

**NEW RESEARCH**

# The State of Marketing and Sales Alignment 2022

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How companies are driving growth with a  
seamless customer experience.

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Research Conducted in Partnership with Ascend2

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# Executive Summary

Are your marketing and sales teams aligned? And how does that level of alignment positively or negatively impact the customer experience? Do your tools and data support the alignment you desire? What are the top complaints from sales about the marketing department? What are the top complaints from marketing about the sales department?

When we fielded the State of Marketing and Sales Alignment 2022 Survey, *we wanted to dig deep into the topic to find the root of the issues and provide insight and data to initiate true change.*

The Marketing and Sales Alignment research study reveals that 74% of those surveyed feel that their **tools cause misalignment** between marketing and sales. And the biggest consequence of a failure to align marketing and sales efforts is leads that don't convert.

Misalignment also impacts the entire buying journey and 86% agree that not having a **single source of data** hinders an organization's ability to fully understand the customer journey.

In the report that follows, we provide data on the problem, the benefits of alignment, the impact on the buying journey, complaints from both sales and marketing, and insights on what a unified view looks like and steps you can take to improve your marketing and sales alignment.

Here are 5 key highlights from the research with additional segmented and more detailed data as you dive deeper into the report. Enjoy!

*Eric Stockton  
VP, Demand Generation*



# Key Highlights

- Only 20% of organizations have the ability to **track the entire customer lifecycle end-to-end** but those who do report having significantly better customer experiences.
- Organizations with **strongly or totally integrated marketing and sales tools deliver better customer experiences** than those who report having only partially or not at all integrated systems.
- **Improving workflows is the top digital transformation initiative** in the coming year.
- 93% of **strongly or totally integrated teams feel confident in their tools and data** to provide insight into what's yielding sales and customer growth, compared to only 56% of less integrated teams.
- Marketing and sales **misalignment has a negative impact throughout the entire buying journey**. Both marketing and sales feel that the most significant impact is in the educating to sales readiness stages of the customer lifecycle.

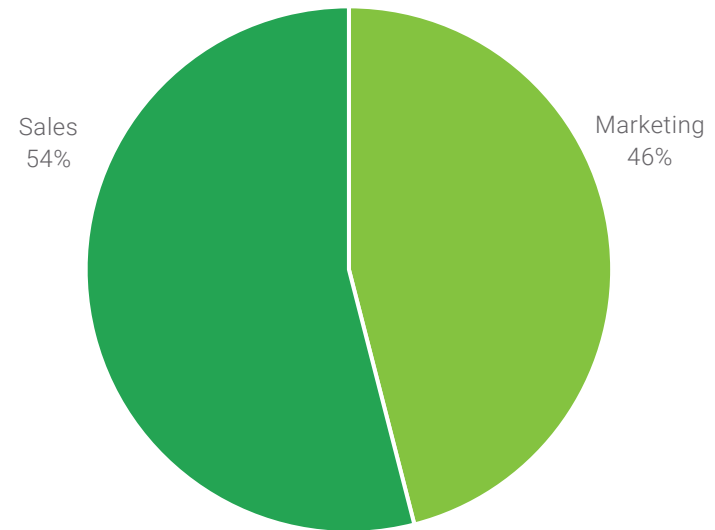
# 1.0 Introduction

Providing a seamless customer experience is no longer optional, it is now foundational to what customers expect across the entire B2B landscape. This “seamlessness” happens when the journey a customer has with marketing continues uninterrupted into their journey with sales, with one picking up where the other left off.

**The alignment of the marketing and sales teams is critical to a seamless experience for the customer. But what does alignment look like from the perspective of the marketing and sales teams that are executing? And how are organizations working toward alignment to create a better overall experience for their customer?**

To help answer these questions and more, SharpSpring, in partnership with Ascend2, fielded the State of Marketing and Sales Alignment 2022 survey. The report that follows represents the opinions of 150 marketing professionals and 179 sales professionals operating in the B2B space.

**Department**  
(All respondents)



## A TALE OF TWO PERSPECTIVES

The opinions represented in this report are nearly evenly split between those of the marketing team and those of the sales team. As you dive into the following pages, you will see particular sections that present a side-by-side view of these two perspectives.

## 2.0 The problem

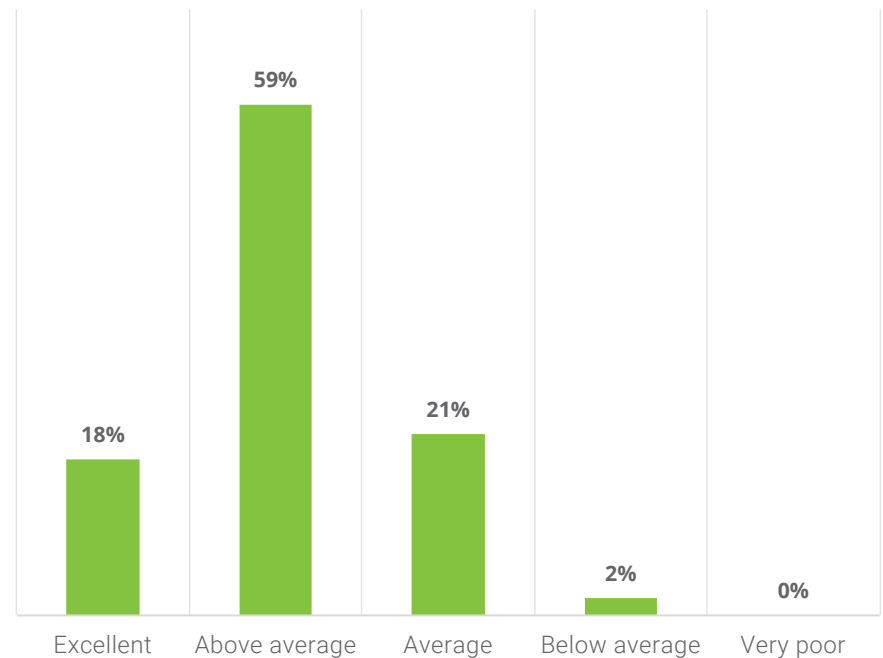
### Less than one-in-five say they have an excellent customer experience.

There is significant room for improvement when it comes to creating a best-in-class customer experience according to most marketing and sales professionals. While 59% of those surveyed say that the experience provided to customers is above average, **only 18% would rate the experience as excellent.** Throughout this report we will examine how marketing and sales teams can improve the overall customer experience by aligning their efforts, working toward common goals, and as a result, make a positive impact on the organization's bottom line.

#### Organizations delivering excellent customer experiences are more likely to have:

- More revenue growth in the last year.
- Integrated tools and systems.
- A full view of the customer lifecycle.

How would you rate the overall customer experience with your organization?  
(All respondents)



#### ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE

Organizations delivering excellent customer experiences are significantly more likely to have **totally integrated marketing and sales tools** than those with less impressive experiences.

## 2.1 The problem

### What contributes to a disjointed customer experience?

What contributes most to a disjointed customer experience? Topping the list at 41% is differing or misaligned goals, followed by complex processes or workflows (36%) and frustration between departments (29%).

#### **Communication is at the heart of the problem.**

Each of the top three factors contributing to a disjointed customer experience point to core communication issues.

But there is a general lack of recognition that siloed data is a culprit in a disjointed customer experience. Having a unified view of customer data allows organizations to track the entire customer lifecycle, giving both sales and marketing teams a single source of truth to base decisions on as they carry out their strategies. In the pages that follow, we will see major indicators that point to siloed data as a top contributor to a disjointed experience.



#### Top organizational factors that contribute to a disjointed customer experience. (All respondents)

- 41%**  
Differing/misaligned goals
- 36%**  
Complex processes/workflows
- 29%**  
Frustration between departments
- 23%**  
Disparate technology
- 21%**  
Lead hand-off process
- 19%**  
Differing attribution models
- 18%**  
Siloed data
- 16%**  
Tracking KPIs

## 2.2 The problem

### Organizations are neglecting the customer experience.

For marketing and sales professionals surveyed, the top three marketing concerns in the year ahead are generating more leads, improving lead quality, and updating technology.

Our research also shows that there are disparities between what is top-of-mind for the marketing and sales departments. Marketing is significantly more concerned with the quantity of leads being generated while sales is focused heavily on the improvement of lead quality.

Even more important to note however, is that improving the buyer experience ranks last on the list of concerns in the year ahead, which might explain why **only 18% of organizations report best-in-class customer experiences**. An enjoyable and seamless customer experience improves the entire lead process.

What are the biggest concerns as it pertains to marketing efforts in the year ahead?

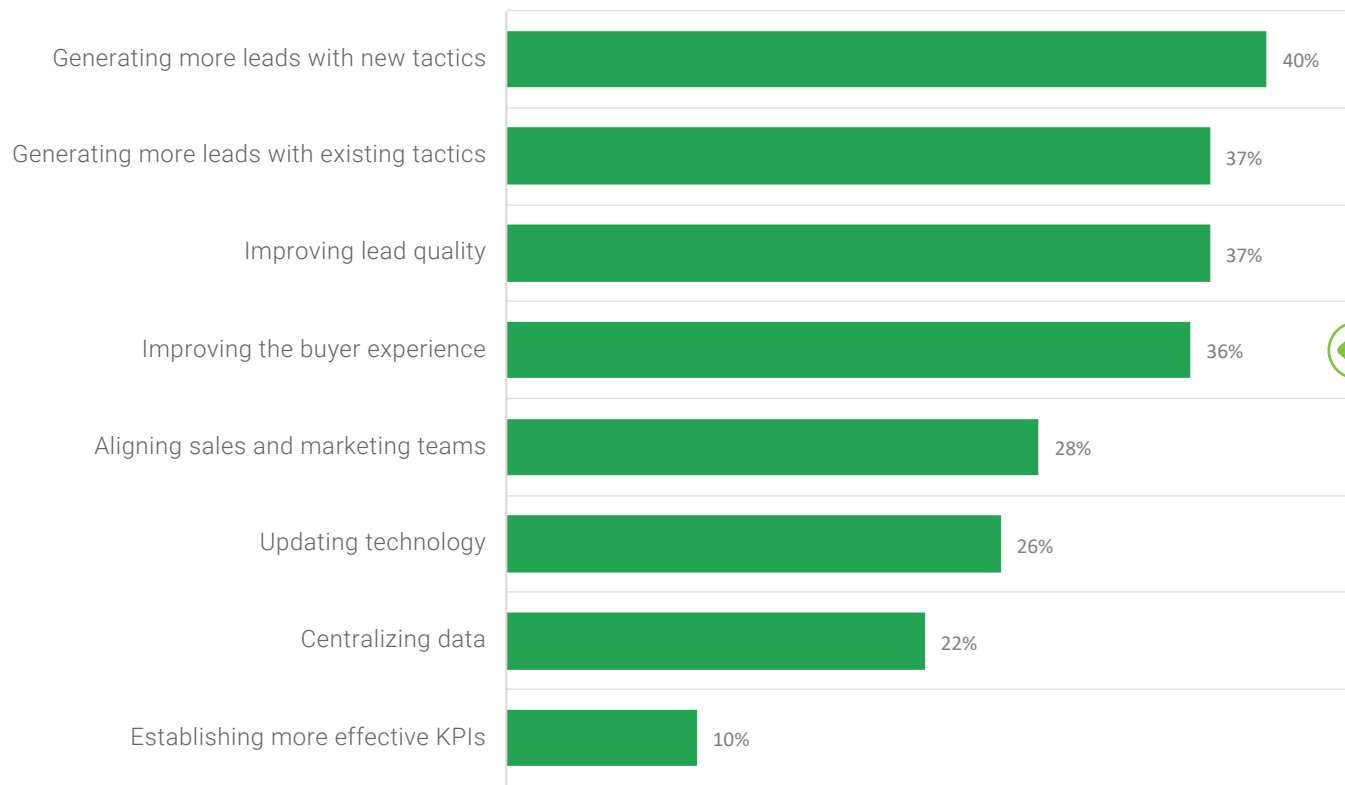


## 2.3 The problem

### Where is the focus in the year ahead?

The focus in the coming year will be on lead generation, both quality and quantity, and organizations aren't afraid to try something new. The top reported objective to drive revenue growth in the coming year is generating more leads with new tactics. If the past two years have taught us anything, it is the critical need to be agile and pivot strategies and tactics as customer's needs and expectations change. **But focusing on generating leads instead of improving the buyer experience may be where some organizations are going wrong.**

What are your top objectives to drive revenue growth in the year ahead?  
(All respondents)



#### GROWTH MODE

Organizations that report the most revenue growth put the customer experience higher on their priority list. **Improving the buyer experience** is the top reported objective to drive revenue growth in the year ahead according to this group. Improving the buyer experience doesn't even make the top four objectives for those who saw a decrease in revenue last year.

This group also puts a heavier weight on aligning marketing and sales (34% vs 26% of all other surveyed).

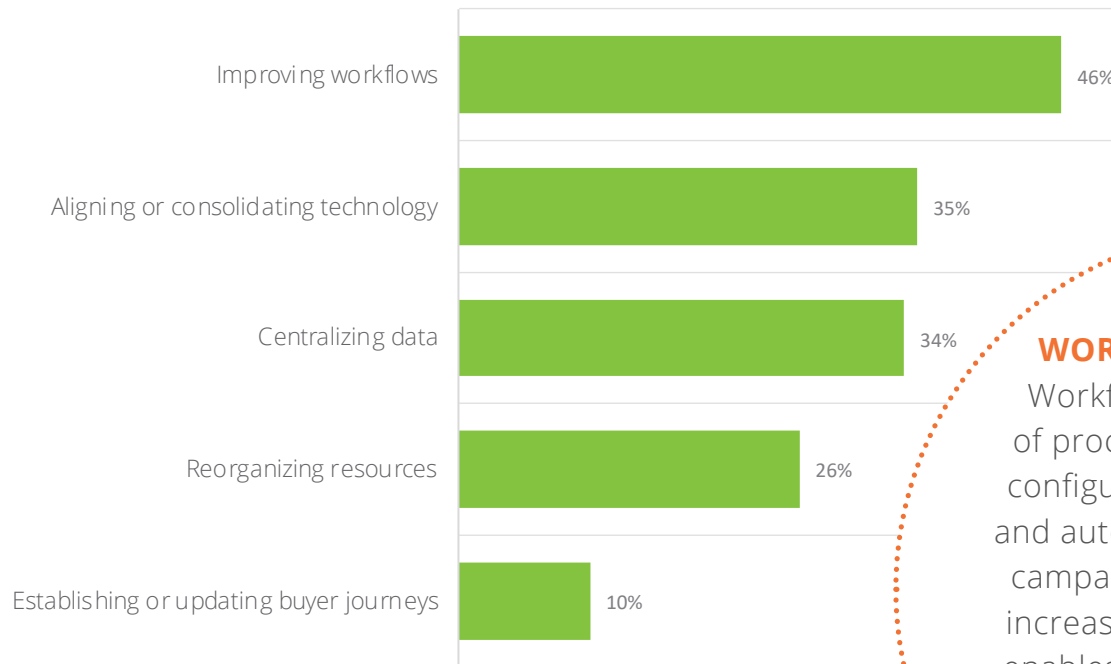


## 2.4 The problem

### Improving workflows is the #1 digital transformation initiative of executives in the coming year.

Nearly half of executives surveyed will be focused on improving workflows in the coming year. This is good news as only 41% of marketing and sales professionals surveyed feel that their team's processes and workflows are well communicated and collaborated on. This is a problem as over one-third (36%) of those surveyed point to complex workflows as the main detriment to a great customer experience.

What are your top digital transformation initiatives for the year ahead?  
(Executive respondents)



#### WORKFLOWS NEED WORK.

Workflows are the automation of processes through a series of configurable steps that help plan and automate marketing and sales campaigns. Improving workflows increases customer engagement, enables personalization, provides consistency in messaging, and optimizes the timing of communication.

# 74%

of those surveyed feel that their **tools cause misalignment between marketing and sales teams**. Could this be why consolidating tech is #2 on the list of digital transformation initiatives in the coming year?

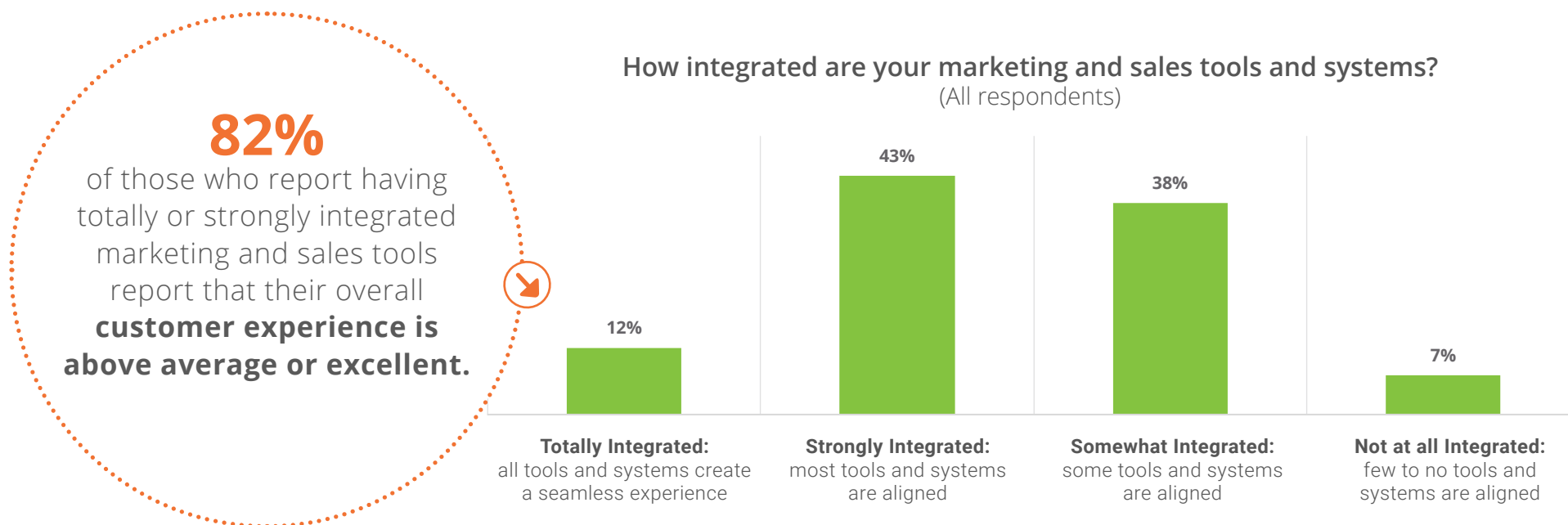
Consolidating technology enables data centralization, the foundation of all digital initiatives. It ensures content is consistent throughout the organization and eliminates the possibility of data being an obstacle, rather than an asset.

## 3.0 Benefits of alignment

### Excellent experiences start with aligned teams.

Only 12% of professionals surveyed report that their marketing and sales tools and systems are totally integrated, but **our research indicates that the sophistication of the integration between marketing and sales tools directly impacts the customer experience. The more integrated, the better the experience.**

A key component of marketing and sales alignment is the integration of their respective tools and systems. Integrated tools and systems allow organizations to embrace an omnichannel mindset to deliver the personalized interactions that customers crave. Technology used across sales and marketing teams that can be aligned to create a more seamless customer journey include email, CRM, ads, forms, landing pages, automation, and social media.



## 3.1 Benefits of alignment

### More conversions, more revenue, better experience.

For over half (53%) of those surveyed, leads that don't convert to sales is a biggest consequence of a failure to align marketing and sales efforts. This is reflected in the top benefits of aligned teams which are reportedly higher conversions of leads to customers, increased revenue, and a seamless customer experience according to 46%, 38%, and 35% of marketing and sales professionals surveyed, respectively.

**What are the primary benefits to marketing and sales alignment?**  
(All respondents)



#### A SEAMLESS EXPERIENCE

Those who have full visibility into the customer lifecycle from end-to-end are significantly more likely to report that a seamless customer experience is the greatest benefit to marketing and sales alignment. 58% compared to just 30% of those who are not able to track the customer lifecycle from end-to-end.

## 3.2 Benefits of alignment

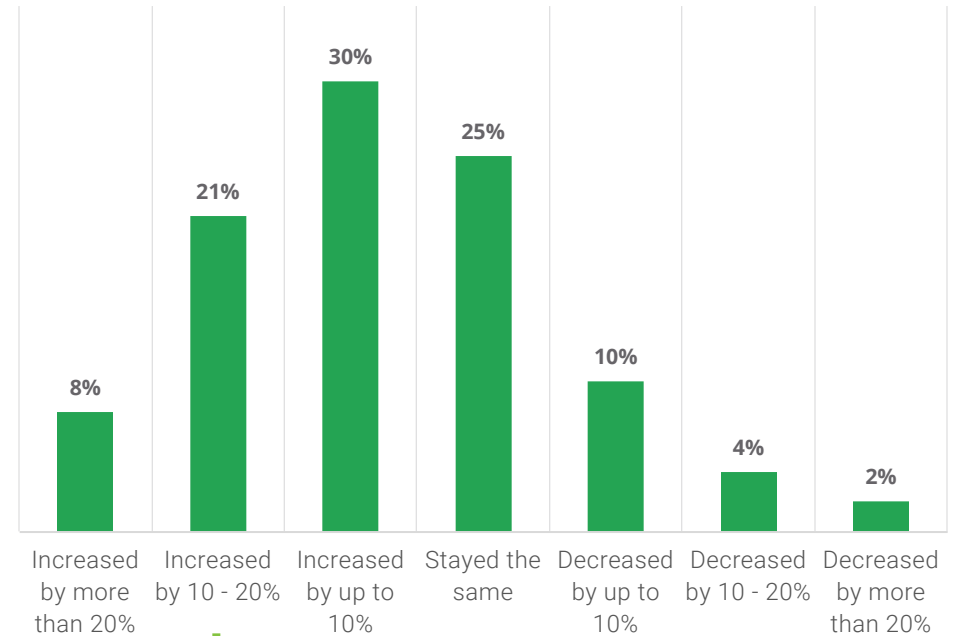
### Strongly or totally integrated teams saw the most growth in revenue last year.

Not only are integrated teams more likely to have a better customer experience, they are also seeing more revenue growth.

Overall, 59% of organizations surveyed experienced revenue growth to some extent in the past year, while one-quarter (25%) of professionals report no growth or decline.

Notably, **organizations with the most integrated tools and systems report more revenue growth** last year than those that are less integrated. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of those who report mostly or strongly integrated marketing and sales tools experienced an increase in revenue of 10% or higher compared to 52% of those with partially or not at all integrated systems.

Change in revenue in the past year.  
(All respondents)



#### GROWTH MODE

Overall, 29% of organizations saw revenue growth of 10% or more in the past year. Throughout this report we will examine what the alignment of marketing and sales looks like for this group and how it impacts their customer experience, technology, data, communication, collaboration, and more.

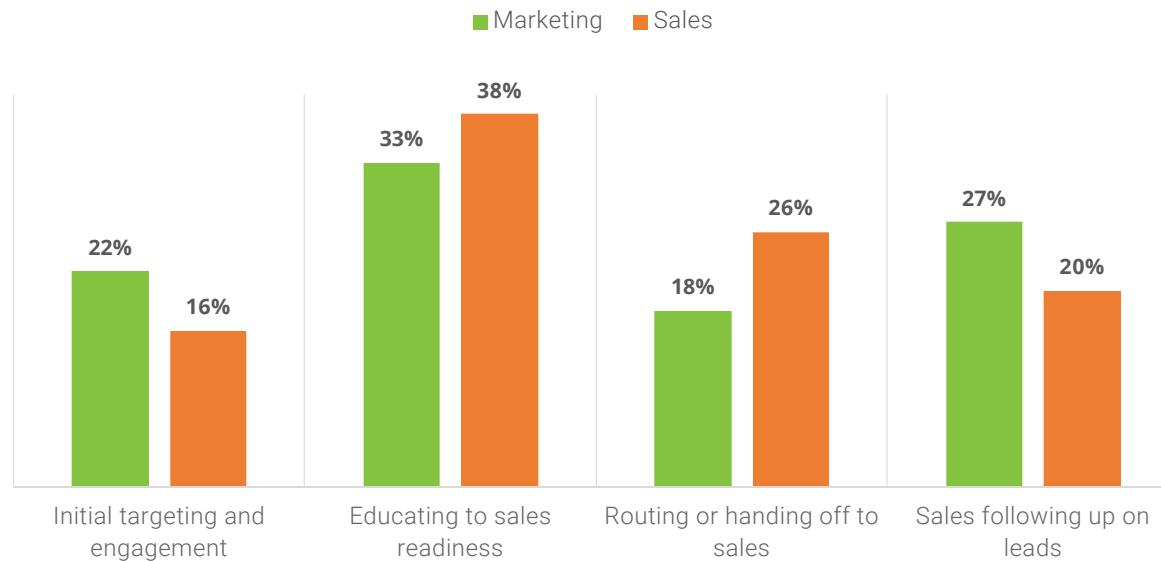
## 4.0 Two Perspectives

### Misalignment impacts the entire buying journey.

Over half (53%) of marketing and sales professionals surveyed feel that a major consequence of a failure to align marketing and sales is leads not converting. Misalignment also causes frustration between teams and inefficiencies that are a catalyst to employee strain.

These consequences rattle the entire customer journey, but sales and marketing feel the impact differently. Both feel that educating to sales readiness is the most impacted stage of the buyer experience, but from the perspective of marketing, the initial stage of initial targeting and engagement also bears the brunt of impact while sales feels the effects in the later journey stage of sales hand-off.

#### Which point of the buyer experience is most negatively impacted by marketing and sales misalignment?



What is the primary consequence of a failure to align marketing and sales?  
(All respondents)

**53%**

Leads that don't convert to sales

**38%**

Frustration between marketing and sales teams

**37%**

Inefficient workarounds and employee strain

**36%**

Fragmented, frustrating customer experience

**30%**

Negative impact on brand

**20%**

Higher cost per lead (CPL)

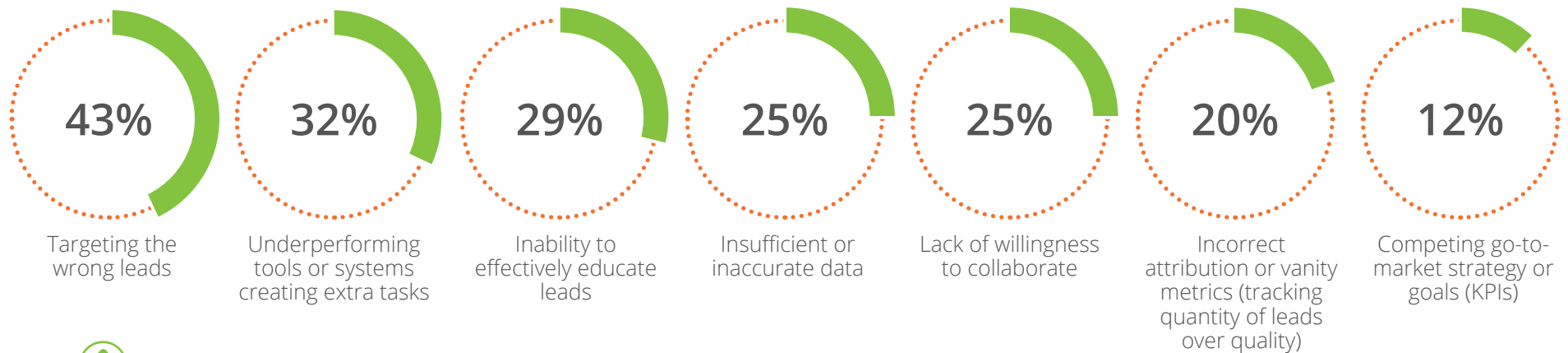
## 4.1 Two perspectives

### Complaints from sales about marketing

To improve marketing and sales alignment, it is important to know what topics cause friction between the groups. What are the top complaints from sales about the marketing team? The leading complaints are targeting the wrong leads (43%), underperforming tools or systems creating extra tasks (32%), insufficient or inaccurate data (25%), and lack of willingness to collaborate (25%).

#### What are the top complaints from sales about the marketing team?

(Sales respondents)



#### TARGETING THE WRONG LEADS

What is behind the sales team's top complaint that marketing is targeting the wrong leads? Does sales feel that marketing doesn't know the customer (which should be a big part of their job) or do they have very little faith in the marketing strategy overall? In both cases, it is important that the marketing team collaborates with the sales team on the Ideal Customer Profile (ICP) framework that they use to target prospects and how that is used in specific campaigns, to generate leads, and nurture leads. Your marketing strategy should not be a "black box" to the sales team, but an open and collaborative process.

## 4.2 Two perspectives

### Complaints from marketing about sales

Marketing professionals report their top three complaints about the sales team as insufficient or inaccurate data (40%), not following up on leads (38%), and underperforming tools creating complexity and workarounds (33%).

What are the top complaints from marketing about the sales team?  
(Marketing respondents)



**86% agree that not having a **single source of data** hinders an organization's ability to fully understand the customer journey.**

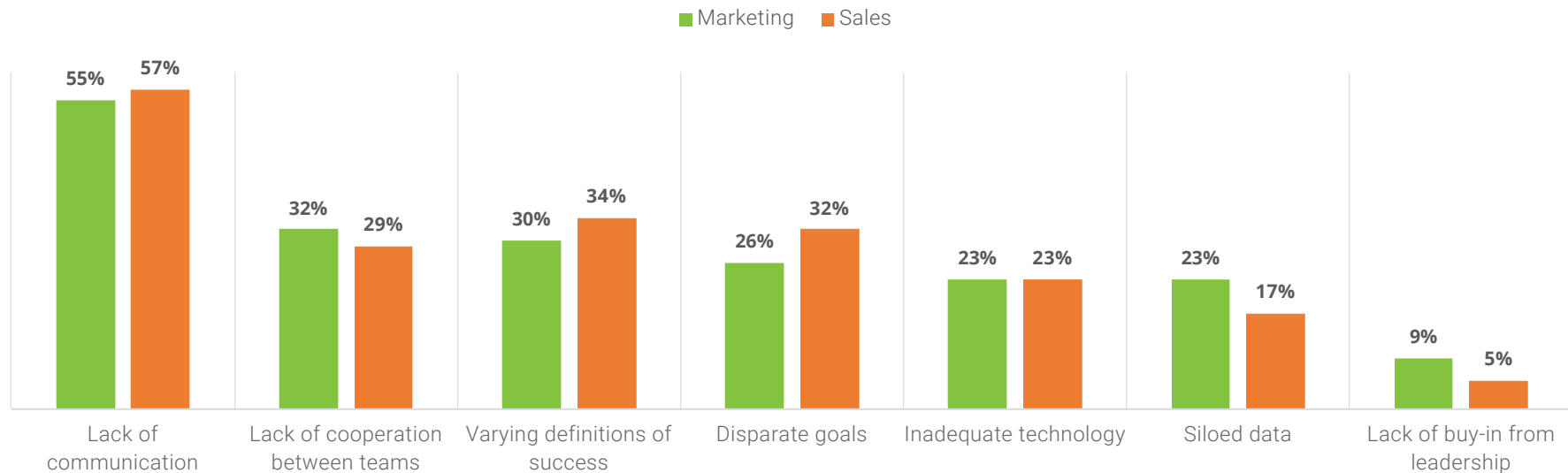
Data is at the center of the customer experience. It is critical to have a single source of data to combat complaints like insufficient or inaccurate data and provide the seamless customer experience that customers demand. Consolidate data, marketing operations, and sales operations to produce a unified view of each customer. With a single-source view of each customer, you will be able to deliver targeted and personalized messaging.

## 4.3 Two Perspectives

### Challenges to collaboration

Marketing and sales teams see eye-to-eye on what the most significant barriers are to effective collaboration between them. **Communication is by far the most significant challenge** according to both teams. We also see here the importance of measuring on the same playing field with varying definitions of success and disparate goals ranking among the top four options for each team.

What are the top challenges to effective collaboration between sales and marketing?



#### IMPROVE ALIGNMENT

Improve alignment by finding common ground, even if it is a complaint. Both marketing and sales are frustrated with insufficient or inaccurate data and underperforming tools or systems creating extra tasks. Both teams want to fix the data and technology problem. One strategy is to focus on fixing the data and technology problems as a team. Finding a common enemy can unify the two groups and improve the overall performance of the organization.



## 5.0 A unified view

### Insight into the entire customer lifecycle matters.

So how can organizations move from above average to excellent experiences?

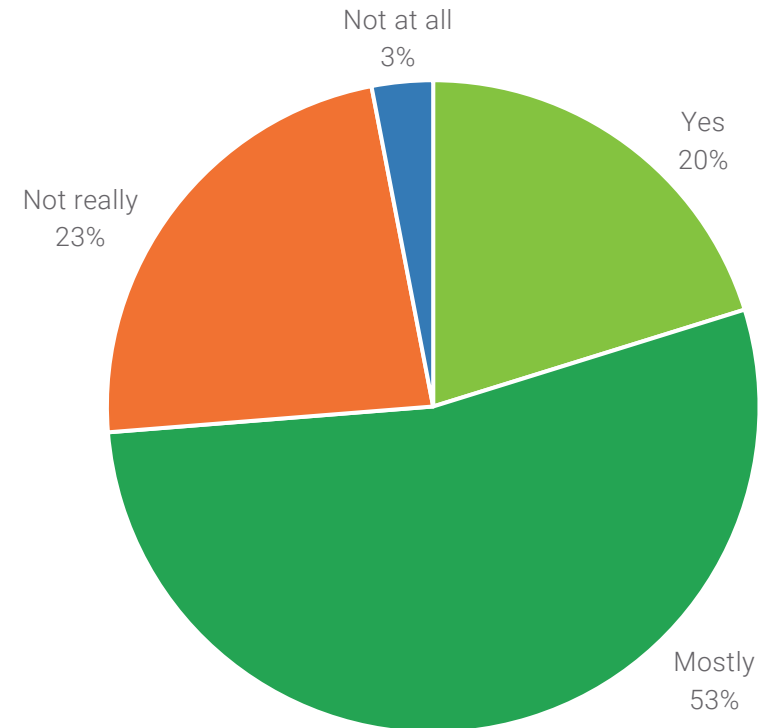
Having a unified data and technology platform that can track the entire customer lifecycle is extremely important to overall success, but only 20% of those surveyed can track the entire customer lifecycle from end to end.

Our research indicates that **those who have more insight into the customer lifecycle have a better customer experience.** 92% of respondents who have the ability to mostly or entirely track the customer lifecycle from end to end say that they have an above-average or excellent customer experience, compared to 73% of those who have less insight into the customer lifecycle.

What are the various stages of the customer lifecycle?

Awareness (lead generation), evaluation (lead nurturing), purchase, customer support, retention, and advocacy are all critical stages. Another way to look at the lifecycle is that you attract, capture, engage, convert, and expand. Each stage uses data and technology in ads, marketing automation, email, CRM, sales engagement, and social media to provide an end-to-end customer experience.

Do you have the ability to use data to track the customer lifecycle from end-to-end?  
(All respondents)



**Only 20% of organizations have the ability to track the entire customer lifecycle end-to-end.**

## 5.1 A unified view

### The importance of confidence in tools and data.

Having confidence in your tools and data to help you make better decisions is critical to business growth. Overall, only 19% of marketing and sales professionals surveyed feel confident in their tools and data to provide insight into what's yielding sales and customer growth. The good news is, our research shows that integrating these tools to unify data builds confidence.

Do you feel confident in your tools and data to provide insight into what's yielding sales and customer growth?

	Strongly or totally integrated	Partially or not at all integrated
<b>Yes</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Mostly</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>48%</b>
<b>Not really</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>41%</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>3%</b>

93% of strongly or totally integrated teams feel confident in their tools and data to provide insight into what's yielding sales and customer growth, compared to only 56% of less integrated teams.

Similarly, 94% of strongly or totally integrated teams feel confident in their ability to prove the ROI and effectiveness of individual campaigns compared to 63% of less integrated teams.

**64%** of those who are mostly or entirely confident in their tools and data saw an **increase in revenue last year** compared to only 38% of those with little to no confidence.

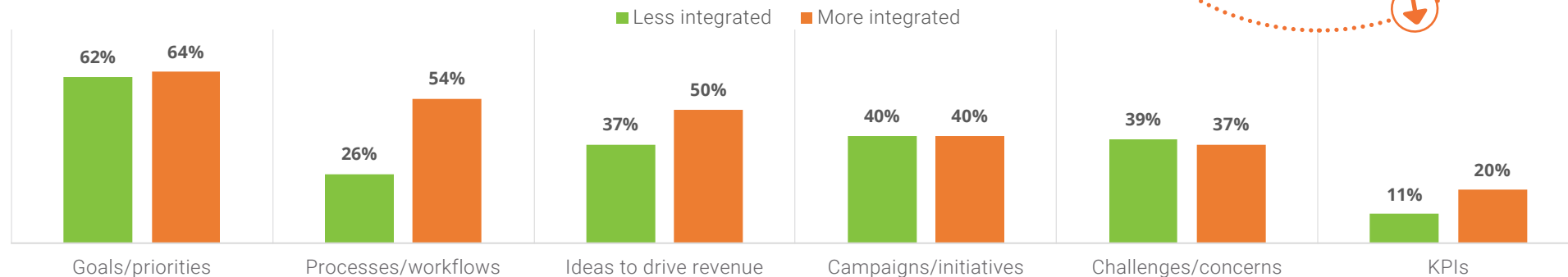
Gaining insight into what's working and what isn't fuels true optimization, and our research shows that the level of confidence in tools and data **directly correlates** to the increase in revenue experienced last year.

## 5.2 A unified view

### Collaboration and communication wins.

Where are teams doing well at communicating and collaborating? Overall marketing and sales professionals feel that goals and priorities are the most well-communicated and collaborated on area between the two teams, with nearly two-thirds reporting so. When more integrated teams (strongly or totally) and less integrated teams (partially or not at all) are put side-by-side, we see significant improvement in certain areas with an integrated approach.

Which of the following do you feel are well-communicated and collaborated on between your marketing and sales teams?



KPIs is the least likely to be well communicated and collaborated on between sales and marketing. Without a unified plan on tracking the right KPIs, it becomes incredibly difficult to measure each department and overall success.

#### INTEGRATION INSIGHT

Organizations with strongly or totally integrated teams are more than 2x as likely to feel that their processes and workflows are well communicated and collaborated on.

## 5.3 A unified view

### Tools that enable alignment.

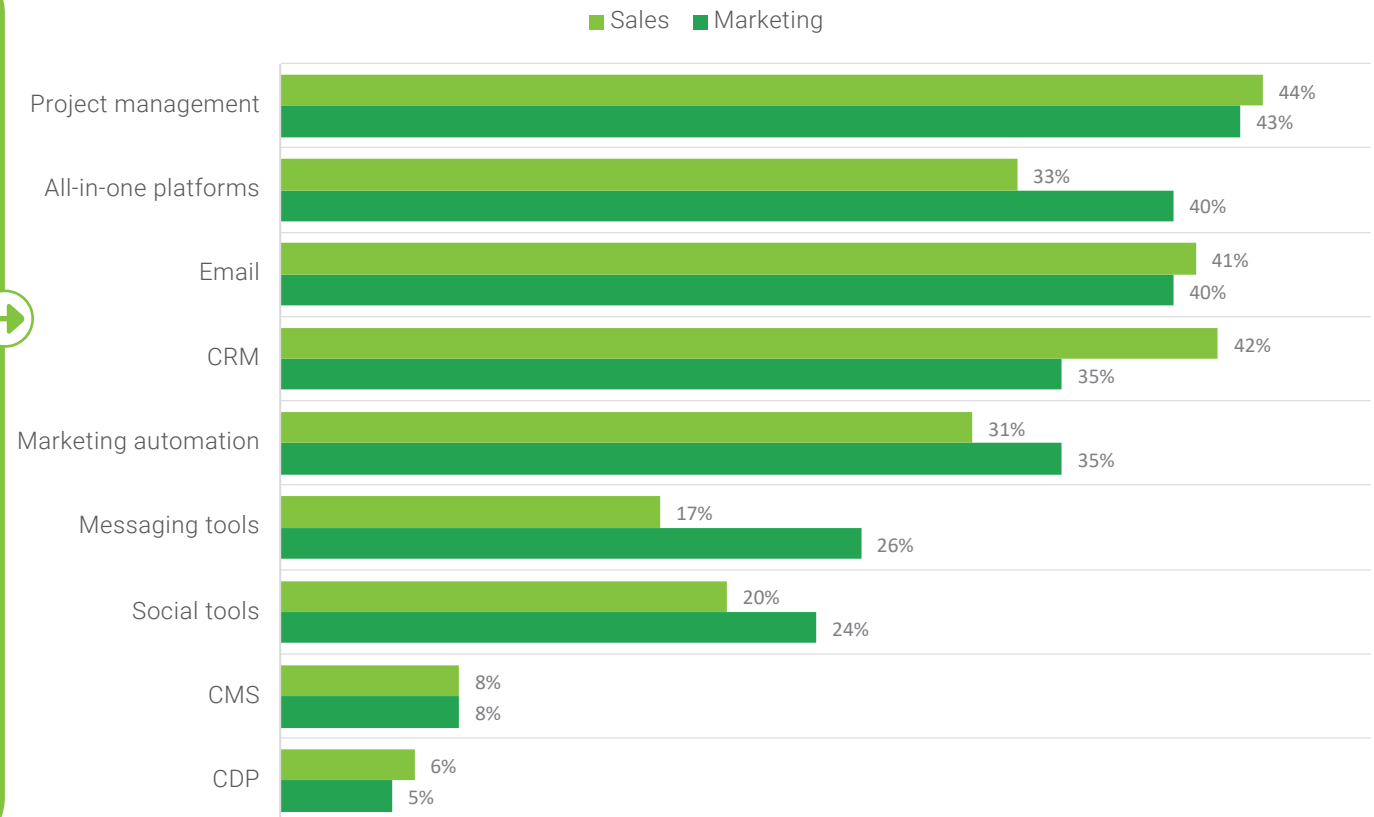
The integration of tools and data provides a myriad of benefits to marketing and sales teams. But can your tools and systems cause marketing and sales misalignment? 74% of professionals say yes, their tools can be a cause of misalignment between teams. We also see underperforming tools creating complex workarounds and extra tasks as top complaints about marketing and sales teams for nearly one-third of those surveyed (30%). The tools that marketing and sales utilize to execute can make or break their alignment and overall success.

#### WORKING TOGETHER

Email and CRM marketing automation tools need to work together for marketing and sales to provide a seamless customer experience. These tools should start conversations that lead to conversions with personalized messages and automated campaigns that respond to user behavior. Proper integration will offer detailed analytics on every interaction, so you can send the right message at the right time, and send your sales team into action with real-time notifications. The proper tools and integration will enable alignment between marketing and sales.



#### Which tools best enable sales and marketing teams to align their efforts?



## 6.0 Measuring performance

### Turning your data into actionable results.

Turning data into actionable results requires having confidence in what is working and what isn't.

**Only 21% of those surveyed feel confident in their ability to prove the ROI and effectiveness of individual campaigns.**

A single source of truth allows for effective optimization and will help you understand the customer's journey, improve conversion, yield more sales, and increase customer growth.

**1**

Consider what data is truly important for your business. What metrics help you determine the effectiveness of a campaign and the next steps to take?

**2**

Have a regular reporting frequency. Use your single source of data and tools to create reports from which your team can interpret the numbers and explain how they correlate to specific campaigns and goals. To unify marketing and sales, make sure that both teams have input into the reports created and that both teams know how to interpret the reports.

**3**

Create the story for your data. Data without context is meaningless. It is important to find the story that the data is telling and communicate that story to both the marketing and sales teams.

**4**

Assess your data strategy each quarter and keep optimizing its use. Is there any data in a silo that needs to be brought into your single source of truth? Is your data strategy moving your overall revenue strategy forward? What is missing? What needs improvement?

## 6.1 Measuring performance

### Difficulty in tracking KPIs across teams

Three-quarters of survey respondents report that their marketing and sales teams are mostly or entirely measured on the same KPIs (only 17% report entirely). But nearly the same amount (72%) report that tracking KPIs jointly across marketing and sales is difficult, and only 16% say KPIs are well communicated and collaborated on.

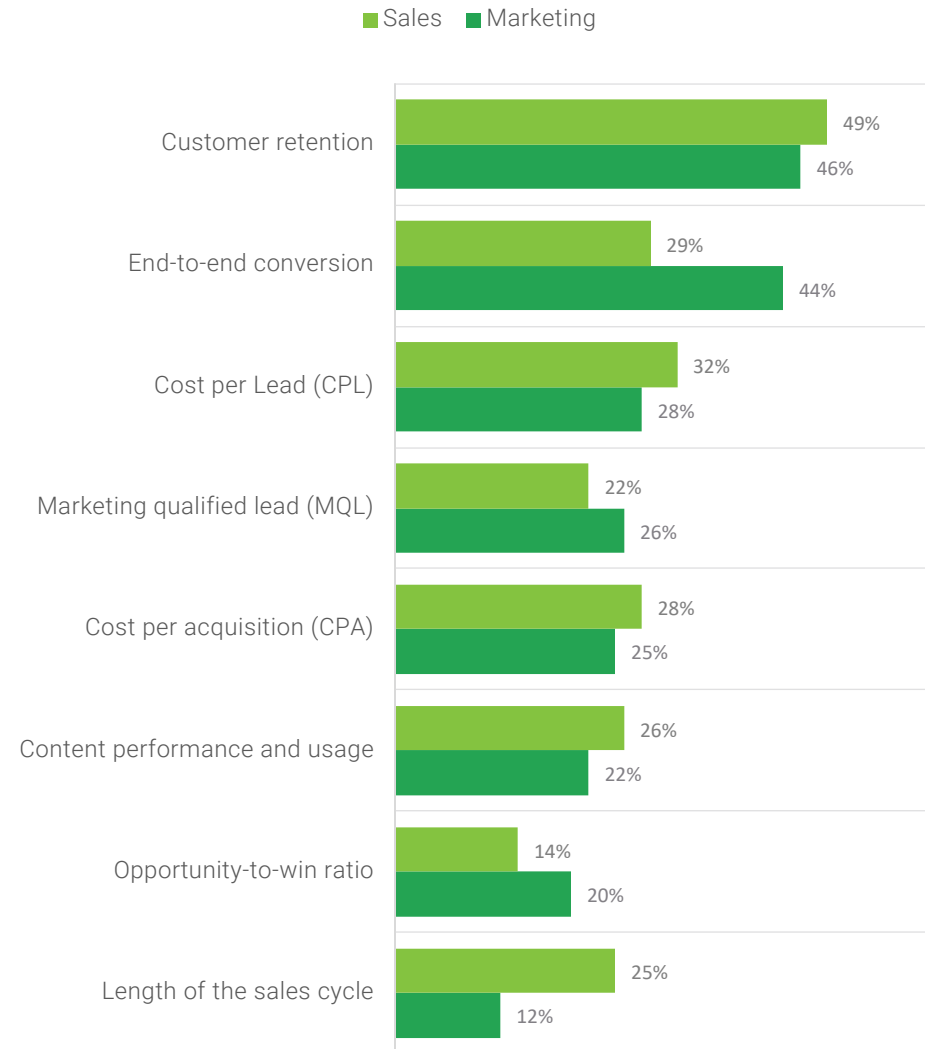
Without alignment on KPIs and having the ability to track those KPIs, it will always be difficult to keep both groups on the same with goals and accomplishments.

But what are the top KPIs to gauge marketing and sales alignment? Marketing and sales have similar views on whether or not their teams are utilizing the same KPIs but they have different perspectives on which KPIs most effectively measure alignment.

#### GROWTH MODE

80% of organizations experiencing the most growth (10%+) measure their marketing and sales performance mostly or entirely on the same KPIs.

#### What are the top KPIs to gauge marketing and sales alignment?



# Participants & Methodology

## N = 329 B2B Professionals

### Department

Marketing	46%
Sales	54%

### Role in Company

C-Level	28%
SVP	7%
VP	5%
Director	20%
Manager	38%
Other	2%

### Agency Status

Agency	29%
Non-agency	71%

## METHODOLOGY

Ascend2 benchmarks the performance of marketing strategies, tactics and the technology that drives them. With a custom online questionnaire, this survey was fielded to a panel of 329 sales and marketing professionals during the month of February 2022.

# About the Research Partners



SharpSpring, Inc. is a rapidly growing, highly-rated, global and affordable revenue growth platform delivered via a cloud-based Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) solution. More than 10,000 businesses around the world rely on SharpSpring platforms to generate leads, improve conversions to sales, and drive higher returns on marketing investments. Known for its innovation, open architecture and free customer support, SharpSpring offers flexible contracts at a fraction of the price of competitors making it an easy choice for growing businesses and digital marketing agencies.

Learn more at [SharpSpring](#).



Marketing technology companies and digital marketing agencies partner with Ascend2 to supplement their marketing content, generate leads, and engage prospects to drive demand through the middle of the funnel.

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