



State of Marketing Strategy Report 2019

MARKETING STRATEGY & MANAGEMENT INSIGHTS



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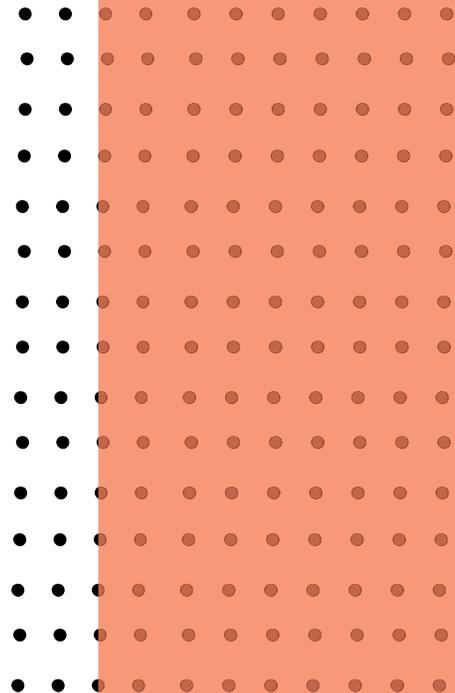
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Introduction

What separates successful [marketing teams](#) from the rest?

How does your team stack up against others in the industry?

And what are the most successful marketers doing differently to achieve success?

These are just a few questions our team wanted to answer with this report.

After all, marketers are inundated with headlines touting the [latest trends](#) and best practices that will help us get ahead in an ever-changing competitive landscape.

Some of those nuggets of conventional wisdom include advice around documenting our strategies, setting clear goals, and organizing our teams so we can execute effectively.

But, what does actual data say about what successful marketers are really doing day-to-day?

Anecdotal advice carries minimal weight without data to back it up. Not only that, but raw statistics also mean little unless we use them to extract meaningful insights.

So, we shared a survey to gather insights and find out what's working, what isn't, and what separates top-performing teams from the rest of the pack.

And we're now sharing what we've learned. Equipped with the insights in this report, you'll be able to:

- **Make data-backed decisions to guide your team toward success.**
- **Understand how your activities stack up against top-performing survey respondents.**
- **Use those findings to adjust your own marketing strategy, management, and execution.**
- **Do your best work to help your organization grow.**

The Top 4 Insights From 2018 (Revisited)

When we ran a similar survey last year, the top four insights we discovered included:

1. **Top marketers document their marketing strategy.** Marketers who document strategy were 538% more likely to report success than those who don't.
2. **Top marketers document their marketing processes.** Marketers who document process were 466% more likely to report success than those who don't.
3. **Top marketers set goals.** Marketers who set goals were 429% more likely to report success than those who don't. And 81% of those successful, goal-setting marketers achieve them.
4. **Top marketers conduct audience research.** Successful marketers were 242% more likely to report conducting audience research at least once per quarter. And 56% of our study's most elite marketers conduct research once or more per month.

This year, we dug more deeply into the benefits of documenting strategy and goal-setting. We also asked whether marketers were proactively planning processes and workflows around marketing toolsets (rather than simply documenting processes).

Top 5 Marketing Insights For 2019

This year, many of the same findings still held true (keeping in mind that the verbiage for each survey question was slightly different this year and the survey population was higher).

Here are those findings:

1. **Top marketers are organized.** The most organized marketers are 397% more likely to report success (R = 0.30, n = 2,055, p-value 0.0001).
2. **Top marketers set goals.** Goal-setting marketers are 376% more likely to report success (R = 0.27, n = 2,055, p-value 0.0001). 70% of the most organized marketers achieve their goals Most of the Time, while an elite 10% of organized marketers Always achieve them.
3. **Top marketers document their strategy.** Marketers with a documented strategy are 313% more likely to report success (R = 0.27, n = 2,055, p-value 0.0001).
4. **Top marketers proactively plan projects and campaigns.** Marketers who proactively plan projects are 356% more likely to report success (R = 0.34, n = 2,055, p-value 0.0001).
5. **Top marketers use agile project management processes.** Marketers using [agile project management](#) were 252% more likely to report success (R = 0.22, n = 2,055, p-value 0.0001).

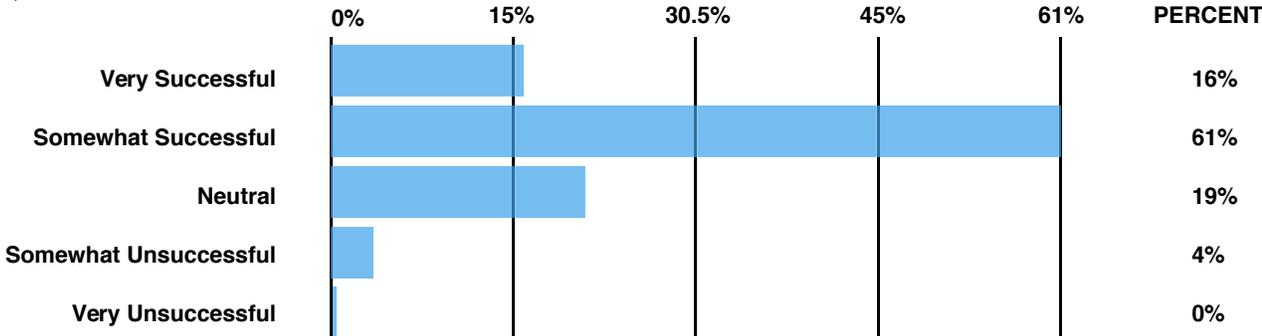
When we compiled our questions for this survey, we wanted to see how things may have changed from last year. We also wanted to confirm or deny some hypotheses we had. Some of our findings fell in line with last year's findings, while some that stood out were somewhat surprising.

And, of course, it turns out some assumptions we'd made were either wrong or weren't strongly supported by the survey data.

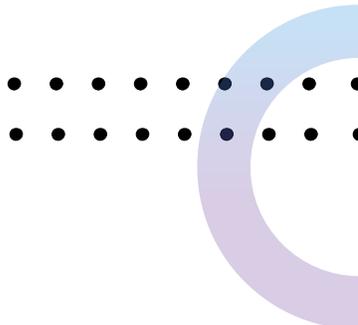
77% of Marketers Report Being Successful

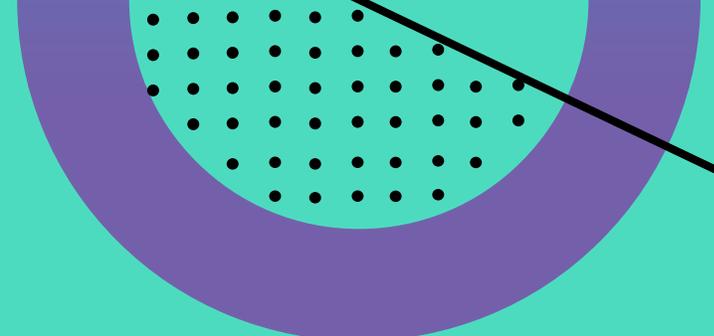
We started with a simple question: **is your marketing successful?**

Is Your Marketing Successful?



This data suggests that for most marketers, there is ample room to improve. However, it also shows that most marketers in the survey are headed in the right direction, with a slim percentage outright reporting lackluster results.





“Action is the foundational key to all success.”

– Pablo Picasso

The Most Organized Marketers Are 397% More Likely to Report Success

Our Hypothesis:

Organized marketing teams are more likely to achieve success.

What We Learned:

Top-performing marketers in the survey overwhelmingly reported being organized.

Marketers in the survey who reported being Very Organized are 397% more likely to report success.

Takeaways

This equaled just 17% of all marketers in the survey. Plus, the data showed a moderate correlation between organization and success. It's not extremely strong, but enough to illustrate a clear connection between getting organized and producing results.

This is elite performance from elite teams.

Next Steps

There are a few steps you can take toward getting your team more organized:

- **Document workflows:** In last year's survey, marketers who documented workflows were 4.7X more likely to be successful.
- **Implement clear project management processes:** Manage and execute workflows with a clear process from start to finish every time.
- **Help your team help itself:** [This guide on getting organized](#) is a great resource to start with.

Goal-Setting Marketers Are 376% More Likely to Report Success

Our Hypothesis:

Setting goals would continue to be correlated with success.

What We Learned:

Marketers with goals are indeed successful. However, marketers who are both organized and set goals are most likely to achieve them.

Before you can achieve success, you need to quantify what success looks like. Generally, this means setting a clear goal.

Marketers who set goals are 376% more likely to report being successful. Here are some more interesting findings as well:

- List every step required to complete the project.
- Assign a role or team member to each step.
- Determine how long each step should take to complete.

Takeaways

Here's the most important takeaway from this:

Getting organized + setting goals = higher likelihood of success.

Next Steps

If you're not setting goals right now, or wonder if you could do a more effective job at setting them, follow these steps:

- **Get organized:** The previous section includes useful tips in this area.
- **Make goals SMART:** Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.
- **Connect goals to KPIs:** Set specific metrics you'll use to gauge success toward goals.

Marketers Who Document Strategy Are 313% More Likely to be Successful

Our Hypothesis:

Marketers with documented strategies would continue to show success.

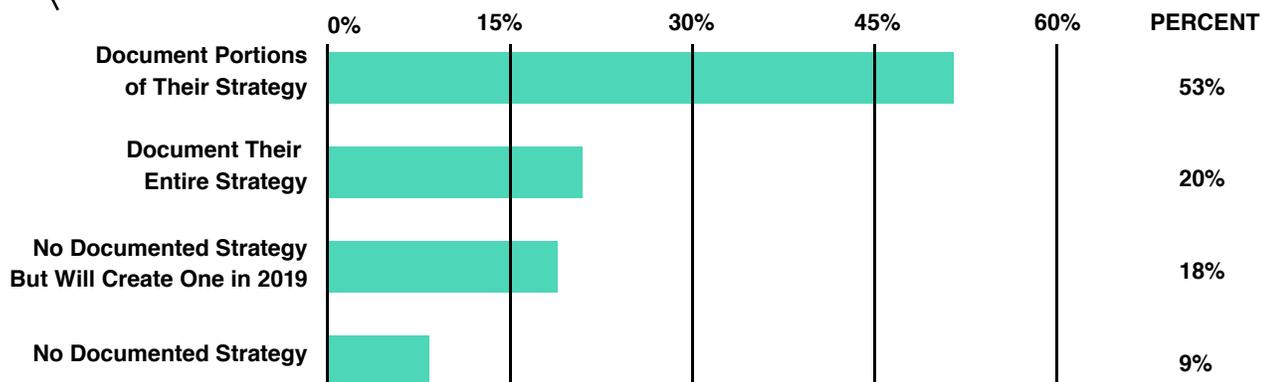
What We Learned:

While the overall percentage dropped somewhat from last year, this hypothesis held true year over year.

We're fans of the phrase, "Plan your work, then work your plan."

That's what a documented strategy helps marketers do. It's something we're often told we need, and the data continues to demonstrate there's a good reason for this.

Are Marketers Documenting Strategy?



Takeaways

This data aligns with findings from a Content Marketing Institute survey where [65% of respondents \(amongst B2B marketers\) reported having a documented content strategy.](#)

Other interesting statistics:

- **57% of marketers** who also reported being **Very Organized** had a complete documented strategy.
- **89% of marketers** who are **Very Organized** and have a **documented strategy** report being at least somewhat successful (with 54% reporting being Somewhat Successful and 35% reporting being Very Successful).
- 0% of this group reported being Very Unsuccessful, and just 1% report being Somewhat Unsuccessful. The remaining 10% report neutral outcomes.

Next Steps

Why does this matter? Because [documented strategy](#) is an engine for clear communication.

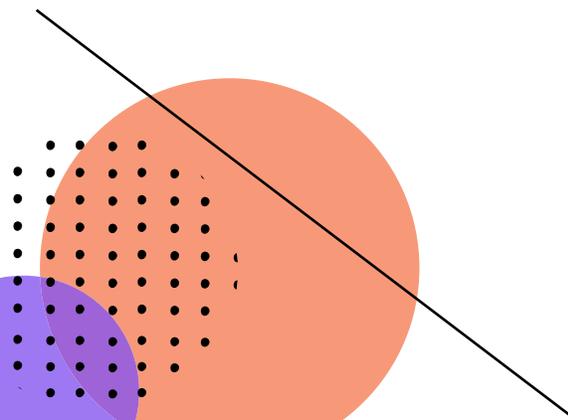
And when you consider that 80% of marketers who set goals also document their strategy (and 82% of these same marketers are at least Somewhat Successful), you have a recipe for a team rowing in the same direction.

In fact, a team from [MIT's Human Dynamics Laboratory](#) documented “the behavior of teams that ‘click.’”

Using what they dub “sociometric” badges, they collected data on communication behavior within teams.

One of their key findings: “patterns of communication [are] the most important predictor of a team’s success.”

So, what does this mean? While there’s always room for improvement, getting organized and documenting strategy improves odds for success.



Marketers Who Proactively Plan Projects and Campaigns Are 356% More Likely to be Successful

Our Hypothesis:

Proactive planning precedes successful execution.

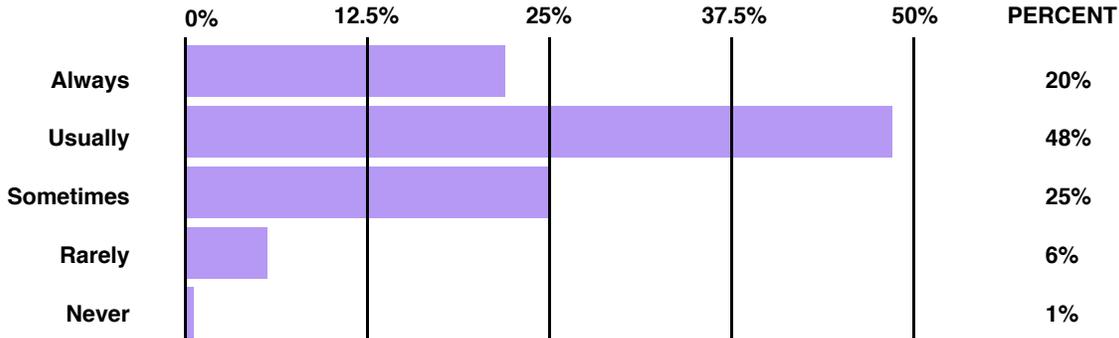
What We Learned:

Nailed it.

Planning doesn't stop with a documented strategy.

Marketers who usually or always plan their projects and campaigns when executing against their strategy are 356% more likely to report success.

Do You Plan Projects Ahead of Time?



Takeaways

The top 15% of marketers who reported their work is **Very Successful** also **plan projects and campaigns ahead of time, every time.**

The takeaway? It pays to plan every project before you start. This helps avoid ambiguity, rework, and other frustrations that derail marketing teams from finishing work on time.

Next Steps

Get started planning projects and campaigns with these resources:

- [How to Organize Your Campaigns With the Best Marketing Project Management Calendar Template \(CoSchedule Blog\)](#)
- [The Ultimate Marketing Campaign Planning Checklist That Will Get You Proactive \(CoSchedule Blog\)](#)

Teams Implementing Agile Marketing Processes Are 252% More Likely to Report Success

Our Hypothesis:

Teams using agile project management would be more successful.

What We Learned:

Process alone doesn't drive success, but using agile marketing processes is loosely correlated with greater success.

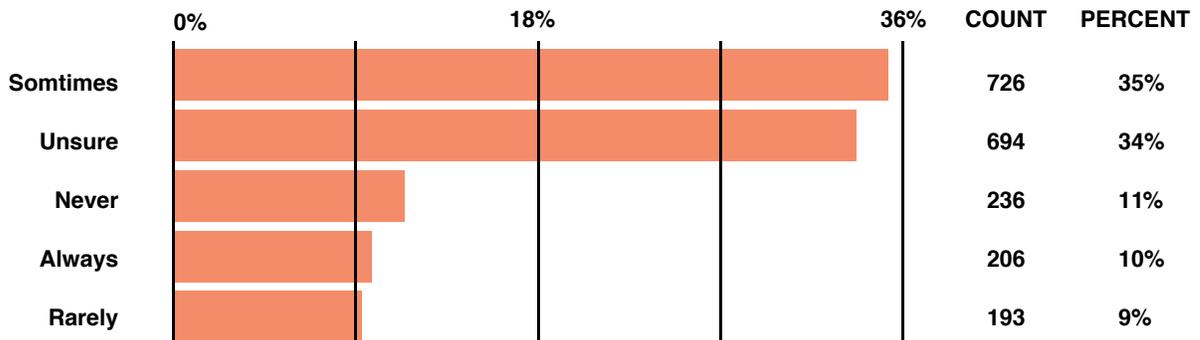
One way to make planning, organization, and execution more efficient is to implement agile marketing processes.

By borrowing the project management framework from the software development world and applying it to marketing, teams can get more done in less time and with fewer headaches.

However, adoption of agile marketing amongst survey recipients seemed somewhat lower than expected. Just 10% said they Always implement agile with their marketing team, while 34% were Unsure.



Are Marketing Teams Using Agile Processes?



Takeaways

This suggests marketers may be unaware of agile or how it could benefit their team. The number of respondents saying they Sometimes (35%) implement agile may also suggest that the majority of marketers who do use agile marketing aren't getting the full benefits.

Next Steps

Getting started with agile now could help your team get ahead of your peers. For further reading, consider reading [CoSchedule's guide on agile marketing](#).

Additional Benchmarks and Insights

The survey yielded more interesting insights outside our top findings. These data points may also be useful for benchmarking and comparison purposes for your team.

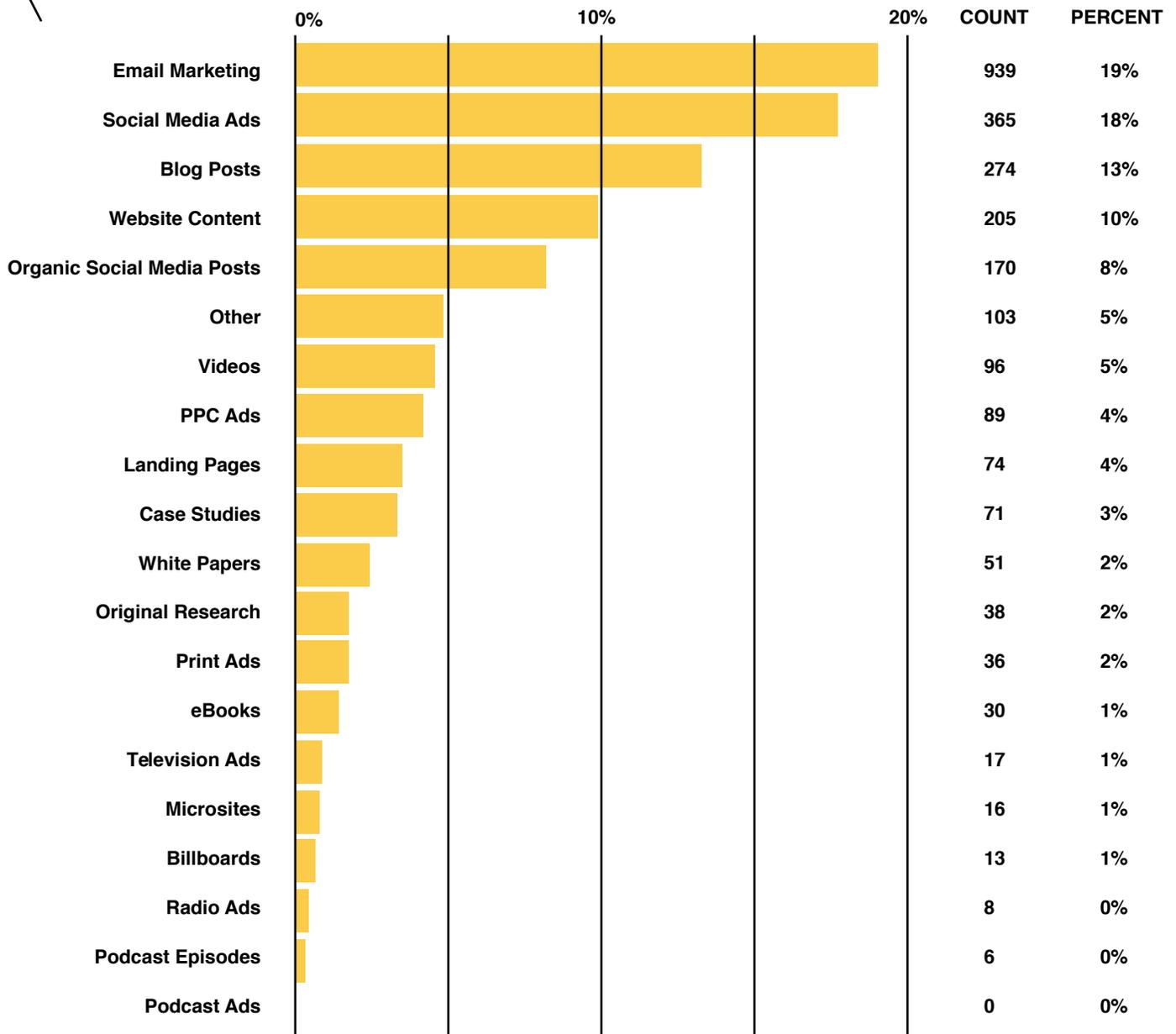
Which Content Types and Marketing Channels Are Most Effective?

Marketers have more options than ever when it comes to tactics and channels to reach potential customers.

19% of marketers reported email marketing was their most successful channel. Given the oft-repeated statistic that **email marketing drives roughly 4,000% ROI**, it's to be expected that it would appear near the top of the list.

It's also a strong reminder that while other channels may generate more hype and headlines, email is still where it's at for producing consistent and measurable revenue.

What Are The Most Effective Marketing Channels?

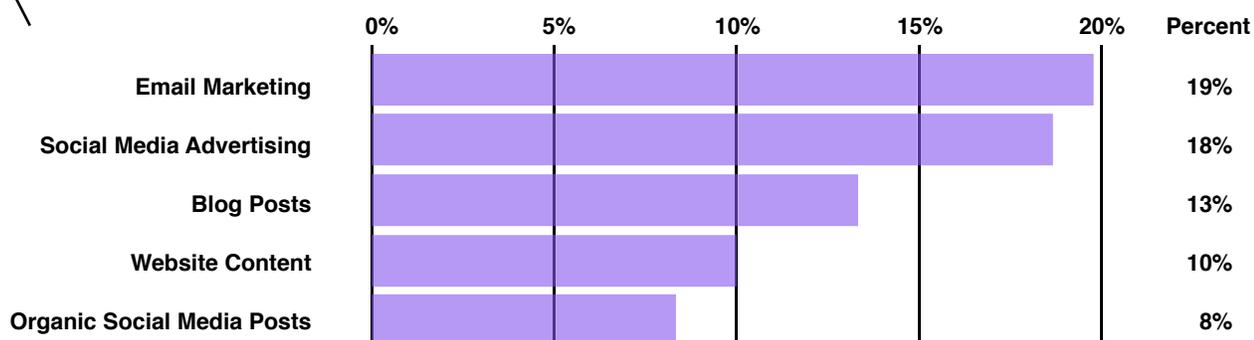


Next, **18% of marketers reported that social media advertising** was their most successful type of content. This correlates with ongoing algorithm changes on popular networks like Facebook and Twitter, which have led to declines in organic reach and referring less traffic to websites.

What's noteworthy here is that only **8% of marketers reported having the most success with organic social media content**. This correlates with the downward trend of plummeting organic reach. Marketers who are continuing to succeed here must focus on content quality and engagement, adjusting their strategy to align with ever-changing expectations.

Blog posts (13%) and website content (10%) came in at #3 and #4 on the list. These often go hand in hand with email marketing, as well as paid and organic social media. You need to content to share and destinations to direct audiences where they can convert.

What Are A Marketer's Most Effective Content Types?



Stand Out By Doing What Others Won't

Of course, the grass grows where you water it, and that's something worth considering when evaluating which [tactics](#) are driving the most success.

And competition in the blogosphere and on social media is only heating up.

If lots of other marketers are heavily invested in email, content, and social media, what can you do to stand out?

Now, this data does not mean marketers who are successful with these types of content are not also [creating other content types](#) as well. But, it does imply these areas may be where investment is highest. This means there may be opportunity to expand and experiment in other areas, especially if you don't see your competition doing similar things already.

So, don't necessarily shy away from other formats that appear further down this list. Here are some tactics and use cases to consider:

- Create [case studies](#) to demonstrate real-world applications of your products and services.
- Share [white papers](#) and [ebooks](#) to establish topical authority.
- Conduct [original research](#) (much like this report) for your own industry.

Be thoughtful and strategic about what you create, and above all, always provide value for your audience and customers. This applies regardless of channels, strategies, or tactics.

Are Marketers Setting Project Deadlines?

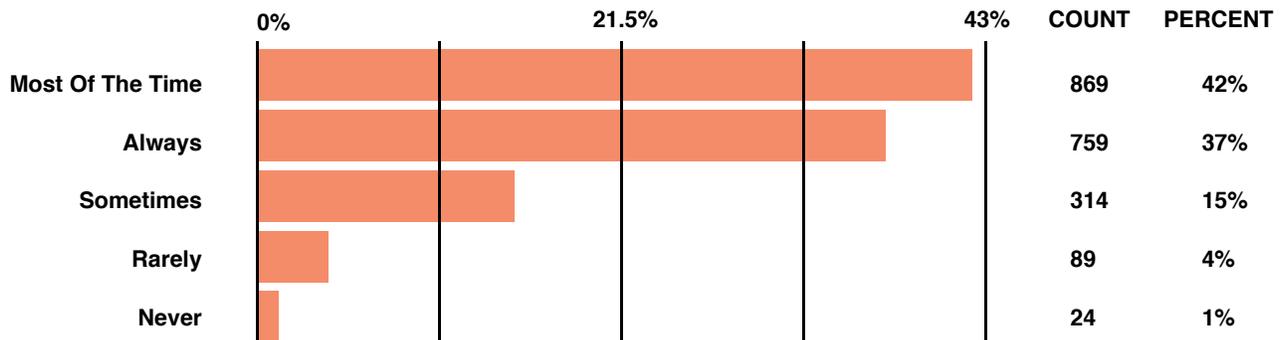
Deadlines hold teams accountable to deliver on time.

And they're not just for content-based projects either. Every campaign and project should have a deadline attached to it.

So it's encouraging to see 42% of respondents set deadlines Most of the Time, while 37% said they Always give projects a deadline.

With only 5% reporting they rarely or never set deadlines, marketers from the survey are clear on the benefits of deadlines.

Are Marketers Setting Deadlines?



Is Your Marketing Team Proactively Organized?

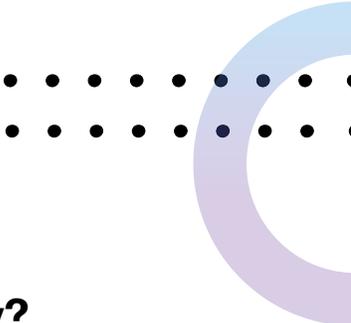
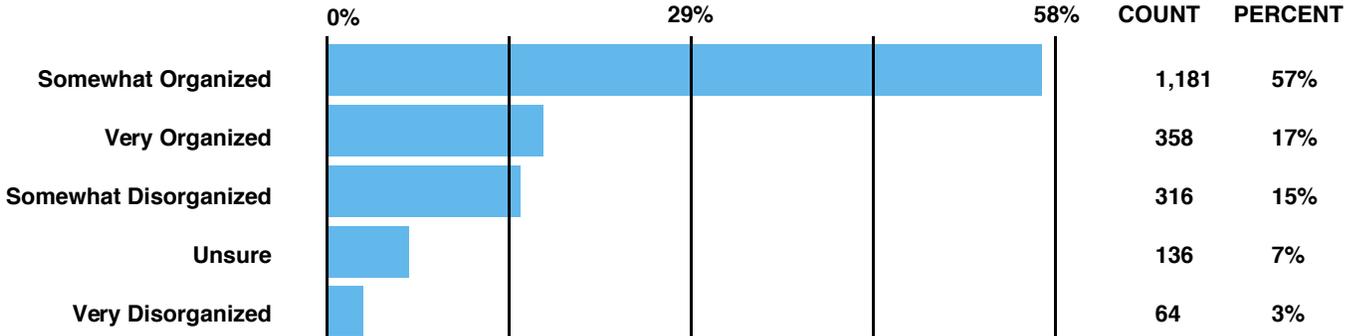
Organized marketing teams are successful marketing teams.

57% of marketers said their teams are Somewhat Organized. This means planning projects and tasks ahead of time using tools to manage processes.

That isn't a bad figure at all. However, just 17% said they're Very Organized.

This suggests that for most marketers, there's room to improve.

How Organized Are Marketing Teams?



Do You Measure Your Team Members' Productivity?

How much work are marketing teams actually getting done, and are managers taking steps to proactively measure output?

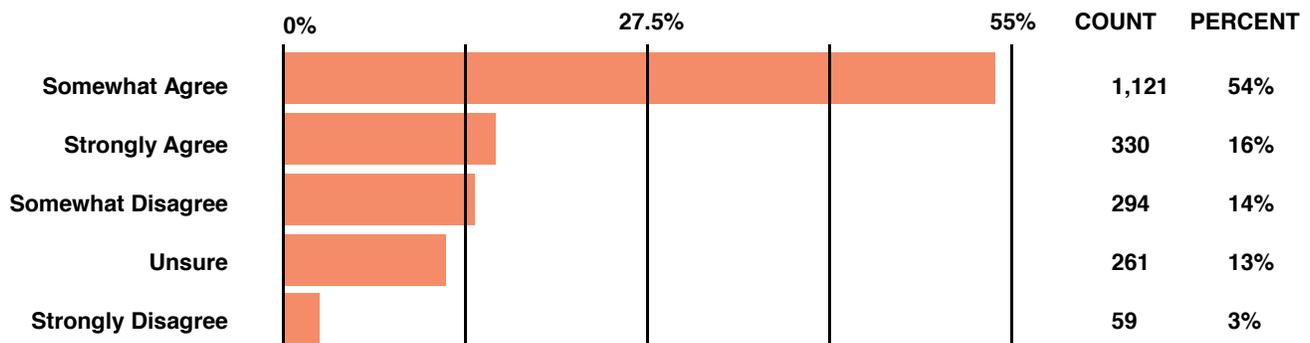
Of course, results matter more than just keeping busy. But results don't happen without taking action.

Only 32% of marketers said they quantitatively measure productivity. This could indicate one of two things:

- **Marketers don't understand the benefits of measuring productivity.** Measuring output can help managers identify productivity roadblocks, understand how team members are performing, and increase or decrease workloads accordingly.
- **Marketers lack the tools to this easily.** CoSchedule customers can use [Team Performance Reports](#) to measure on-time task completion automatically.

How Easy Is It For Marketers to Find Needed Assets?

Marketing teams often need to collaborate on documents and share files to complete their work. They may also need access to file photos and other assets. The less time spent tracking down those assets, the better.



54% of marketers surveyed Somewhat Agreed it was easy to find things they need to complete projects. While this is nowhere near ideal, a few simple fixes might include:

- **Moving to a file sharing cloud platform like Dropbox or Google Drive.** Combined with a clear folder structure and consistent file naming convention, these can make storing and locating assets easy.
- **Adopting DAM (Digital Asset Management) software.** These are purpose-built platforms for hosting media, like video and image files.
- **Switch to a marketing management platform.** Software such as CoSchedule makes it easy to keep files attached to projects where they'll be worked on.

How Do Marketers Feel About Their Team's Organizational Skills?

So, most marketers who took the survey reported they were successful. And the most successful marketers are also organized. However, getting organized isn't necessarily easy.

So, how do marketers actually feel about their organizational skills?

59% reported they Somewhat Agree that their team has strong organizational skills, while just 20% said they Strongly Agree. This suggests that there is room for improvement.

For further reading on organizing teams, check out these resources from CoSchedule:

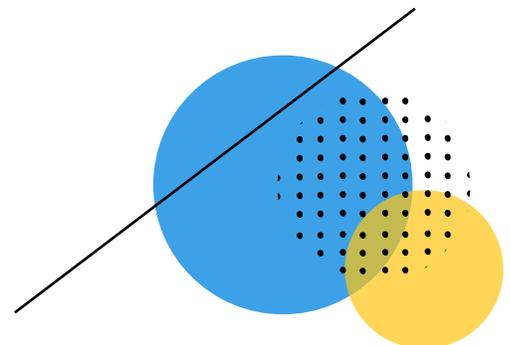
- [How to Get Organized At Work When You're a Marketer \(CoSchedule Blog\)](#)
- [How to Prove the ROI of Getting Organized \(CoSchedule Blog\)](#)
- [Why Starting + Shipping + Staying Organized is Key to Marketing Success \(Actionable Marketing Podcast episode w/ Kelly Napoli from Obermiller Nelson Engineering\)](#)

Are Marketers Using Tools to Help Get Organized?

Sometimes success starts with having the right tools for the job.

57% of marketers working on a team who were surveyed **use project management software**. This could include options such as Trello, Basecamp, Asana, or CoSchedule (29% of respondents reported using CoSchedule).

32% also reported using task management software (such as [Todoist](#), [Any.do](#), and [Wunderlist](#)). These types of tools are invaluable for developing checklist-based workflows to keep teams on task. CoSchedule customers can also use [Task Templates](#).





The takeaway: **the right tools help skilled people do their work better.** Just like a plumber wouldn't fix a drain with a saw, nor would a lumberjack wouldn't chop a tree a wrench, marketers should consider whether their current toolstacks are suited for their work.

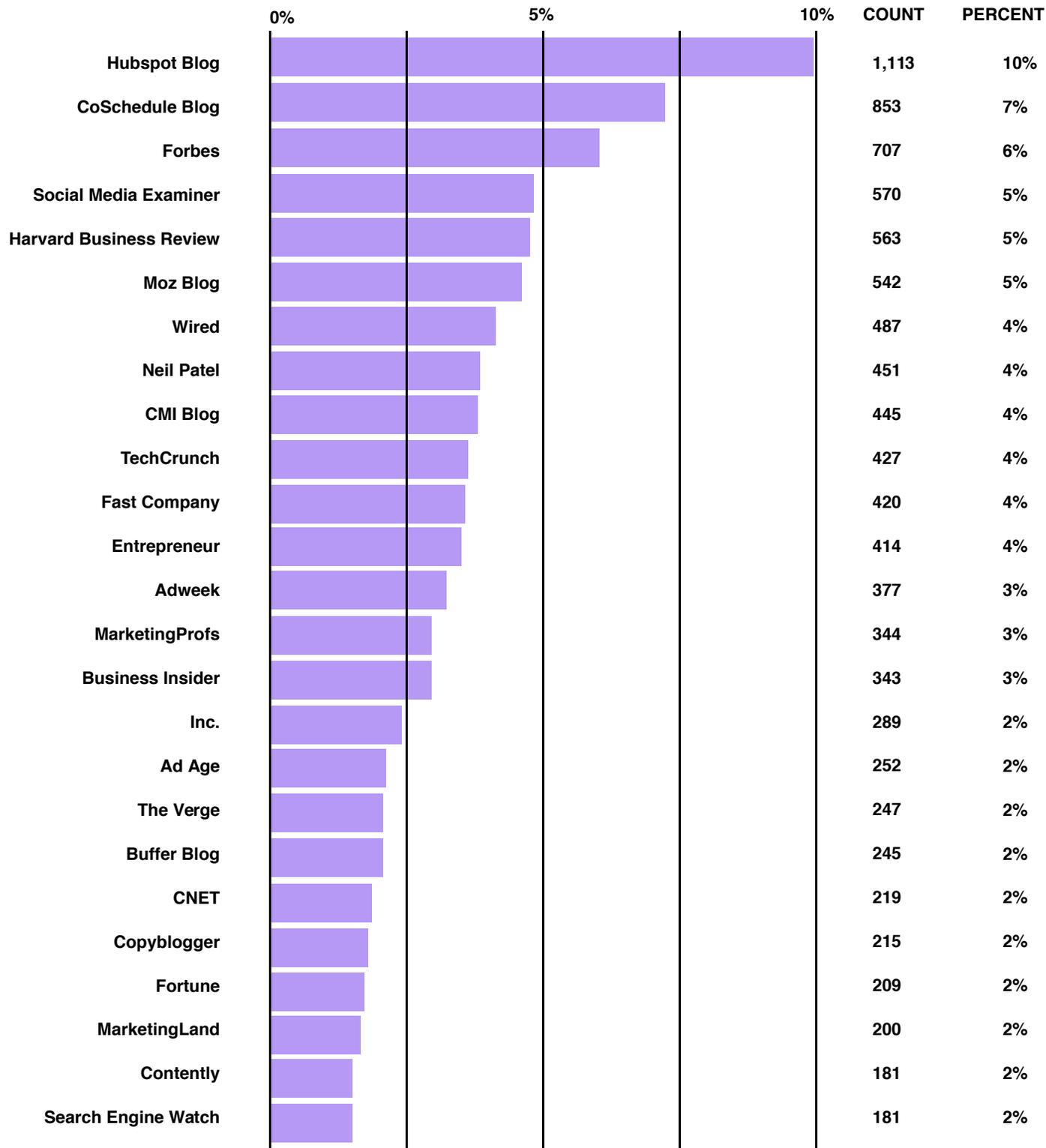
What Are Successful Marketers Reading to Stay Ahead?

Marketers should always remain committed to expanding their knowledge. That includes learning more about their craft, the industries they work in, and changes in society as a whole.

Since this survey was sent to CoSchedule email subscribers and social media followers, it's unsurprising to see the CoSchedule blog near the top at #2 (so, take this with a grain of salt; if they didn't follow CoSchedule, it's unlikely they would have received the survey).

Looking across the rest of the list, Hubspot weighs in at #1 by a wide margin. Other popular marketing sources, such as the Moz Blog and Neil Patel, ranked highly too.

So did general business and technology publications such as Wired, Forbes, and the Harvard Business Review. Taken all together, this list suggests that survey respondents are well read across a wide variety of different sources.



Report Summary

By now, you've consumed a ton of data and insights. So, it may be a good idea to restate the key take-aways to consider acting on next:

- **Top marketers are organized and set goals:** 413% more likely to report success.
- **Top marketers document their strategy:** 313% more likely to report success.
- **Top marketers proactively plan projects and campaigns:** 356% more likely to report success.
- **Top marketers use agile project management processes:** 252% more likely to report success, with a moderate level of positive correlation.

You now have the data to compare against your marketing team, and you know what your next best steps might be to improve. Now, go forth and do better marketing.



What is CoSchedule?

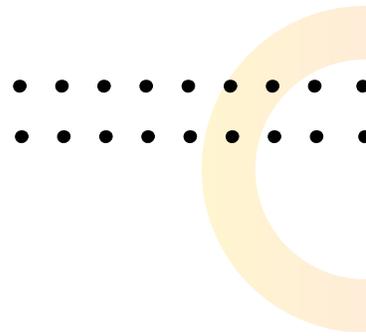
[CoSchedule](#) is the only way to organize your marketing in one place. It's a family of agile marketing products that will help you stay focused, deliver projects on time, and make your team happy.

It's mission control for all your marketing, equipped with powerful automation and work management capabilities.

The screenshot displays the CoSchedule interface. At the top, a navigation bar shows the date range "DEC 2 - JAN 13" and icons for calendar, list, share, and add. Below this, a calendar grid shows tasks for days 34, 5, 6, and 7. Tasks include "Design-Graphics", "Review Messages", "Product Launch Promo", "Social Campaign", "Monthly KPI Reporting", "KPI Presentation", "Stage Ads", "Final Email Review", "Create Outline", "Product Announcement", "Paid Ads", "Final Email Review", and "Internal Newsletter".

A "TASKS" overlay is visible in the bottom left, showing a progress bar at 66% and a list of tasks: "Create First Draft" (checked), "Design Images" (checked), and "Final Review" (unchecked).

A notification bubble from @Danny is shown in the bottom right, stating: "@Danny This looks great! Let's go ahead and schedule it! 30 min ago - Reply - 👍". A red circle with the number "1" is placed above the notification.



Survey Methodology

This data is based on findings from a survey that was distributed to CoSchedule email subscribers and social media followers.

Out of 3,599 respondents, 2,055 reported belonging to a marketing team, either as part of an agency or in-house team in a small-to-medium business or large enterprise.

The insights included in this report focus on the findings from marketers who work within a company or organized.



From there, the data was crunched to either confirm or refute our hypotheses about what makes marketing teams most successful. Then, the statistical relevance was calculated to determine the validity of each set of responses had at least a moderate correlation with success.

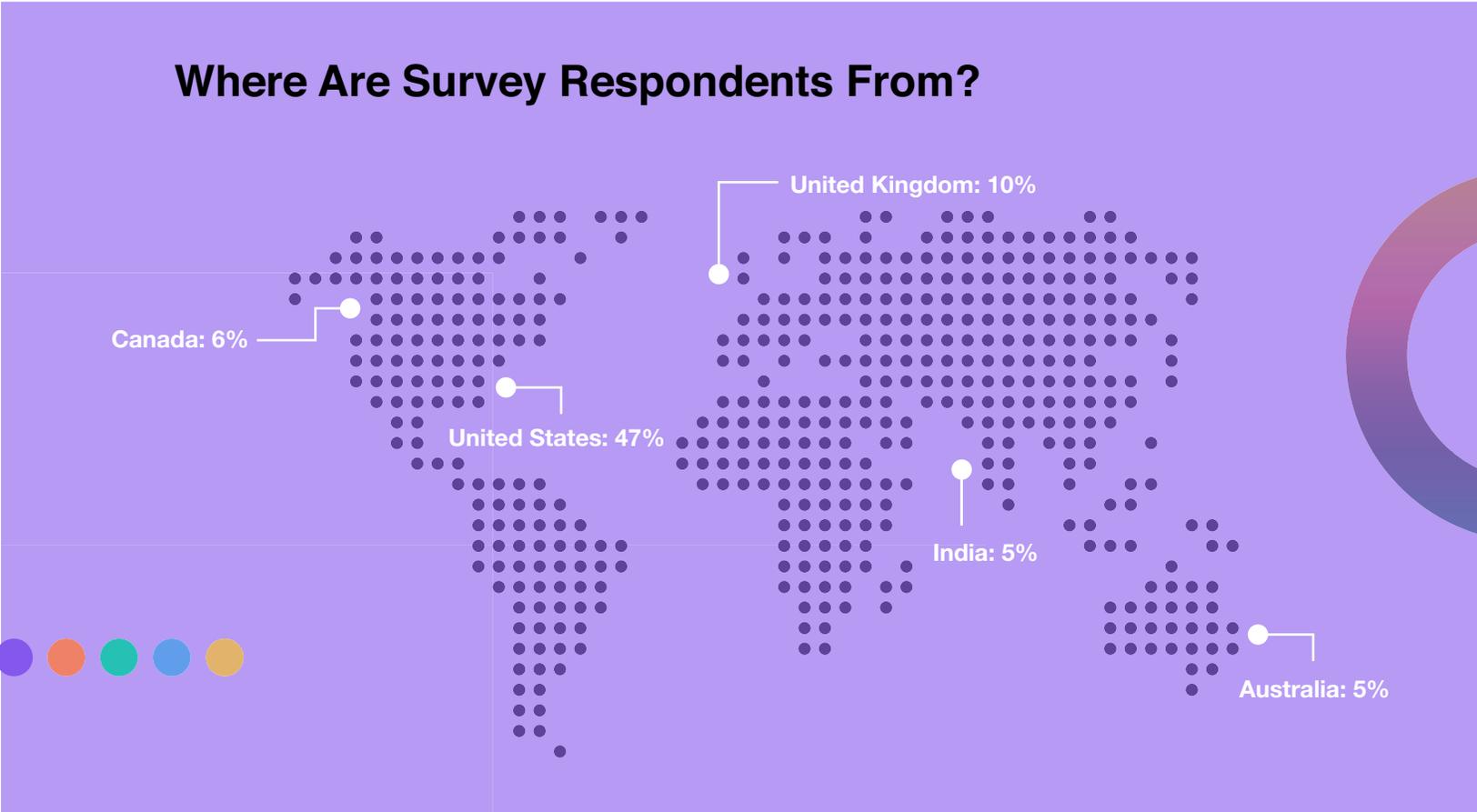
While this was not a deep scientific study, it was intended to gather useful insights about the state of marketing management and strategy, based on actual data from real marketers.



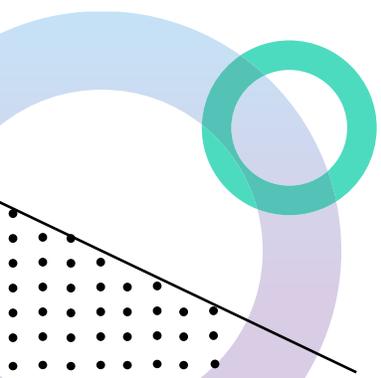
Who Took the Survey?

Marketers and content creators from over 100 countries took the survey. For this report, the data will be filtered to include only professional marketers working within a company or organization.

Where Are Survey Respondents From?



Now, to assess how well your own team aligns with the marketers who took the survey, let's break down some data.





Where Do Surveyed Marketers Work?

- 55% work for small to medium-sized businesses.
- 24% work on agency teams.
- 21% work in-house at enterprise companies.



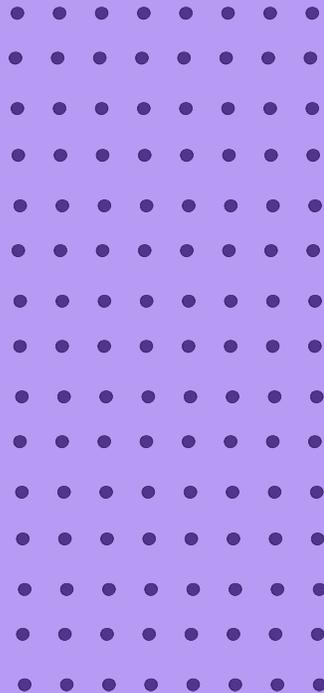
How Large Are Their Teams?

- 1 member: 19%
- 2-5 members: 54%
- 6-10 members: 15%
- 11-25 members: 7%
- 25+ members: 5%



Are They B2B, B2C, or Both?

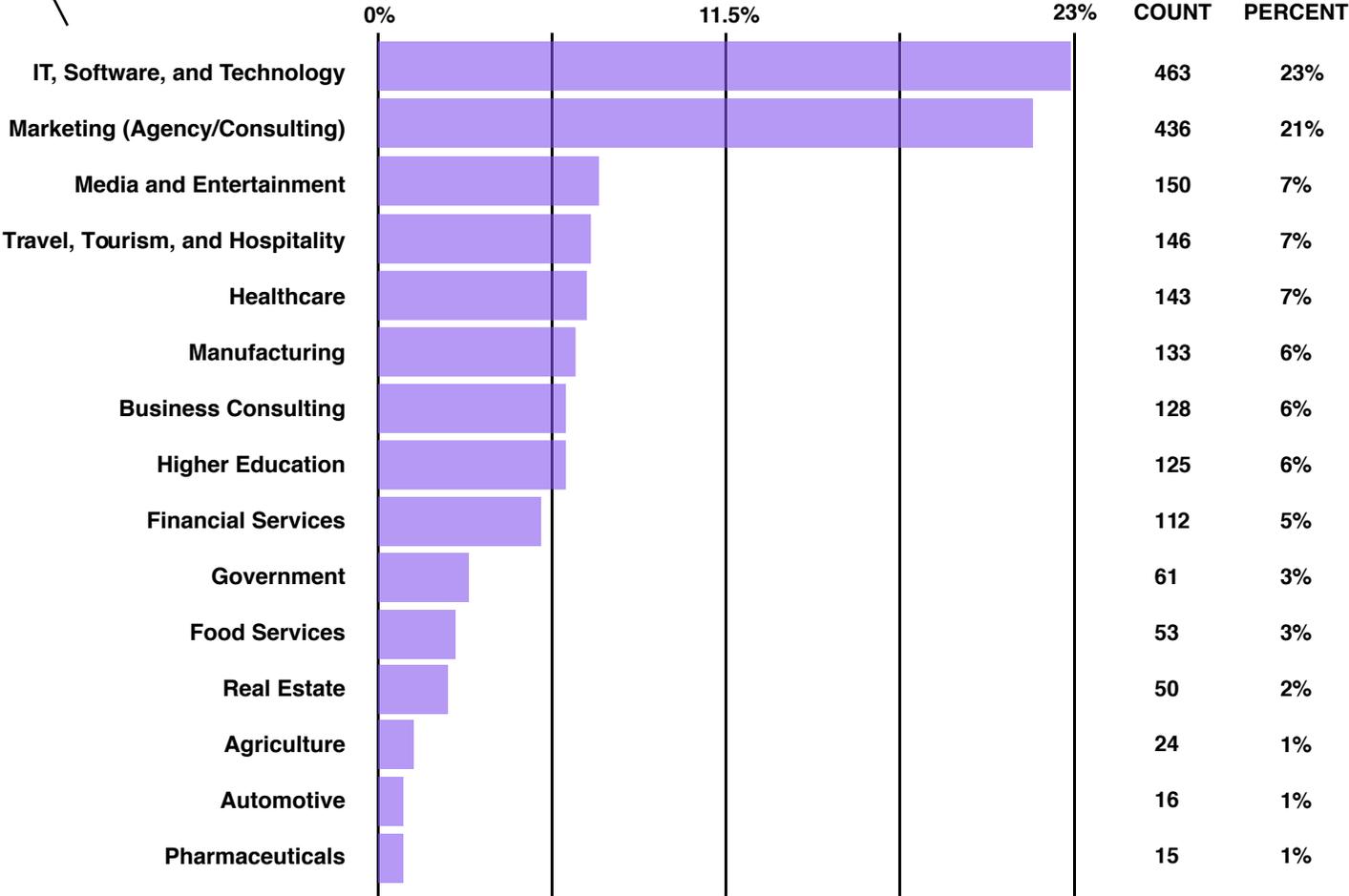
- B2B: 42%
- Both: 41%
- B2C: 17%



Industry Breakdown

Respondents represent a wide array of industries and verticals as well. Here is a breakdown of what they reported:

Respondents By Vertical



Manage Your Marketing Team With CoSchedule

Marketing is a multi-faceted job. Your marketing platform should be too. With CoSchedule, marketing teams get everything they need to manage their team and work.

- Get global visibility with calendar and list views.
- Manage tasks and collaboration all in one place.
- Proactively build team schedules and manage work with Team Management Dashboard.
- Keep projects on track with Kanban Management Dashboard.
- Measure team productivity with Team Performance Reports.
- Use powerful integrations to connect your favorite tools.

See what makes CoSchedule the best holistic marketing project management platform on the web.

