

# 2017 Digital Marketing Plans

for Small and Medium Businesses



Research Conducted in Partnership with Ascend2

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Want to learn the factors of successful lead-generation strategies and tactics, with findings and recommendations most pertinent to the SMB marketer and sales director?



Download our eBook :

**[Lead Generation and Management for SMB Sales and Marketing](#)**

# 2017 Digital Marketing Plans for SMBs

For Small and Medium Businesses, creating an effective digital marketing plan relies on adapting to constant change through continuous improvement.

## But what strategies and tactics will drive digital marketing success for SMBs in the year ahead?

To find out, Act-On Software in partnership with Ascend2 fielded the 2017 Digital Marketing Plans Survey.

The data in this edition of the study, titled *2017 Digital Marketing Plans for Small and Medium Businesses*, exclusively represents the opinions of 142 marketing influencers working for businesses with fewer than 500 employees. We thank these busy professionals for sharing their insights with us, and you.

This research has been produced for your use and can be used in your own marketing strategy planning and presentation materials. Clip the charts and write about them in your blog or post them on social media. Please share this research credited as published.

*Michelle Huff*  
Chief Marketing Officer for Act-On Software

## Methodology

Ascend2 benchmarks the performance of popular digital marketing practices using a standardized questionnaire and proprietary 3-Minute Survey format. This survey was conducted from a research subscriber and marketing influencer panel the week of December 4, 2016.

The exclusive segment represented in this report includes the following:

### Role in the Company

Owner / Partner / CXO	38%
VP / Director / Manager	51%
Non-Management	11%

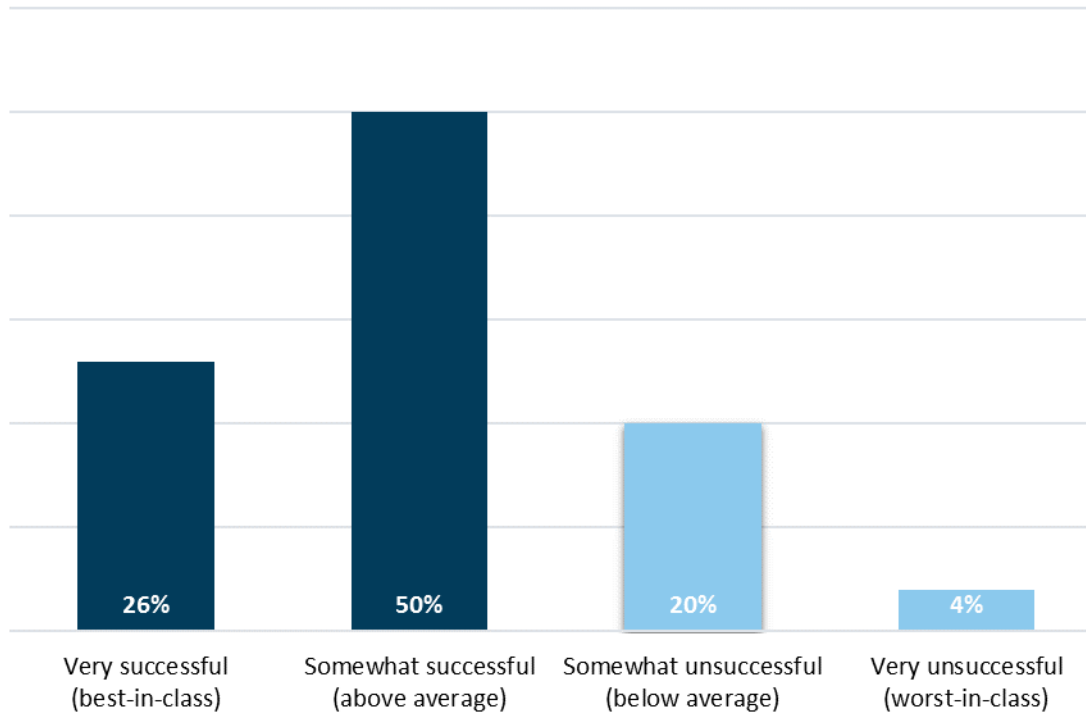
### Primary Marketing Channel

B2B	43%
B2C	39%
B2B and B2C Equally	18%

# Planning for Digital Marketing Success

While more than a quarter of SMBs (26%) describe the success of their digital marketing as “best-in-class” compared to competitors, nearly the same percentage (24%) still consider their organizations’ efforts unsuccessful to some extent.

*Which best describes the SUCCESS of your organization's digital marketing plan compared to competitors?*



Best-in-Class companies are

# 67%

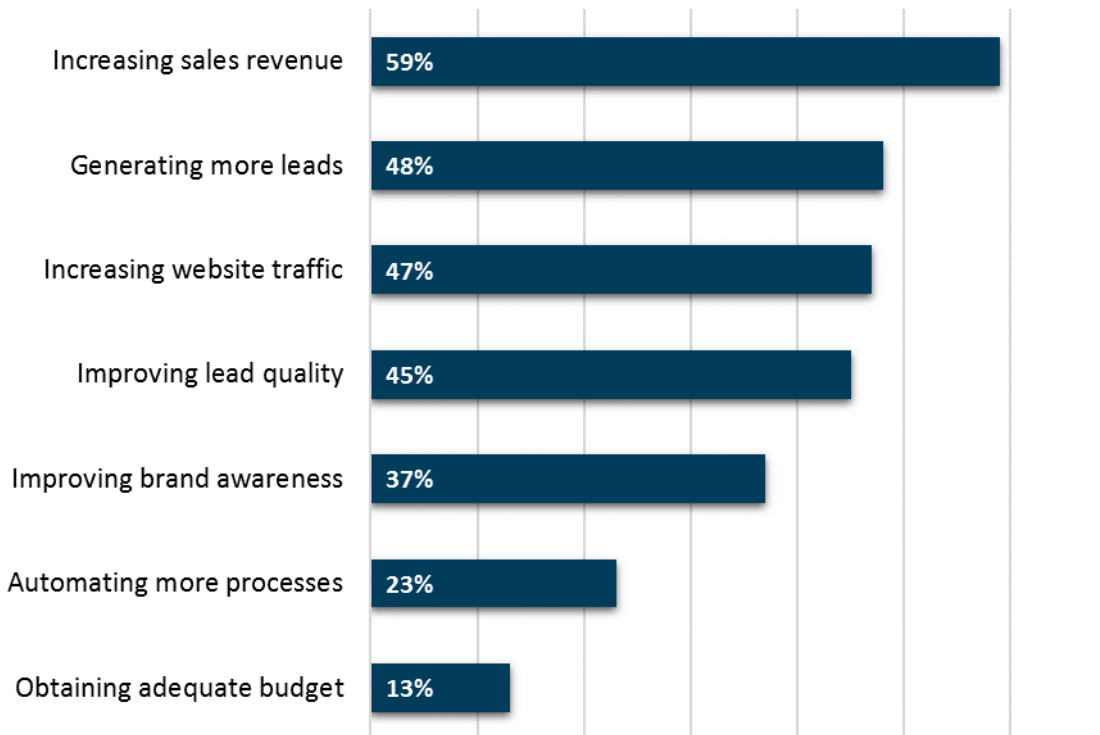
more likely to use a marketing automation platform such as Act-On Software.

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[www.act-on.com/live-demo/](http://www.act-on.com/live-demo/)

# Most Important Strategic Goals

The ultimate purpose of marketing for small and medium businesses is to drive sales. That's why 59% of SMB marketing influencers point to increasing sales revenue as a most important goal for their digital marketing strategy in 2017.

*What are the MOST IMPORTANT GOALS for a digital marketing plan to achieve?*



A high-performance marketing plan can help you understand how your programs are doing, tie them back to revenue, and show you where you should be prioritizing your time.

Get started on your plan today with this six-step blueprint for developing a [high-performance marketing plan](#).

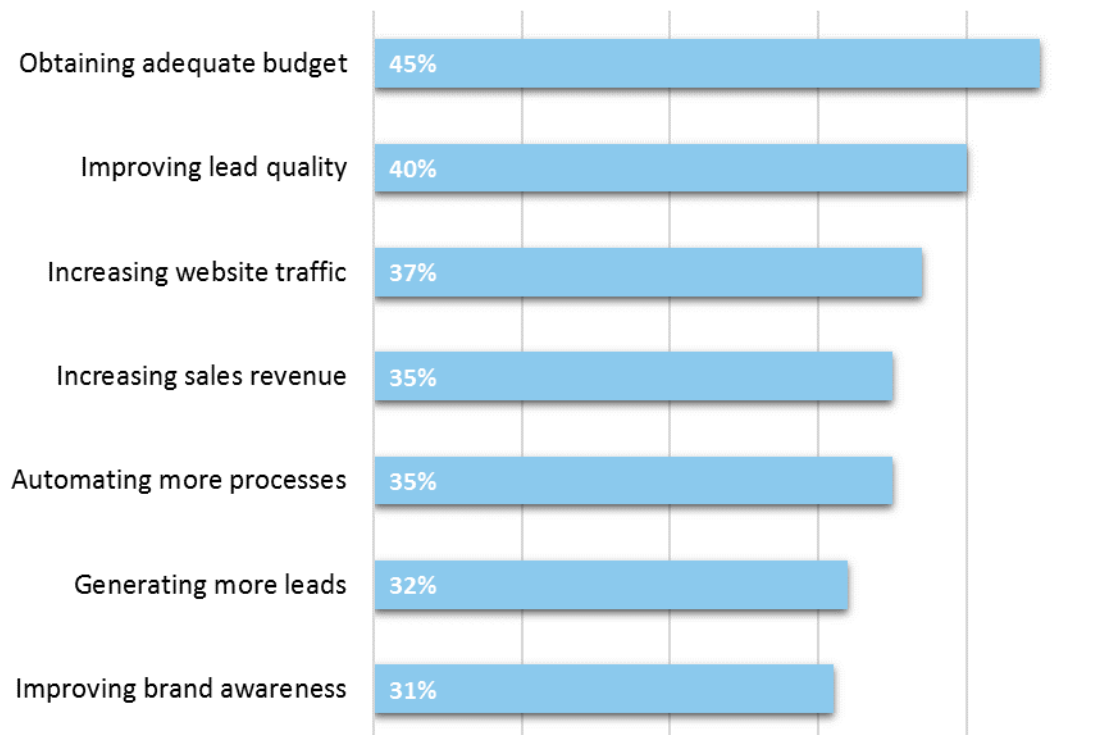


Download your copy of [The High-Performance Marketing Plan: A 6-Step Blueprint To Exceeding Your Goals](#)

# Most Significant Success Barriers

SMBs must face many barriers to digital marketing success. For nearly half (45%), a most significant success barrier to overcome is obtaining an adequate budget to fund digital marketing plans.

*What are the MOST SIGNIFICANT BARRIERS to the success of a digital marketing plan?*



## The CMO's Five Most Important Initiatives

SMB's face challenges at every turn. Your CEO wants big results, your CFO wants you to come in on budget, and your staff wants assurance you're headed in the right direction. Wouldn't it be great if you could compare what you're doing with how other marketing leaders are dealing with these challenges? We talked to a number of CMOs and asked what they're focusing on to grow their sales and revenues, and what they're doing to avoid problems. They shared their insights on 5 top initiatives.

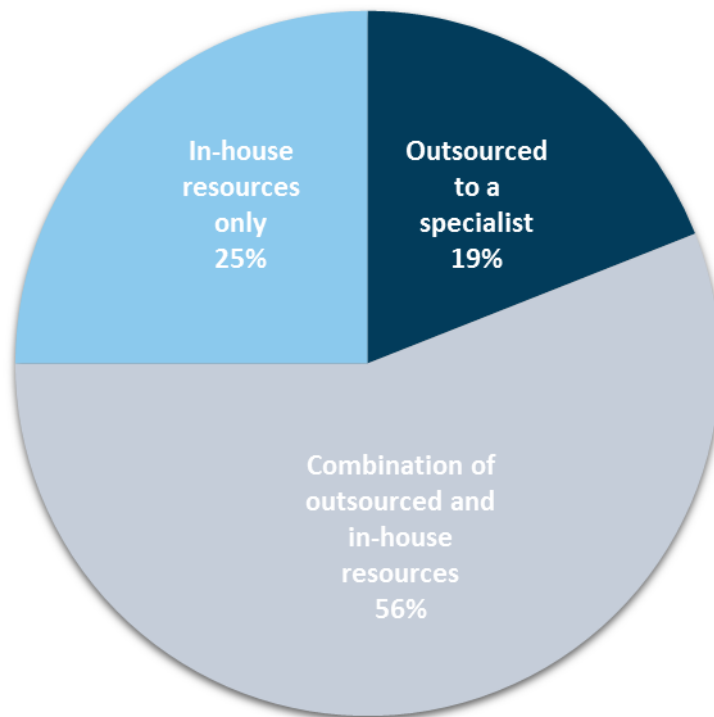


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# Digital Marketing Planning Resources Used

Three-quarters of SMBs (75%) outsource all or part of planning their digital marketing strategy. Outsourcing enables companies to gain performance-improving experience not available in-house.

*Which best describes the RESOURCES USED to plan a digital marketing strategy?*



Knowing when to outsource or do the work in-house can be a challenge. Listen to our ReThink Podcast, Episode #8, and get the perspective from an agency owner. He'll also share the one question he wished clients asked him.

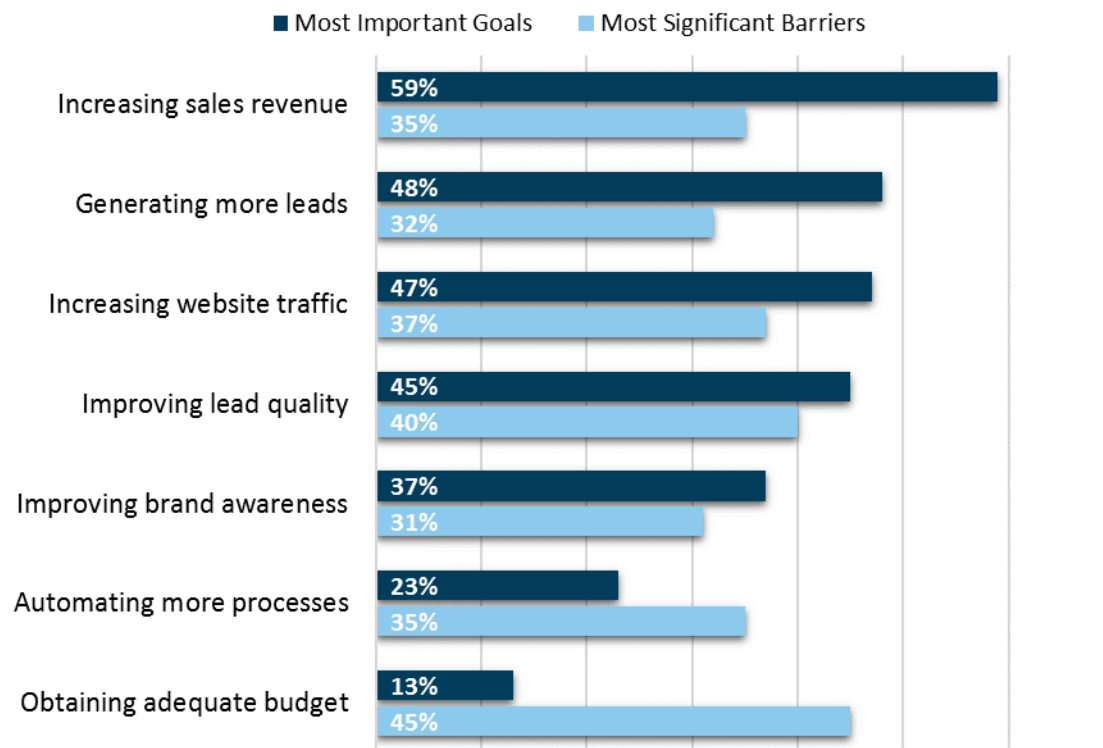


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# Strategic Goals Versus Success Barriers

Prioritizing important goals by comparing their significance as a barrier to success is an extremely helpful way for SMBs to develop a well balanced and effective digital marketing plan for 2017.

*Strategic analysis of goals versus barriers.*



## 10 Ways Sales Benefits from Marketing Automation

Marketing automation gives sales teams not only new and expansive visibility into the buyer's journey, but the ability to effectively engage with their hottest prospects and close more deals.



In this [eBook](#), you'll learn the 10 key benefits marketing automation offers sales, including how they directly tie to improved efficiency, faster funnels, and higher close rates.

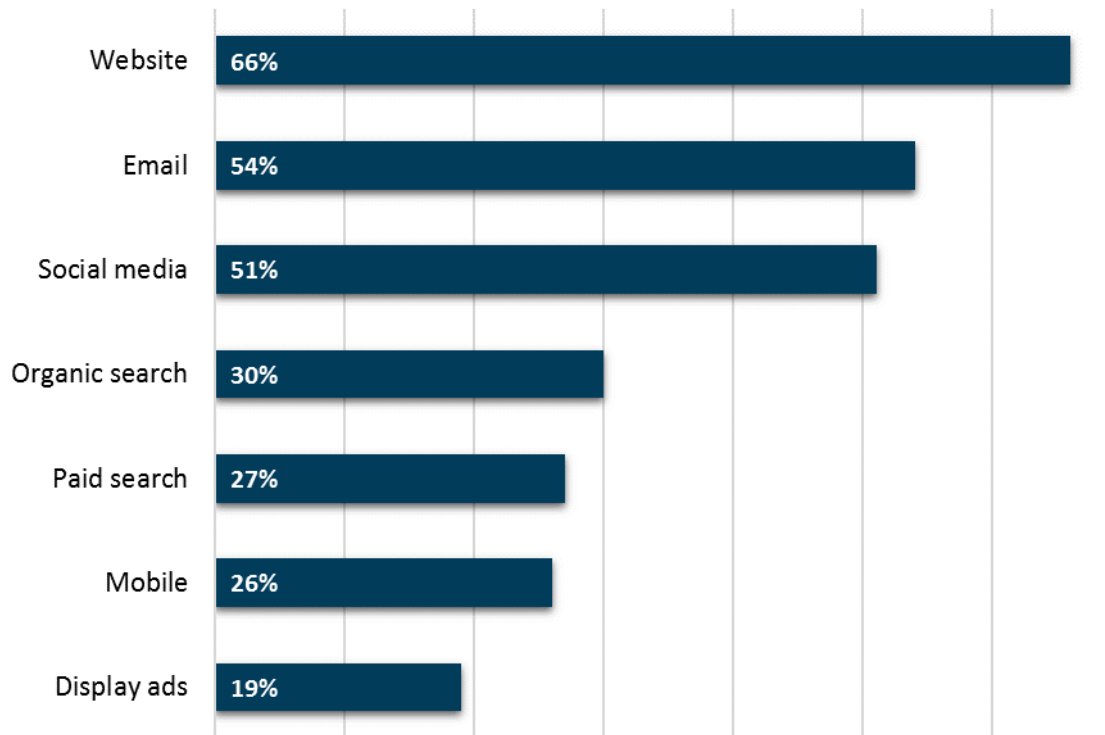
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# Most Effective Tactical Channels

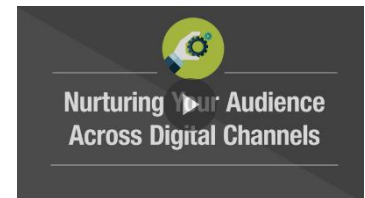
A website is a most effective digital marketing channel for about two-thirds (66%) of SMBs. Email and social media are nearly as effective for more than half (54% and 51% respectively) of SMBs.

*What are the MOST EFFECTIVE CHANNELS for a digital marketing plan to include?*



## WEBINAR: Nurturing Your Audience Across Digital Channels

Learn how to nurture your audience across tactical channels, from your website to paid retargeting advertising. Join Linda West, Director of Marketing at Act-On Software and Rodrigo Fuentes, Co-Founder and CEO of ListenLoop, as they discuss how to extend your nurturing capabilities across digital channels so you can generate more sales ready leads.

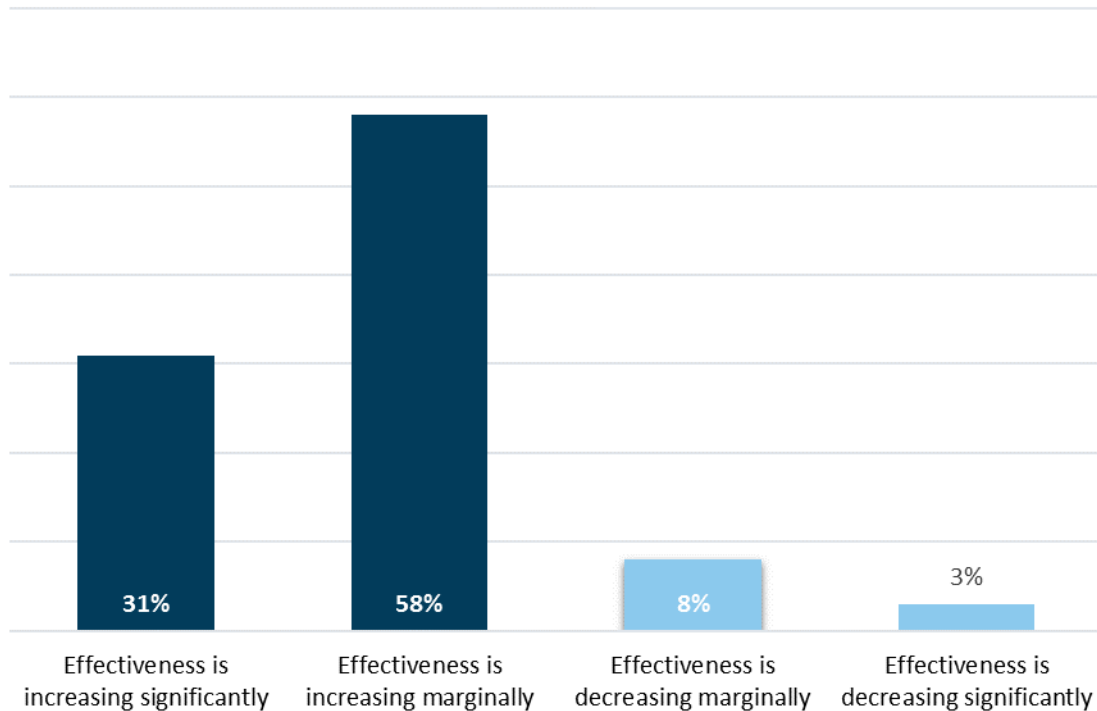


[Watch today!](#)

# How Channel Effectiveness is Changing

The effectiveness of digital marketing channels is increasing significantly for 31% of SMBs and marginally for another 58%. Only 11% of SMBs are experiencing a decrease in effectiveness.

*To what extent is the EFFECTIVENESS CHANGING for the digital marketing channels planned?*



## 5 Digital Marketing Mistakes and How to Fix Them

In this eBook, we explore the five most common mistakes people make in digital marketing, and also explore how to fix those mistakes. In the end, you'll have a good sense of where the most common digital marketing landmines are, and what you can do to avoid them or fix them.

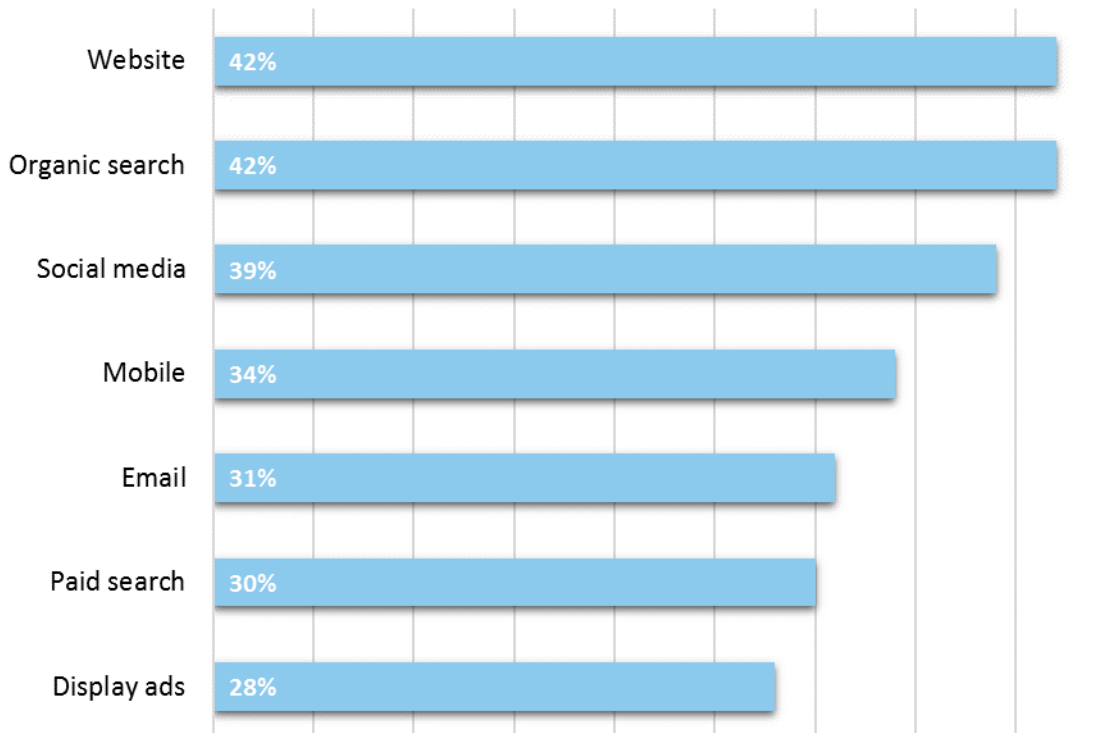


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# Most Difficult Channels to Execute

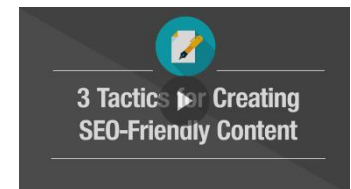
SMBs consider their website and organic search equally difficult channels to execute. The performance of both channels may benefit from advanced skills and resources not always available in-house.

*What are the MOST DIFFICULT CHANNELS to execute in a digital marketing plan?*



## 3 Tactics for Creating SEO Friendly Content

Content marketing has become an important piece of a modern digital marketing plan. Marketing teams are producing more content than ever, all to attract more potential buyers to their web properties. In this new digital landscape, writers and content marketers are key players in the search optimization equation, but most don't yet know the rules of the SEO road.

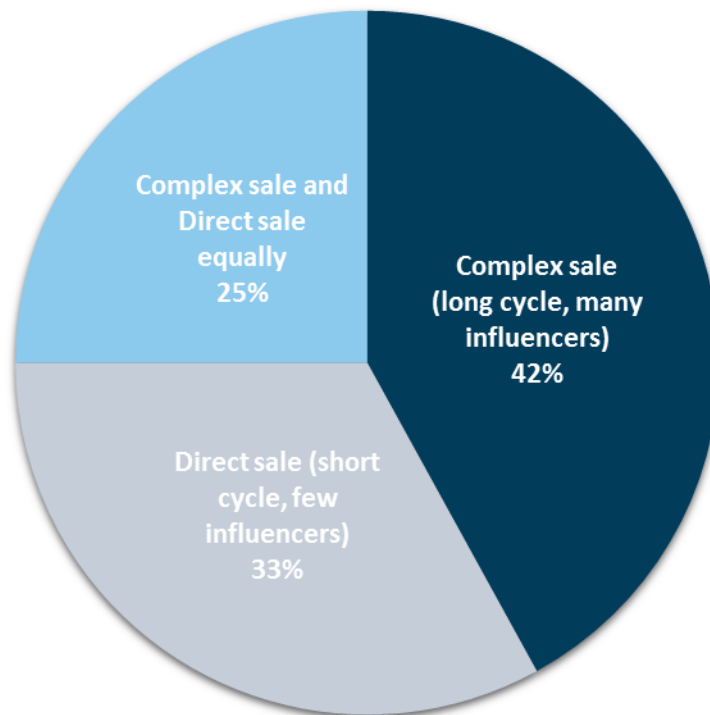


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# Increasingly Complex Sales Cycle for SMBs

As sales cycles become more complex, many digital marketing plans are focused on achieving strategic goals using tactical channels that efficiently keep customers engaged longer term.

*Which best describes the type of SALES CYCLE your organization most often encounters?*



## Marketing: The New Stewards of the Customer Relationship

Our [eBook](#) provides five concise recommendations for improving customer engagement and re-defining marketing's role in the customer lifecycle.

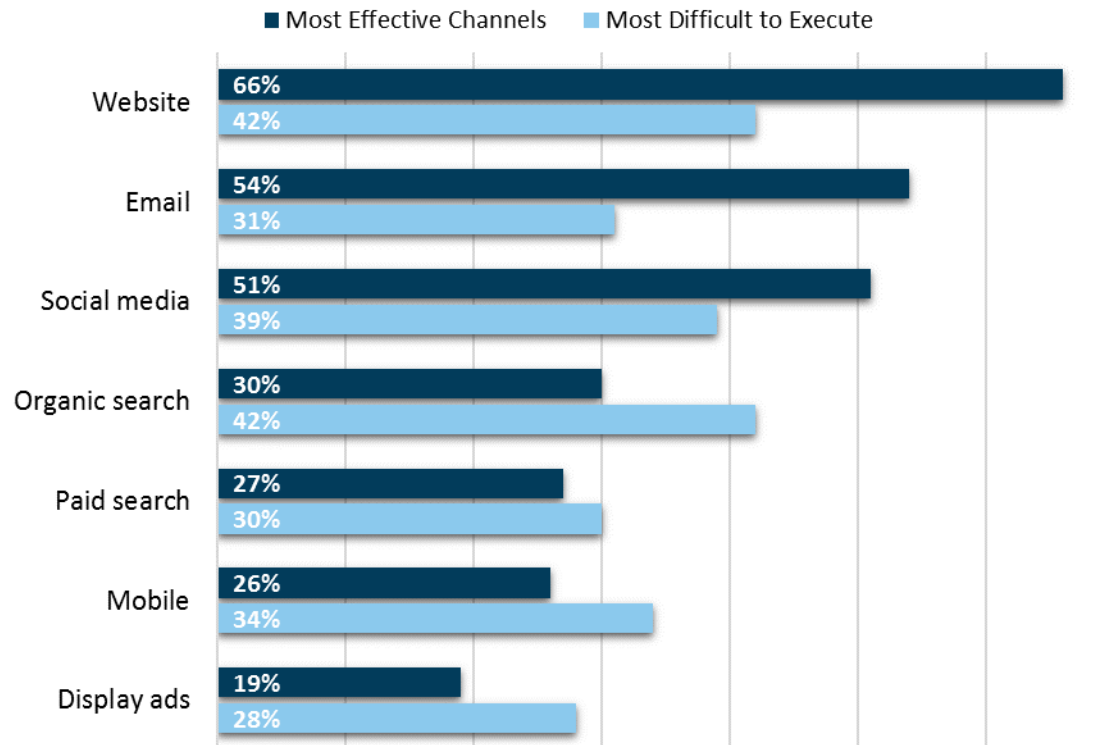


[Read it today](#) and learn how you can improve your bottom line!

# Tactical Effectiveness Versus Executional Difficulty

Digital marketing channels that are more difficult to execute than effective – such as organic search – benefit from outsourcing, which is often subject to success barrier #1, an adequate budget.

*Tactical analysis of effectiveness versus difficulty.*



## Creating an Inbound Marketing Strategy

Creating a winning inbound marketing strategy can attract the attention of customers and prospects, giving you the opportunity to build powerful customer relationships.



There are several tools to help you do this effectively but it can be difficult to determine just where to start. [In this guide](#), we will walk you through 4 simple steps to create an inbound marketing strategy that will attract and convert better leads.

# Acclaim for **act-on**

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## About Act-On software

Act-On Software delivers cloud-based integrated marketing automation software. Marketers can manage all their online marketing efforts from a single dashboard that can be seamlessly integrated with CRM, giving sales access into various marketing functions. Act-On's fresh approach to marketing automation gives its users full functionality without the complexity other systems impose, and makes campaign creation and program execution easier and faster.

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# About the Research Partners



Our Mission: To Delight Small Marketing Teams with Big Ambitions!

Act-On Software is the world's fastest growing marketing automation company; its cloud-based marketing automation platform is the foundation of successful marketing campaigns everywhere – from small, simple and direct, to complex globally implemented programs.

Learn more at [Act-On.com](http://Act-On.com)



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