STATE OF MARKETING AUTOMATION
Survey Summary Report
Methodology

Ascend2 benchmarks the performance of popular digital marketing strategies and tactics using a standardized questionnaire and a proprietary 3-Minute Survey format.

This survey was fielded to a panel of research subscribers and marketing influencers during the week of April 2, 2017.
Marketing Automation refers to software applications designed to streamline repetitive marketing tasks. The technology has become ubiquitous across all industries.

But what strategies are having the most impact on the state of marketing automation in 2017?

To find out, Ascend2 and our Research Partners fielded the State of Marketing Automation Survey. We thank the marketing influencers responding to this survey for sharing their valuable insights with us, and you.

The data in this edition of the study titled the State of Marketing Automation Survey Summary Report represent the average of all market segments responding to the survey. Specific segments from the survey are reported on separately and exclusively by our participating Research Partners.

This research has been produced for your use. Put it to work in your own marketing strategy. Clip the charts and write about them in your blog or post them on social media. Please share this research credited as published.

Enjoy!
While increasing marketing ROI is an important objective for the largest share of marketing influencers (46%), optimizing productivity and acquiring more customers are a close second with 45%.
SUCCESS OF STRATEGY

One third (33%) of marketing influencers consider their marketing automation strategy very successful at achieving important objectives, describing it as best-in-class. 51% consider their strategy somewhat successful while the other 16% are still struggling to achieve success.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very successful (best-in-class)</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat successful (above average)</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat unsuccessful (below average)</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unsuccessful (worst-in-class)</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How SUCCESSFUL is your marketing automation strategy at achieving important objectives?
There are many challenges competing for the top spot, however, measuring performance is a most critical challenge for 41% of marketing influencers.

What are the most critical CHALLENGES to achieving marketing automation success?

- Measuring performance: 41%
- Improving database quality: 39%
- Increasing marketing ROI: 39%
- Acquiring more customers: 37%
- Aligning marketing and sales: 36%
- Optimizing productivity: 34%
- Improving campaign management: 30%
SALES CYCLE ENCOUNTERED

A total of two-thirds (67%) of the respondents encounter a complex sale with a long cycle and many influencers in the course of their marketing. The complex sale is the sweet spot for marketing automation. However, one-third (33%) of influencers automate marketing processes for direct sales.

Which best describes the type of SALES CYCLE encountered most often?

- Complex sale and Direct sale equally
  - 19%
- Complex sale (long cycle, many influencers)
  - 48%
- Direct sale (short cycle, few influencers)
  - 33%
OBJECTIVES VERSUS CHALLENGES

The greater the gap between the importance and the challenge of achieving an objective (optimizing productivity, for example), the higher the priority it should have in the development of a successful marketing automation strategy.

Analyzing strategic objectives versus critical challenges.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Strategic Objectives</th>
<th>Critical Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increasing marketing ROI</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquiring more customers</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimizing productivity</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measuring performance</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aligning marketing and sales</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving campaign management</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving database quality</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A majority (54%) of marketing influencers point to ease of implementation as an important evaluation criteria for selecting a marketing automation system. Ease of implementation is more important than even the cost of ownership, making it the subject of the following survey questions.

What are the most important EVALUATION CRITERIA for selecting a marketing automation system?

- Ease of implementation: 54%
- Cost of ownership/pricing: 43%
- Analytics capabilities: 40%
- Cross-platform integration: 39%
- Technical support: 38%
- Industry analyst ratings: 23%
- Clients/recommendations: 22%

State of Marketing Automation Survey, Ascend2 and Research Partners, April 2017
IMPLEMENTATION COMPLEXITY

A total of 84% of marketing influencers perceive the implementation of a marketing automation system to be a complicated task, with more than a quarter (26%) describing it as extremely complicated. Only 15% consider implementing a marketing automation system uncomplicated.

How complicated is the IMPLEMENTATION of a marketing automation system?

- Extremely uncomplicated: 3%
- Somewhat uncomplicated: 12%
- Somewhat complicated: 59%
- Extremely complicated: 26%

State of Marketing Automation Survey, Ascend2 and Research Partners, April 2017
IMPLEMENTATION RESOURCES USED

Whether complexity is a perception or reality, it is the primary reason that a total of 88% of marketing influencers outsource the implementation of marketing automation to some extent. Outsourcing also provides skills and capabilities not always available in-house.

Which best describes the RESOURCES used to implement a marketing automation system?

- In-house resources only 12%
- Outsourced to a specialist 26%
- Combination of outsourced and in-house resources 62%
IMPLEMENTATION TIME-FRAME

46% of marketing influencers consider 4 to 6 months to be a reasonable time-frame for completing the implementation of a marketing automation system, while 31% think it should be done in 3 months or less. Nearly one-quarter (23%) believe implementation requires more than 6 months.

What is a reasonable TIME-FRAME for completing the implementation of a marketing automation system?

- 31%: 3 months or less
- 46%: 4 to 6 months
- 18%: 6 months to 1 year
- 5%: More than 1 year
Research-Based Marketing for Marketing Solution Providers

Marketing technology and data companies, and digital marketing agencies, partner with Ascend2 to reliably generate demand and supplement marketing content for their firms. Our Research Partner Programs are transparent – focusing on your brand and the interests of your target audience.

Learn more about us at Ascend2.com

Below are just a few of the leading marketing solution providers that Partner with us on research-based marketing programs.

As a marketing technology or data company, or digital marketing agency, your prospective customers are marketing influencers with an interest in the facts about improving marketing performance.

Research-Based Demand Generation is a process we developed to generate leads using factual content of interest to your target customers, and nurture those leads to marketing-qualified status in the name of your brand.
Research Partner Programs

Research Partner Programs rapidly deliver factual content and a guaranteed number of leads to marketing solution providers, in two simple steps:

1. **Choose marketing topics of interest to your audience.**
   - A new marketing topic is surveyed every month

2. **Choose an exclusive data segment for each topic.**
   - Successful Strategy Benchmarks
   - Leadership Benchmarks
   - B2B Benchmarks
   - B2C Benchmarks
   - Enterprise Benchmarks
   - SMB Benchmarks
   - Agency Benchmarks
   - Complex Sale Benchmarks
   - And more!

Learn more about Ascend2 Research-Based Marketing by calling 800-762-1595 extension 703 or visit [Ascend2.com](http://ascend2.com).

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