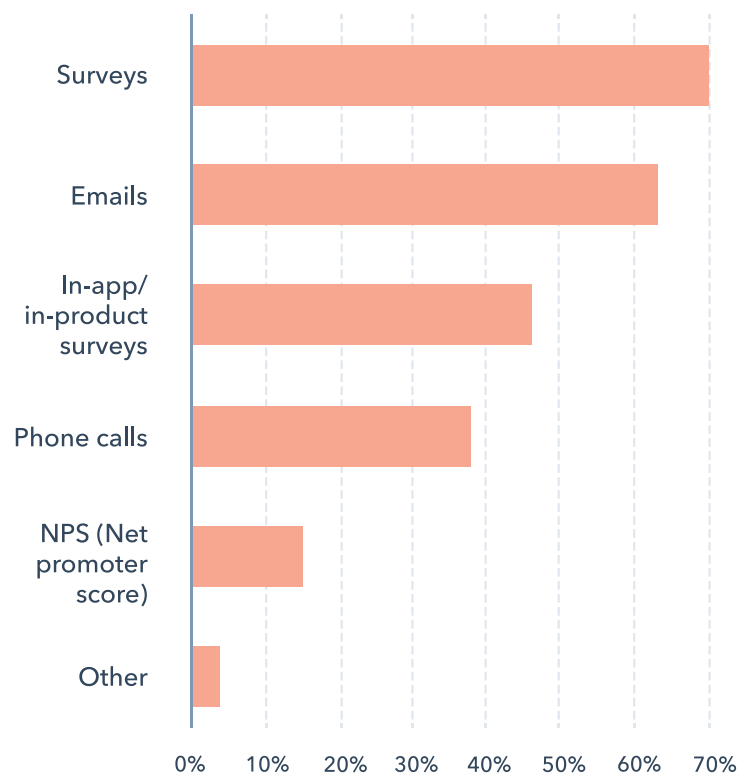
In today's world of marketing, benchmarks and statistics from two, three, or five years ago might as well be from 1960. Up-to-date and personalized data for your customer base and target market might look completely different than a company who appears to be in the same industry, but has a slightly different niche.

Marketers now have the power to gather and synthesize information using tools like Google Surveys and their own customer surveys. Designing a useful survey (like we hope this one is for you) can guide strategy for teams across the board and open your eyes to new strategies, social media platforms, preferred communication channels, and offerings you didn't even know your audience wanted.

Marketers are investing in gathering proprietary data and benchmarks

- Almost all companies surveyed (91%) use customer feedback to make decisions.
- 83% of marketers are conducting market research.
- 88% of companies are using market research to make business decisions.
- 67% of marketers plan on increasing market research spend in the next year.

What are your company's tactics for collecting customer feedback?



CHAPTER TEN

International Marketing Strategy

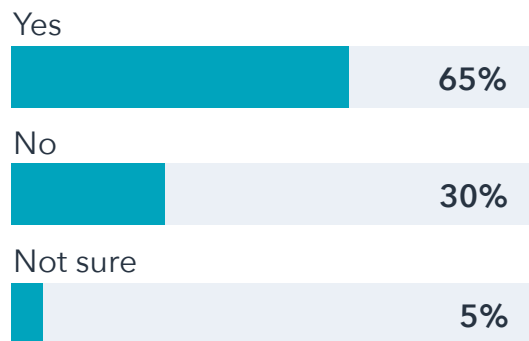
93% of respondents operate in more than one region, but only 65% of marketers report marketing internationally. This year, at least a third of marketers plan to initiate an international strategy, but are facing challenges, largely with exchange rates and cultural differences.

HubSpot's [VP of Localization, Nataly Kelly](#), works directly with product teams to ensure the business is solving for everyone, even down to product update announcements being translated into multiple languages.

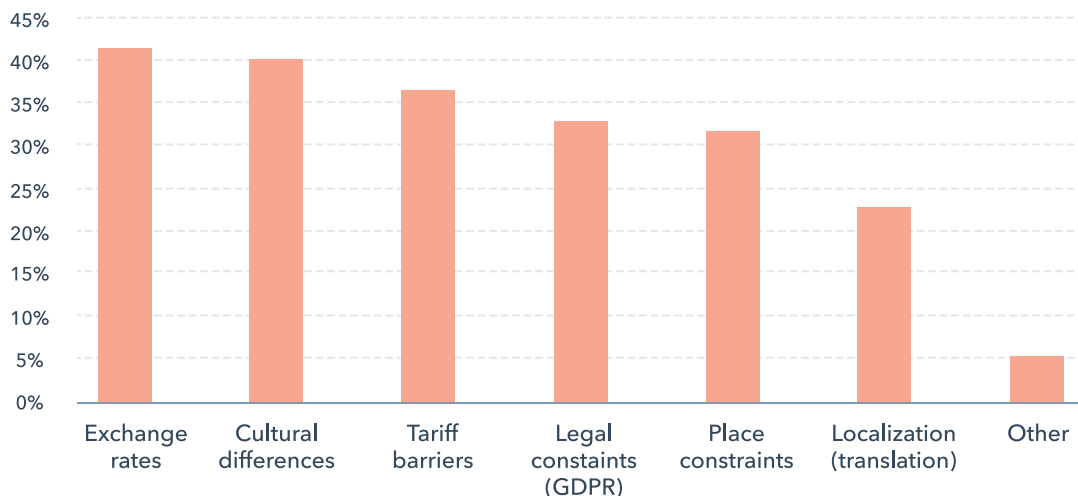
Where are the bottlenecks in your international marketing strategy? Are software limitations holding you back from expanding to a promising market (that will ultimately pay back any investments made into a platform that allows you to accept foreign currency)?

If you haven't already – solve for local or cultural challenges by hiring locally. With a newly hybrid workforce, physical location is no longer a limit to where you can be a part of a team from.

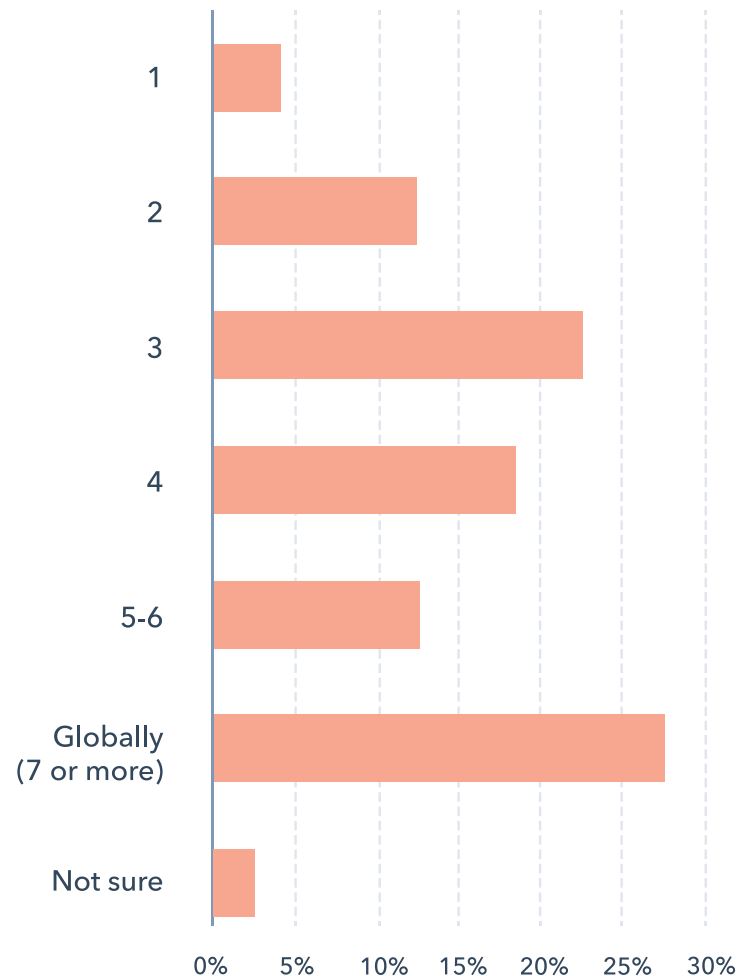
Does your company market internationally?



What challenges are you facing with international marketing?

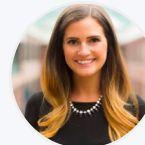


How many regions does your company operate in?



"One of my favorite things about HubSpot over the past 8 years has been our global expansion.

I constantly learn from people around the world and am always challenged to think differently as a result."



HANNAH FLEISHMAN
Director of Employer
Brand & Internal Comms



CHAPTER ELEVEN

Video Marketing Strategy with Wistia

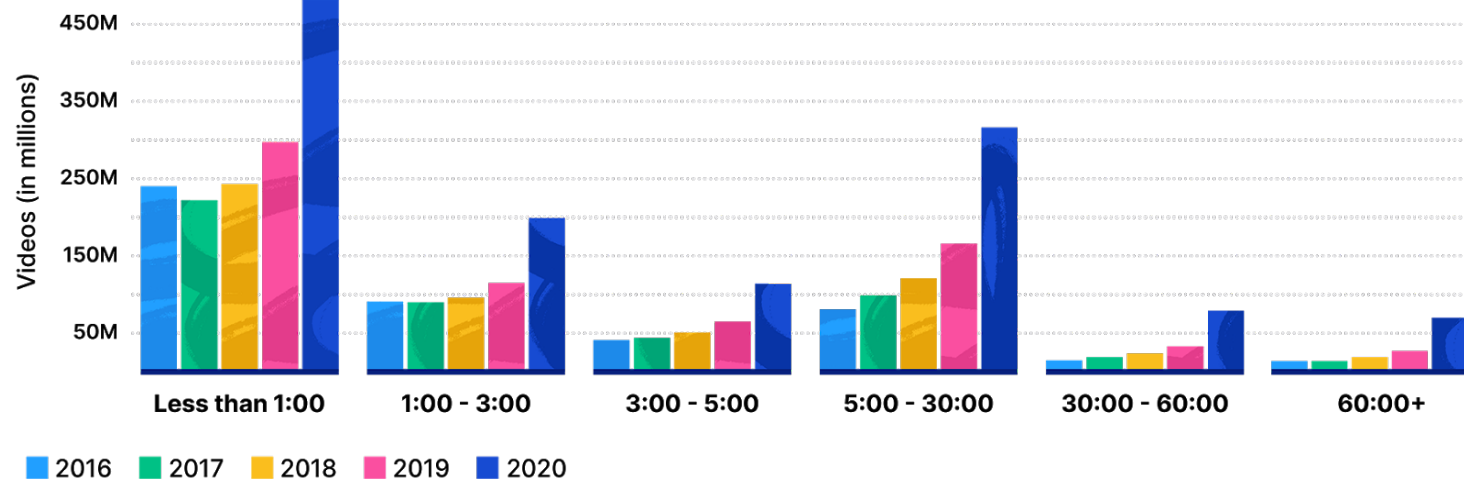
Marketers have had to adapt a lot over the past several years to keep up with the times. With new social media platforms popping up every day (looking at you, Clubhouse) and marketing priorities shifting to go all-in on digital, it's safe to say that the landscape we once knew has changed forever.

One thing that has remained constant, however, is the demand for video marketing. Video continues to be an essential tool marketers leverage to communicate and connect with their audiences and customers.

Notable Video News and Trends

2020 was an impressive year for video. Media uploads increased 80% year-over-year, peaking at 103,603 videos uploaded on April 22. This dramatic increase shows that the global pandemic has accelerated the creation of video content at a rate that no one could have predicted. Though video uploads did begin to slow down in the following months (May-August), the overall number of uploads is still 88% higher than before the pandemic.

Video uploads by length over time

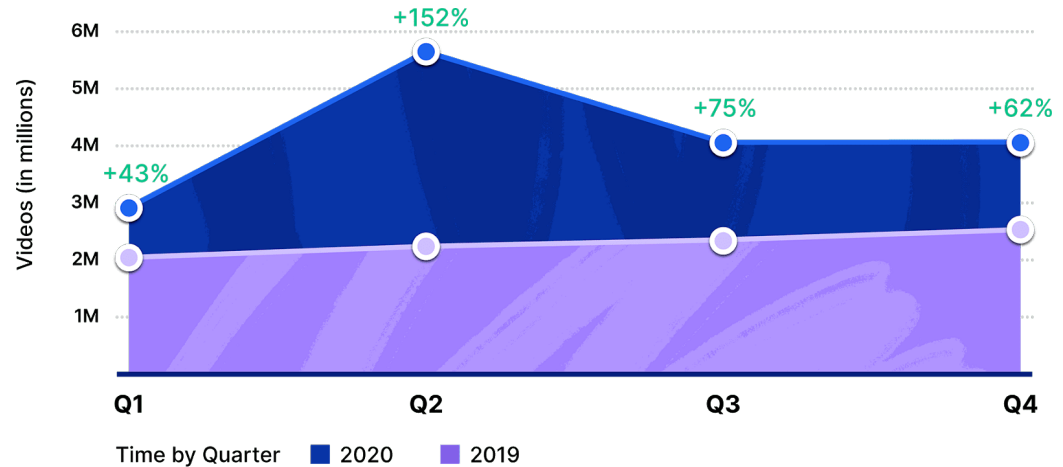


WISTIA'S 2021 STATE OF VIDEO REPORT

So businesses were busy creating more video content, but were people actually watching? The answer is a resounding – yes! The global pandemic has overwhelmingly impacted the amount of time people spend watching videos online. Minutes watched increased 85% in 2020. And, people watched 12.2 billion minutes of video last year; that's 23,211 years' worth of content!

"People watched 12.2 billion minutes of video last year – that's 23,211 years' worth of content!"

Video uploaded in 2020 vs 2019



WISTIA'S 2021 STATE OF VIDEO REPORT

So, what kind of video did businesses create? Well, there was more volume in the short-form video category, with over 4.8 million 0- to 30-second long videos uploaded in 2020. This is a 62% increase over 2019.

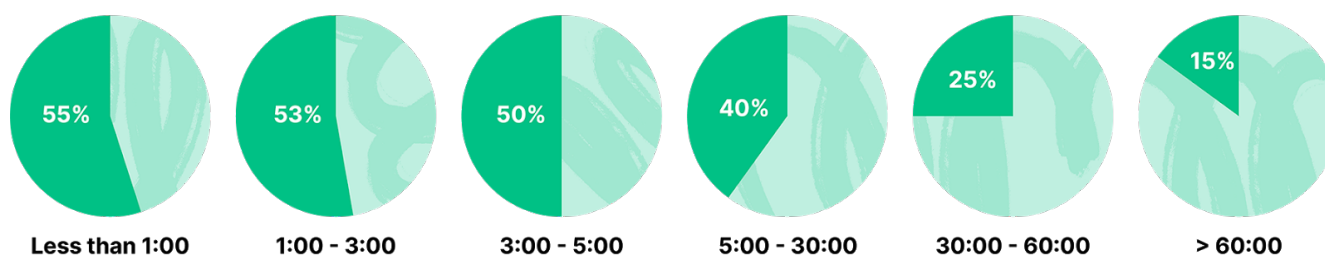
Although video volume is up across the board, long-form videos stole the spotlight from a growth perspective. The number of videos in the 30-60 minute category grew 140% compared to 2019. This suggests that longer-form content is becoming a more popular option for businesses as more companies embrace video series and other long-form video content.

Finally, marketers really leaned into video throughout the entire funnel. The number of videos using conversion events increased by 30% in 2020. When it comes to driving engagement, events placed at the beginning of videos had the highest conversion rate at 12.7%. Marketers also found that email collection forms were the most successful at converting viewers, with a 15% conversion rate in 2020. This finding correlates with the increase in video content consumption overall, suggesting that viewers are more than willing to hand over their email if the content is compelling enough.

What to Keep Doing in 2021

More marketers are embracing long-form video content to support marketing goals. We love this trend and have seen first-hand how it can impact long-term brand affinity. So, in 2021, we want to encourage folks to keep experimenting with different video formats and lengths. And, in general, aim for these engagement benchmarks to gauge how well your content is resonating with your audience.

Engagement benchmarks by video length (in minutes)*



*Engagement varies heavily depending on multiple factors like the content within the video itself, where the video is embedded, and more.

WISTIA'S 2021 STATE OF VIDEO REPORT

What to Stop Doing in 2021

More than just cat videos on social media, the data clearly shows that the global pandemic has accelerated video adoption and consumption for businesses. Your audience is hungry for video content, so give them what they want! If you haven't started investing more in video content across your marketing funnel, now is the time. Yes, video can be used to entertain and inspire; but it can also be used to educate, empower, and drive real results for your organization.

What to Start Doing in 2021

It's time to embrace live! Throughout 2020, marketers did a ton of experimenting with [live video and virtual events](#). Experience producing these types of events will become a default for marketers moving forward. Whether that means being comfortable on camera or knowing how to best engage with viewers on a live stream, marketers will need to keep up with best practices and industry standards in this space.

Check out the full detailed report Wistia released earlier this year regarding the [State of Video](#). If you'd like additional resources for producing great quality marketing videos, check out [Wistia's Guide to Video Marketing](#).



Video can supercharge your marketing. Ready to power up your content?

When customers use video as a part of their marketing strategy, they see an increase in overall brand engagement. Start seeing bigger results from your videos with Wistia.

Start free now

CHAPTER TWELVE

UK & Ireland Spotlight

Understanding the state of marketing across the globe is important. But marketing trends tend to vary based on location—and the UK and Ireland are no different.

We asked 412 businesses (370 in the UK, 42 in Ireland), both B2B and B2C, across a variety of industries (including advertising or marketing; business or consumer services; agriculture, food, and beverage; retail; construction; financial services or insurance; and education) for their insights on all things marketing, including the strategies they're focusing on, what's driving results, and where they're taking their marketing in 2021 (and beyond). Here's what they had to say...



It's All About Leads

When it comes to marketing priorities, businesses in the UK and Ireland are in agreement—it's all about the leads.

When asked to rank their top marketing priorities for the next 12 months, 71% of businesses in the UK and 69% of businesses in Ireland included “generating more leads” in their top three priorities—with 36% of UK-based businesses and 31% of Ireland-based businesses ranking lead generation as their top marketing priority.

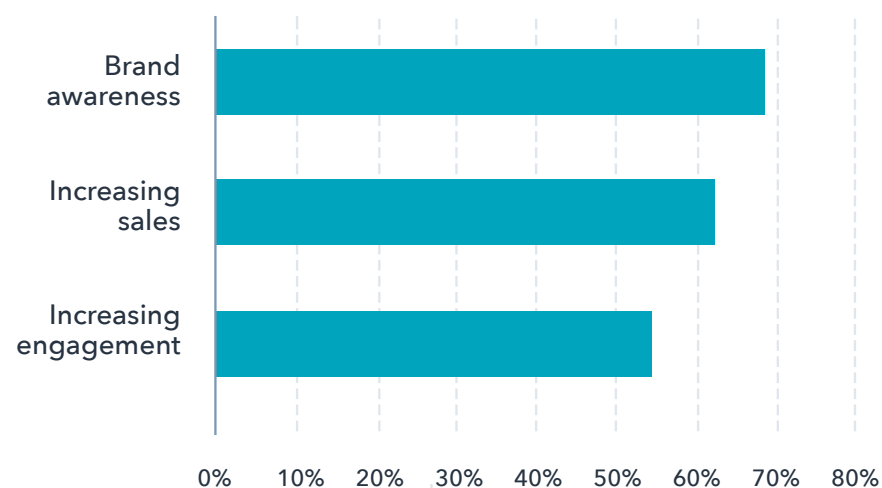
These priorities are reflected in the way businesses plan to spend their budgets. In the UK, the businesses surveyed plan to focus their upcoming marketing budgets on paid media (24.88%) and content creation (26.28%)—both of which can help to drive qualified leads (and, ultimately, more sales and revenue for the business).

Ireland-based businesses are also planning to focus a significant portion of their marketing spend on paid media to drive new leads (28.12%). And while Irish companies do plan to invest in content creation (23.45%), they're slightly more invested in getting the software they need to effectively manage their marketing campaigns (which, of course, can help to more effectively generate leads)—with a mean of 26.95%

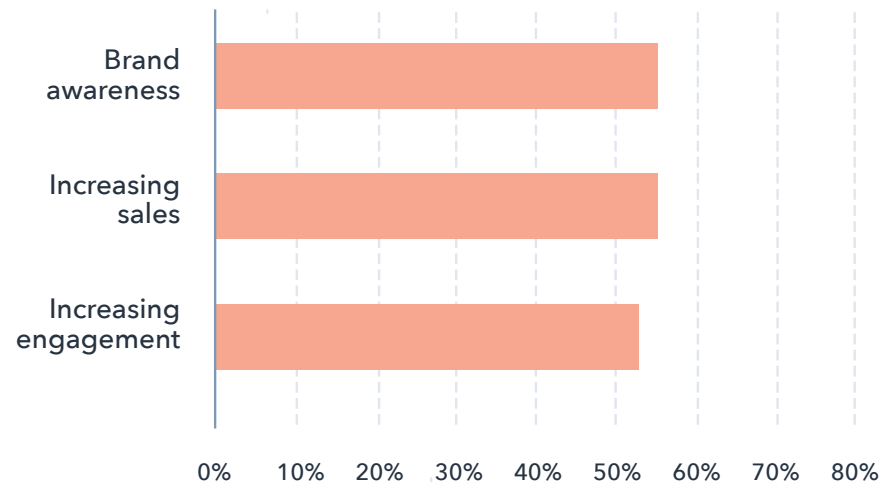
of marketing spend going towards software.

Even though the majority of businesses in the UK and Ireland named “generating more leads” as a top (if not the top) marketing priority, when asked to share their goals for their marketing campaigns, interestingly, lead generation was not at the top of the list. Here are the primary marketing campaign goals for the UK and Ireland:

UK primary marketing campaign goals:



Ireland's primary marketing campaign goals:



In the UK, 50% of businesses said lead generation was a primary goal for their marketing campaigns—but more businesses named brand awareness (68%), increasing sales (62%), and increasing engagement (54%) as primary marketing campaign goals. In Ireland, at 53%, lead generation was just shy of being the most common primary goal for marketing campaigns—only slightly behind brand awareness (55%) and increasing sales (also 55%).



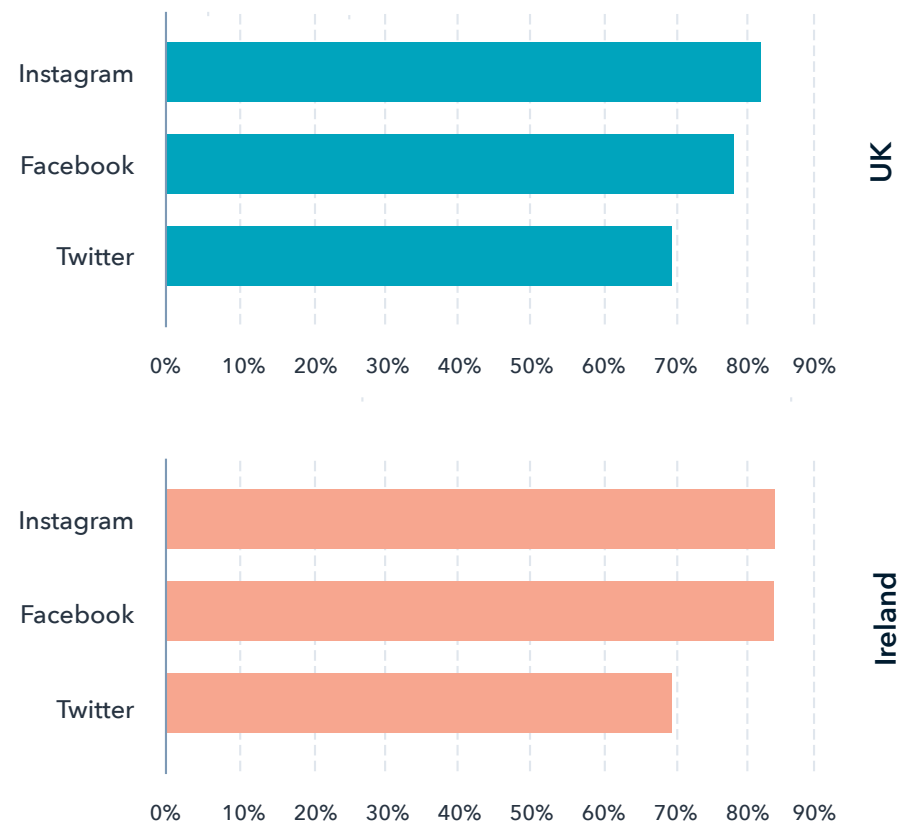
Most Companies Consider Social Media To Be Their Primary Approach To Marketing...

Another major marketing priority for businesses in the UK and Ireland? Social media.

71% of businesses in the UK and 60% of businesses in Ireland claim social media as their organisation's primary approach to marketing—while 86% of UK-based businesses and 76% of Irish businesses rank social media as their most popular marketing channel.

While newer social media platforms (like TikTok) are generating plenty of buzz, when it comes to connecting with and marketing to customers, most businesses in the UK and Ireland are sticking to the tried-and-true platforms they know best—which makes sense, as both UK and Ireland-based businesses ranked Facebook (46% in the UK and 52% in Ireland) and Instagram (28% in the UK and 33% in Ireland) as the social media platforms with the most ROI.

What social media platforms does your company use?



What social media channels businesses are using is important - but so is *what they're doing* on those channels. The most popular social media marketing tactic in both the UK (at 64%) and Ireland (68%) is social listening - the practice of tuning to customers' online conversations to understand how they feel about your brand, products, and or/services.

The Importance Of Gathering Information From Customers - And Implementing Their Feedback

The fact that social listening is the #1 social media marketing tactic shows that businesses in the UK and Ireland care about what their customers think. But that care doesn't stop at just monitoring online conversations; UK and Ireland-based businesses are invested in getting to know their customers, what they need, and what they want—and then using that information and feedback to drive their business strategy.

Part of that strategy is collecting feedback directly from customers. 89% of businesses in the UK and a whopping 100% of businesses in Ireland collect customer feedback—with 95% of UK-based businesses and 88% of Ireland-based businesses then using that feedback to make decisions, steer the direction of their companies, and better serve their customers.

Some of the most popular methods for collecting customer feedback include: surveys (75% in the UK, 79% in Ireland), emails (63% in the UK, 55% in Ireland), and in-app or in-product surveys (44% in the UK, 52% in Ireland).

UK

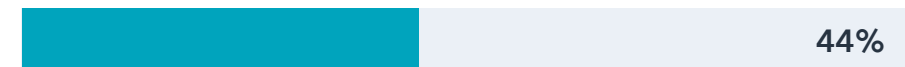
Surveys



Emails



In App/Product Surveys



Ireland

Surveys



Emails



In App/Product Surveys



Market Research

Marketing research is another way businesses are investing in getting the information they need to improve their businesses and better service their customers. 83% of companies in the UK and 93% of companies in Ireland currently conduct market research—with 69% of businesses in the UK and 79% of businesses in Ireland planning to increase their spending on marketing research in the upcoming year. And of those businesses that aren't currently conducting marketing research? 29% in the UK and 69% in Ireland plan to at some point in 2021.

Businesses in the UK and Ireland use a variety of tactics to conduct marketing research, including:

UK

Surveys



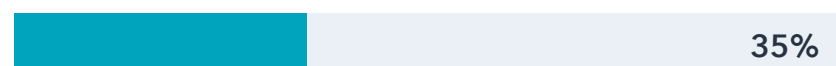
Interviews



Focus Groups



Experiments/Field Trials



Ireland

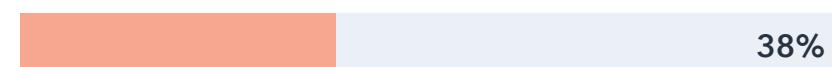
Surveys



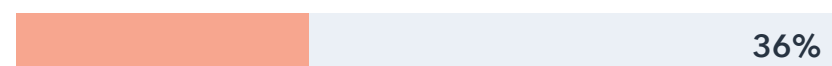
Interviews



Focus Groups



Experiments/Field Trials



But whatever the tactic they're using, similar to feedback, one thing businesses in the UK (90%) and Ireland (95%) have in common? They're using that marketing research to make business decisions.

The Most Popular (And Effective!) Marketing Strategies For UK and Ireland-Based Businesses

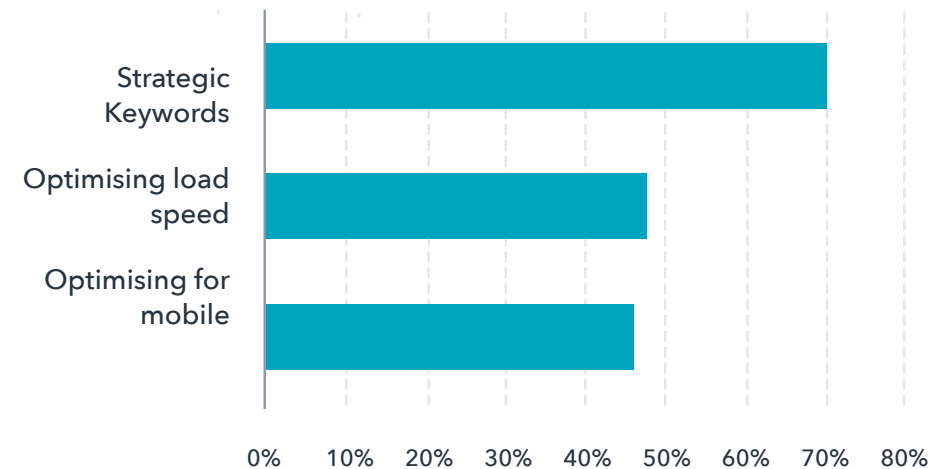
While social media may be the primary approach many businesses are taking to marketing in 2021, it's certainly not the only approach. Some other marketing strategies popular in the UK and Ireland include:

SEO

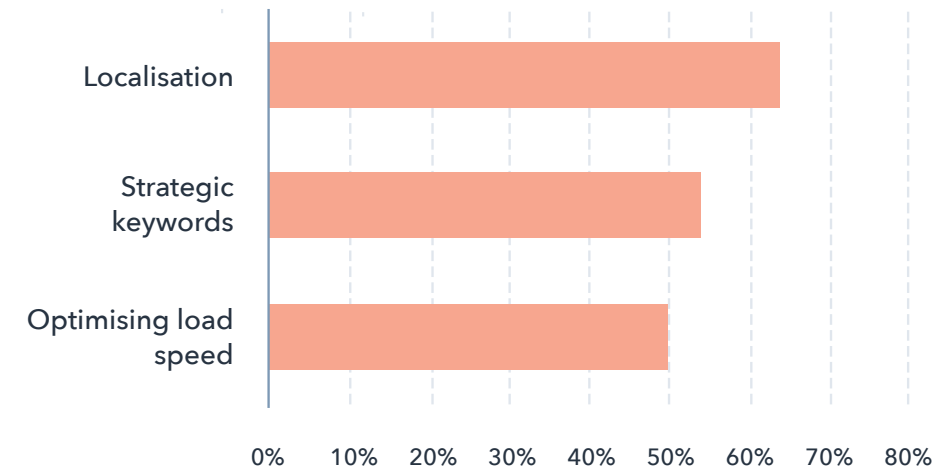
74% of businesses in the UK and 83% of businesses in Ireland consider SEO either "extremely effective" or "very effective" at hitting their marketing goals.



The most popular SEO tactics in the UK include:



In Ireland, the most popular SEO tactic are:



Account-based marketing

Account-based marketing (ABM), which leverages highly targeted marketing campaigns to land high-value accounts, has becoming an increasingly popular marketing strategy in the UK and Ireland, with 67% of companies in the UK and 79% of companies in Ireland currently using ABM—and with 72% (UK) and 79% (Ireland) ranking the strategy as either “extremely” or “very” effective.

Automation

More companies than ever are leveraging automation to make marketing easier and more effective. 73% of businesses in the UK and 81% of businesses in Ireland are currently using automation—with more companies (24% in the UK, 50% in Ireland) planning to roll out an automation strategy in the upcoming year.

Both UK and Ireland-based companies are leveraging automation most in three areas of their businesses:

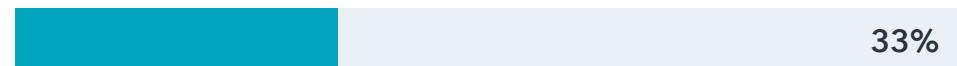
Marketing



Sales



Finance



UK

Marketing



Sales



Finance



Ireland

How those businesses are using automation is also similar—with task management (61% in the UK, 56% in Ireland) and content automation (39% in the UK, 41% in Ireland) being the most popular tactics around automation.

Conclusion

This year, embrace the marketing community as you set out to rethink what it means to be successful as a marketing team in 2021. Try new things (AI, VR, ABM – we’re looking at you.) Fail, then learn. Talk to your customers and your social media audience. Send out more surveys. Use more data. Floss your teeth. Tip well. (Oops, this conclusion just turned into a corny sign from the dentist – but those signs are so true! And inspirational.)

In 2021, marketing will be more human, creative, personalized, social-driven, and experimental than ever before. We can’t wait to see what you do.



Running a data-driven marketing program

HubSpot’s Marketing Hub has all the tools you need to optimize your strategy for 2021 and beyond. Run your website, social strategy, email, and conversion right from HubSpot, testing and iterating along the way.

Using the Marketing Hub, you can:

[Generate traffic](#)

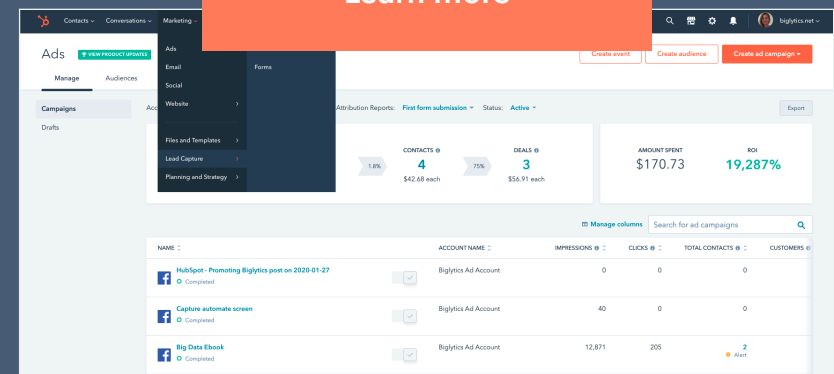
[Convert leads](#)

[Engage with your audience](#)

[Analyze and report on your marketing efforts](#)

[Connect with the marketing community](#)

Learn more

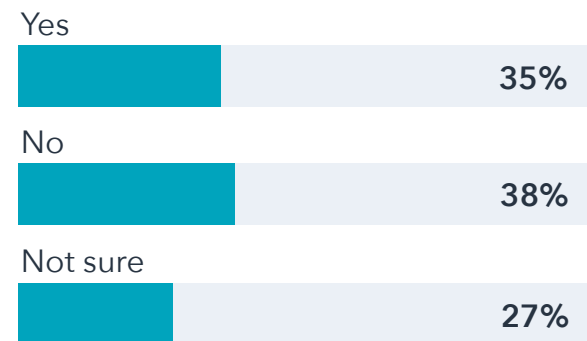


Appendix

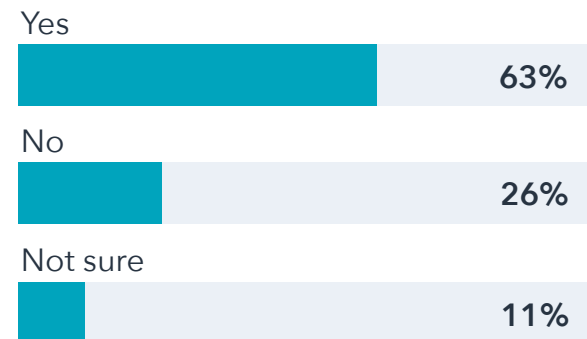
ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

Overall Marketing/Strategy

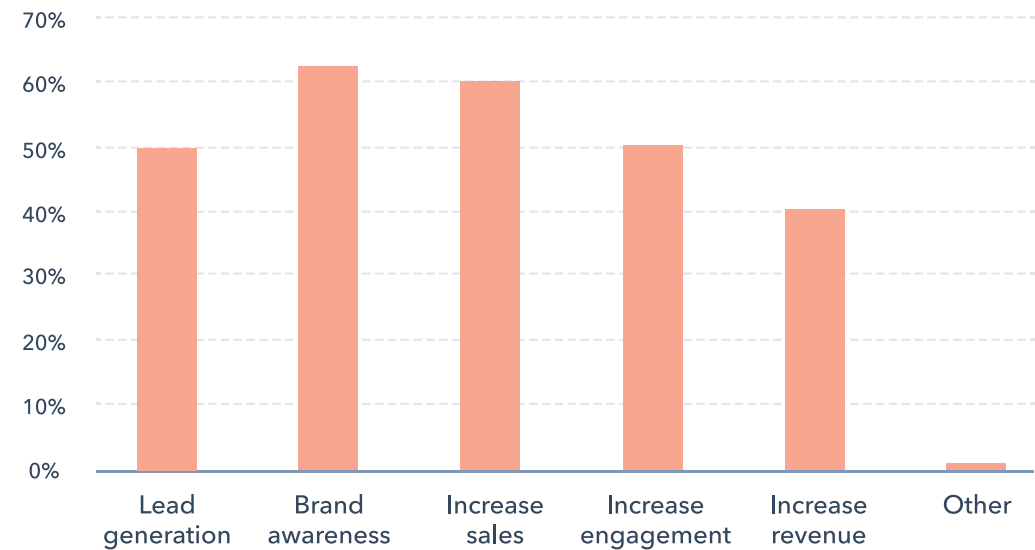
Does your company plan on running marketing campaigns in 2021?



Has your marketing budget increased in 2021?



Primary goals for running marketing campaigns in 2021



Marketing Automation

How effective is your automation strategy?

65%

of marketers feel their automation strategy is 'extremely effective' or 'very effective'.

What parts of your business are currently using automation?

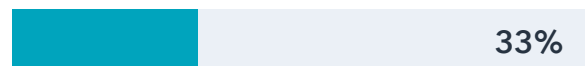
#1 Marketing



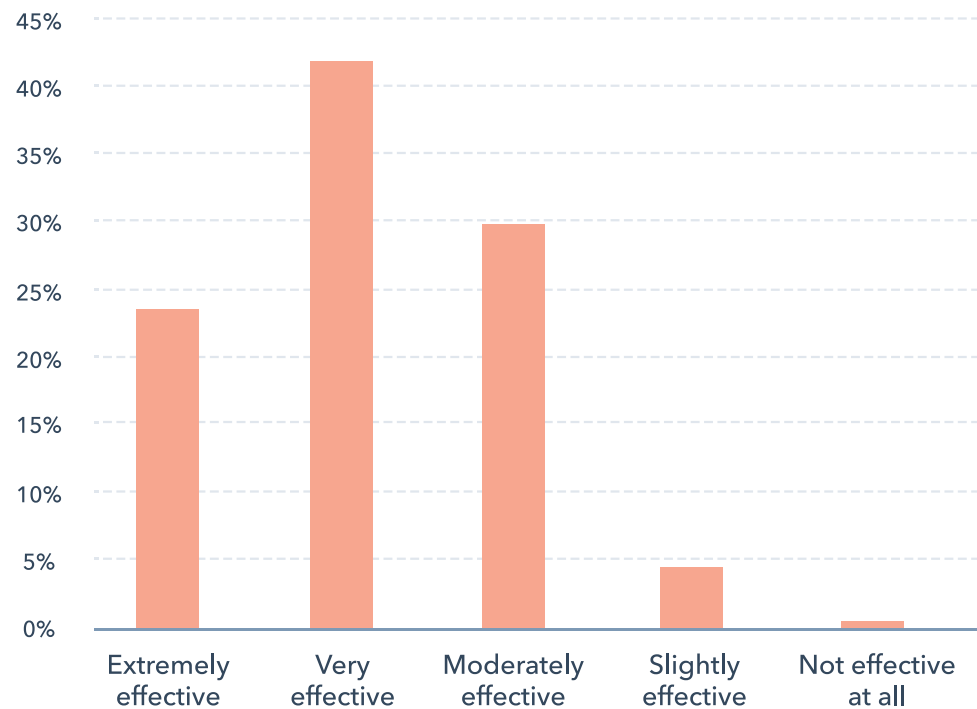
#2 Sales



#3 Finance



How effective is your automation strategy?



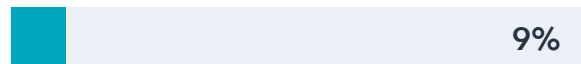
Content Marketing

Does your company have a website?

Yes



No

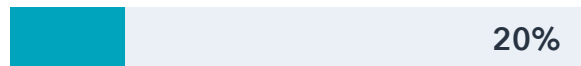


Is your company investing in a website upgrade in 2021?

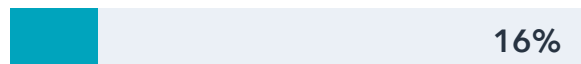
Yes



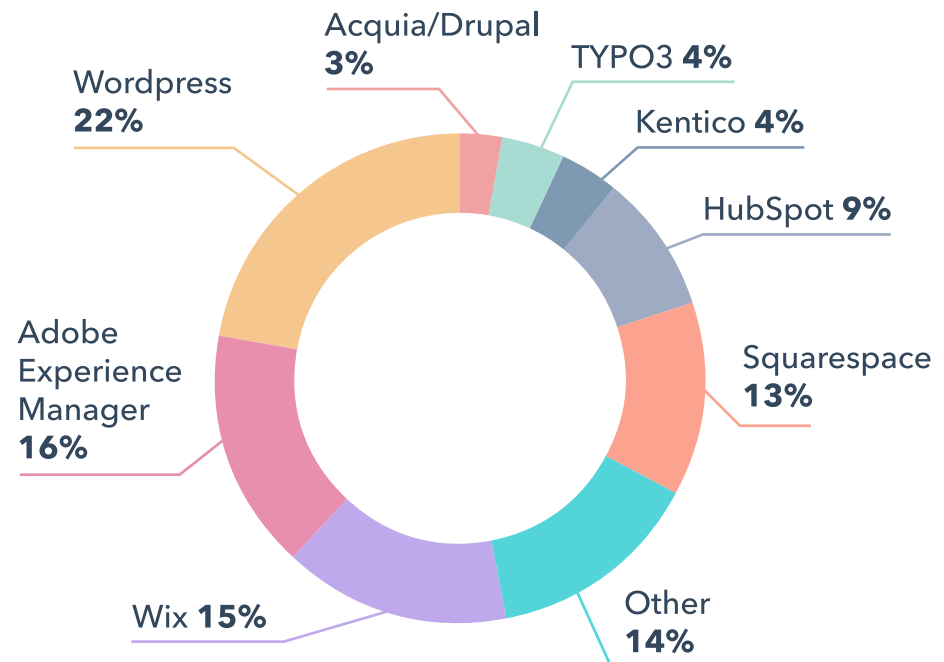
No



Not sure

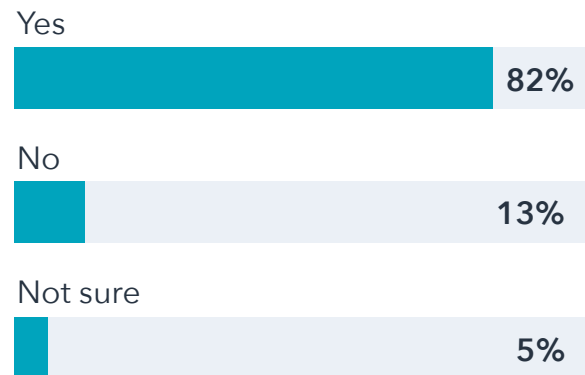


Which CMS platform is your company currently using?

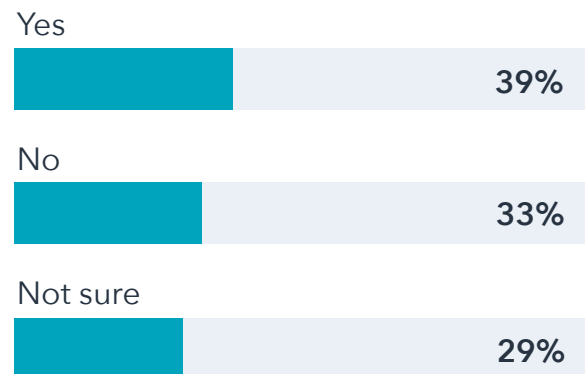


Social Media Marketing

Does your company invest in social media marketing?



Does your company plan on using social media marketing in 2021?



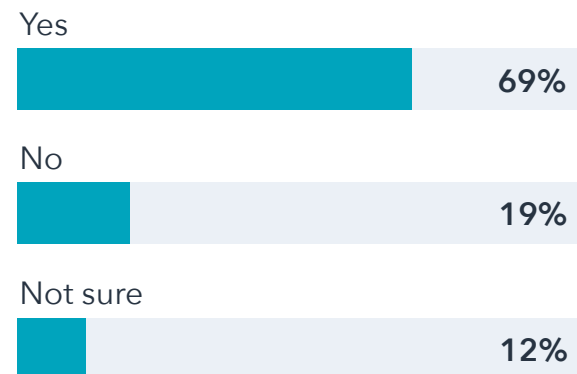
SEO

How confident are you that your website is helping you reach your marketing goals?

83%

of respondents are either 'very confident' or 'somewhat confident' that their website is helping them reach their marketing goals. Only 4% are 'not very confident' or 'not confident'.

Does your company actively invest time in search engine optimization (SEO)?



Which of the following SEO tools do you currently use?

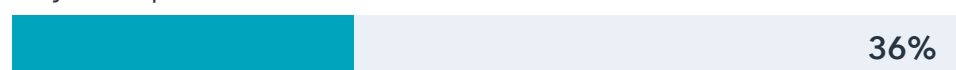
Google Analytics



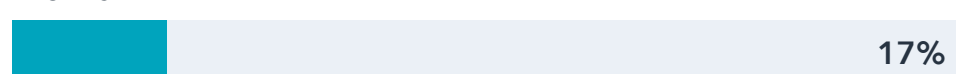
Google Search Console



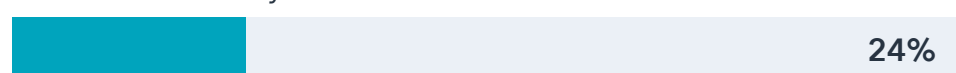
Keyword planner



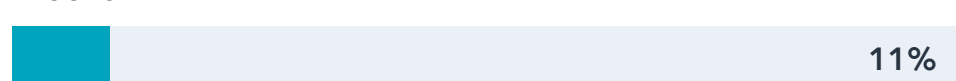
MozBar



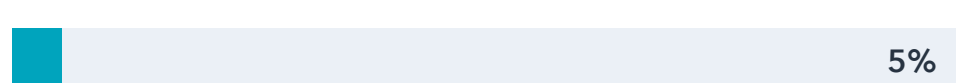
SEOWorkers analysis tool



WooRank



Other



How effective are your SEO tactics at helping you achieve marketing goals?

75%

'extremely effective' or 'very effective'

4%

'slightly effective' or 'not effective at all'

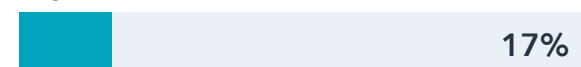
Reporting + Attribution

Does your company use reporting tools?

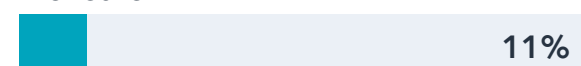
Yes



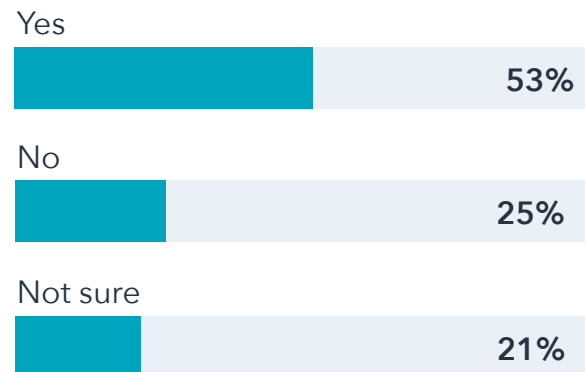
No



Not sure



Does your company use attribution reporting?



How confident are you that your team has access to data when they need to make business decisions?

87%

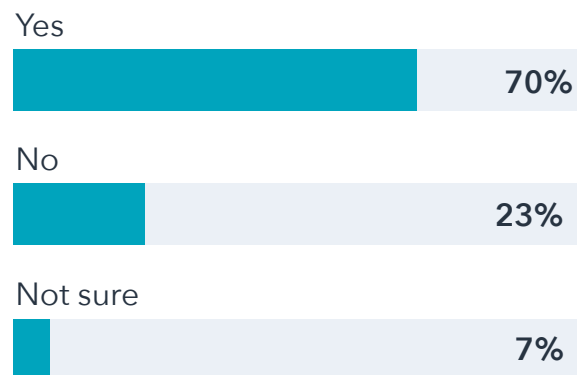
feel 'very confident' or 'somewhat confident'

2%

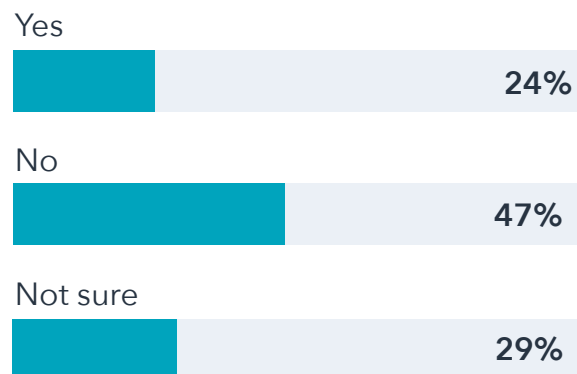
feel 'somewhat not confident' or 'not confident at all'

Email Marketing

Does your company invest in email marketing?

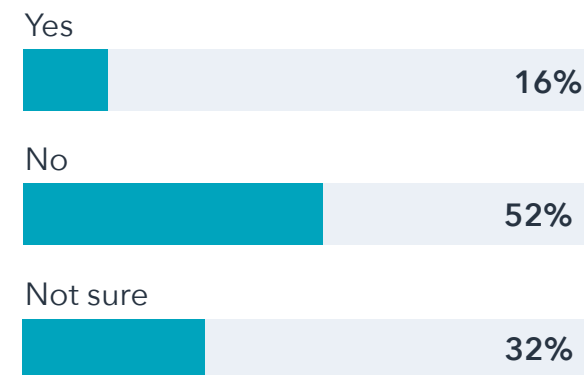


Does your company plan on using email marketing in 2021?



Conversational + AI Marketing

Does your company plan on using bots in marketing in 2021?

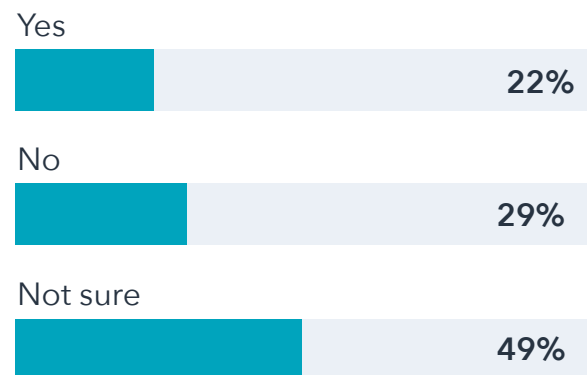


Account Based Marketing (ABM)

Does your company currently use ABM (Account Based Marketing)?



Does your company plan on using ABM in 2021?



How effective is your ABM strategy?

71%

'extremely effective'
or 'very effective'

3%

slightly effective' or '
not effective at all'

In which ways does your company target accounts?

#1 Geographic location



#2 Company size



#2 Industry

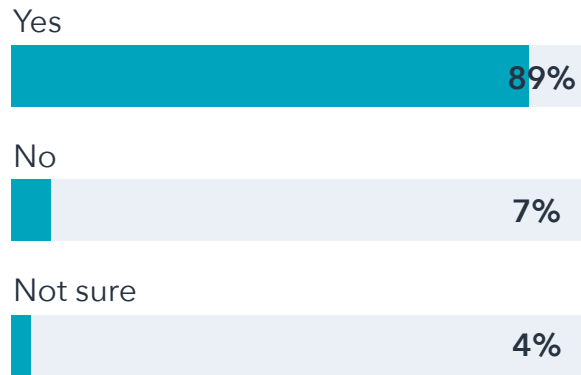


#3 Revenue

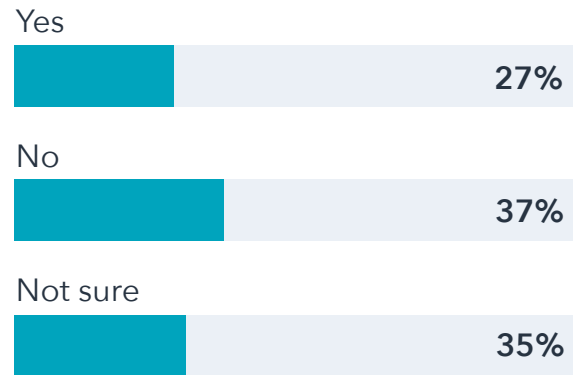


Market + Customer Research (ABM)

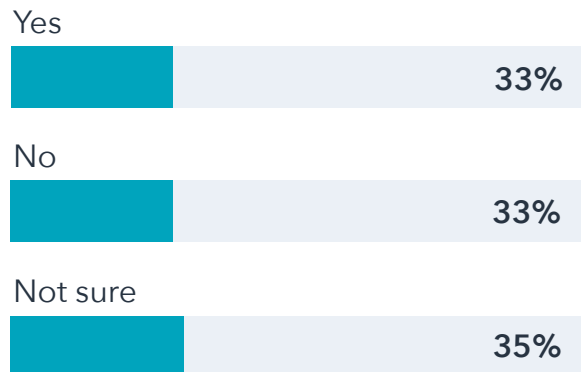
Does your company collect customer feedback?



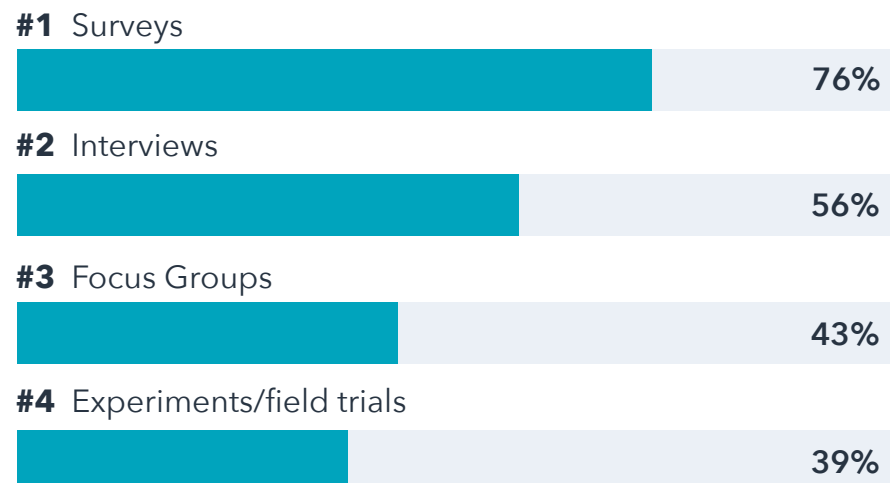
Does your company plan on conducting marketing research in 2021?



Does your company plan on collecting customer feedback in 2021?



What are your company's tactics for conducting marketing research?



International Marketing

In which ways does your company change marketing tactics based on region?

#1 Product offering



#2 Services offered



#3 Product name



SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Regions represented:

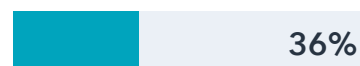
- USA
- Canada
- UK
- Ireland
- ANZ
- France
- Germany

Industries represented:

- Advertising or marketing
- Agriculture, food, and beverage
- Business or consumer services
- Chemicals and metals
- Communication services
- Construction
- Consumer product manufacturing
- Defense or aeronautics
- Education
- Electronics
- Emergency services
- Energy, utilities, and waste management
- Financial services and insurance
- Government
- Healthcare or public health
- Information Technology
- Manufacturing and materials
- Media and entertainment
- Non-profit
- Retail
- eCommerce
- Transportation and logistics
- Travel and hospitality
- Waste management or water systems

B2B or B2C?

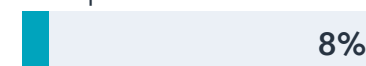
B2B



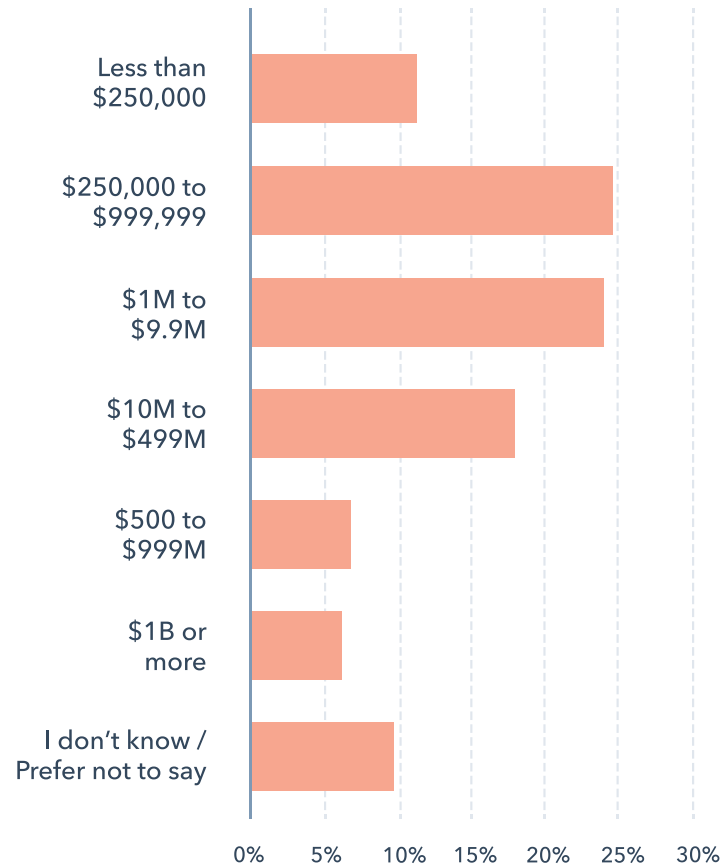
B2C



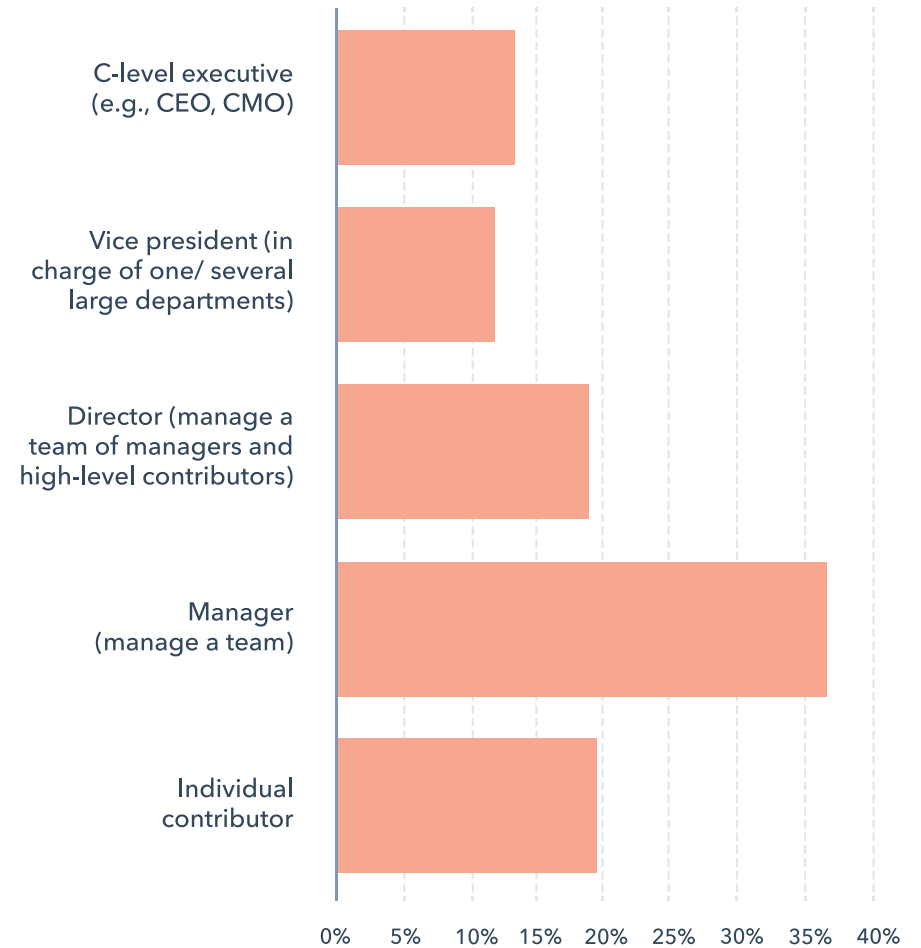
Nonprofit/Government



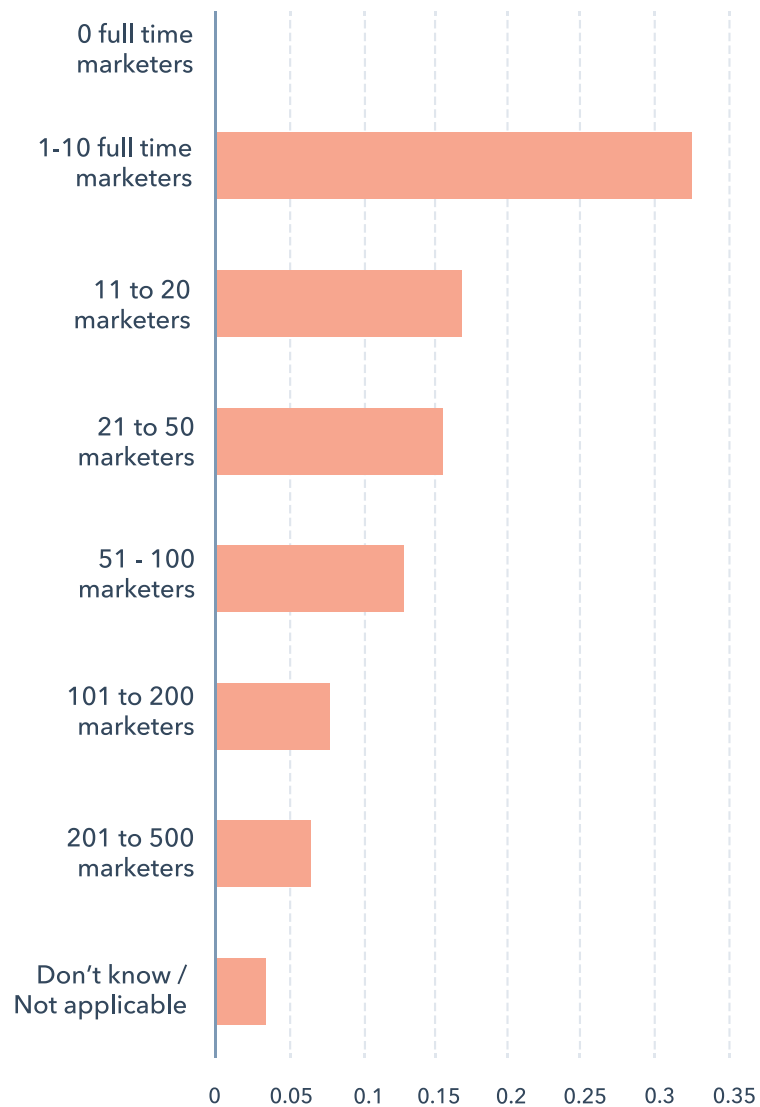
Company's average annual revenue [Global]



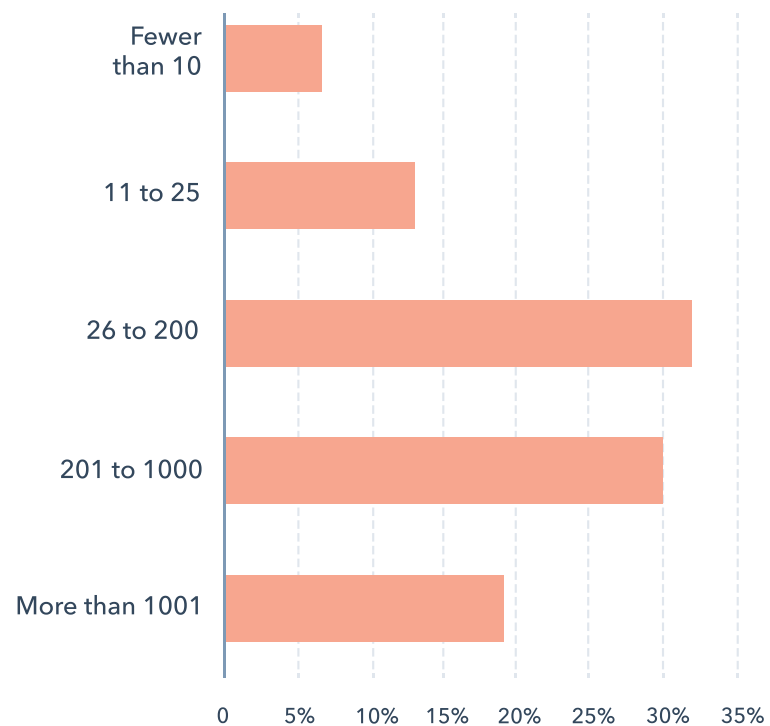
Level in company



of full time marketers



of employees at the company [Global]





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