

Red Alert: Execs Reveal Disconnect Between 2022 Marketing Budget & Planning



Why This Report Matters

We don't have to tell you how drastically things have changed since the beginning of 2020, from customer needs (and wants!) to data regulations and restrictions. But 2021 represented a watershed moment for marketers looking to synthesize those behavioral shifts and the accompanying evolution in strategies, tactics, channels, and more into profitable growth.

Agility and innovation are no longer nice-to-haves for enterprise brands, and marketing leaders can't assume that what worked in the past will work in the future.

This report was built to help marketers understand whether marketing strategies and spend actually align with business impact and executive confidence—and Wpromote's experts will share how to transform these challenges into market differentiators for your brand.

How We Got The Data

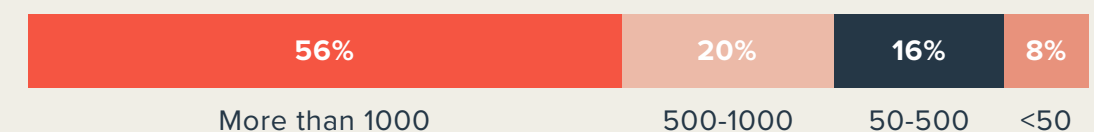
In November 2021, Ascend2 and Wpromote fielded a custom online questionnaire to a panel of senior-level marketing professionals as well as to a curated list of marketing research subscribers, all representing organizations with a revenue of more than \$50M per year and operating in the B2C space.

N = 210 B2C Senior-Level Marketing Professionals

Primary Industry

Professional Services <i>(Insurance / Finance / Banking / Legal / etc.)</i>	37%
Retail <i>(Fashion / Online shopping / Grocery / etc.)</i>	20%
Health and Personal Care <i>(Medical / Dental / Wellness / Beauty / etc.)</i>	19%
Home and Transportation Services <i>(Telecommunications / Real Estate / Home Improvement / Automotive / etc.)</i>	13%
Hospitality <i>(Travel / Tourism / Restaurant / etc.)</i>	8%
Entertainment <i>(Arts / Media / Sports / Gaming / etc.)</i>	3%

Number of Employees



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Key Findings



Quick Strategy Insights

- ✓ **The first-party data danger is real:** Nearly one-third of marketers indicated that first-party data collection was an effective strategy for them in 2021, but only 21% said they will be allocating a significant budget to it in the coming year.
- ✓ **Uh oh, overplanning is starting to hurt:** Nearly one in five of those who plan their marketing strategy a full year in advance find their strategies to be unsuccessful.
- ✓ **Cutting down on content marketing:** 40% of marketing leaders point to content marketing as the most effective upper-funnel strategy for 2021, but only 30% place it in the top budget items for 2022—and even less believe it will make a significant impact on strategy in the year ahead.
- ✓ **Chart a new path for performance:** B2C marketing execs report that brandstanding and new social networks will have the most impact on marketing performance in 2022.
- ✓ **Ready to pay to play:** Nearly half of B2Cs will be increasing their budgets for paid search and paid social in the year ahead, but the risk of overindexing on direct response is very present.

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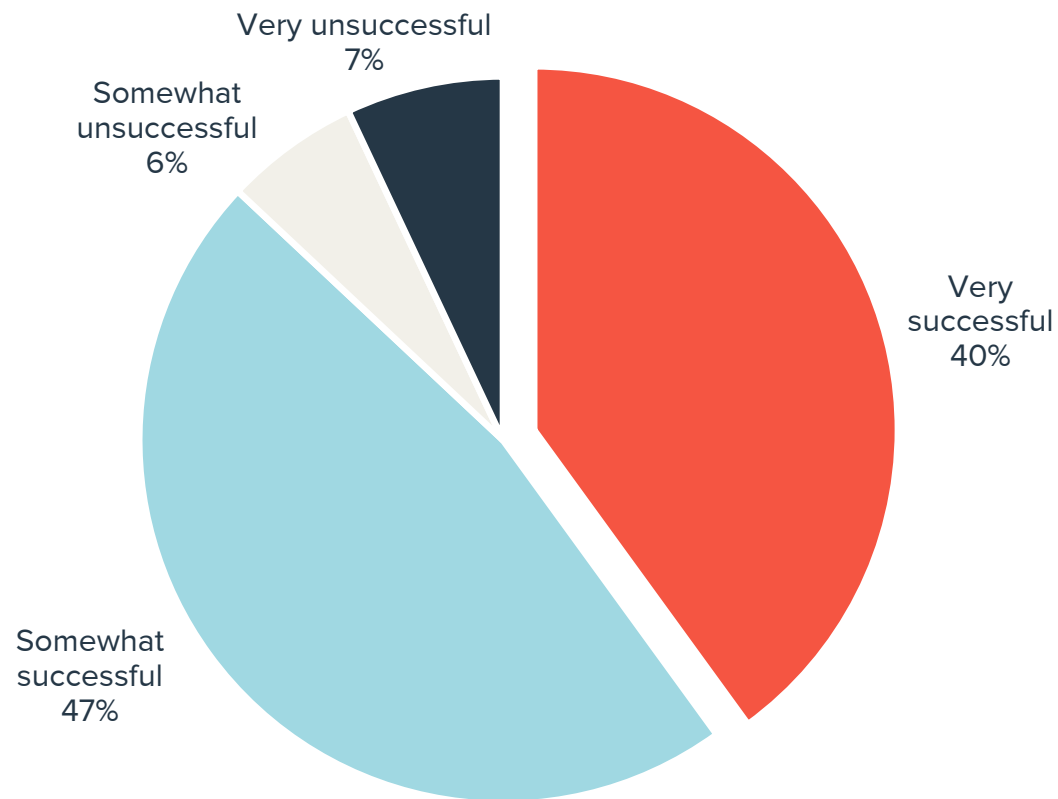
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Strategies and Tactics

How successful has your marketing strategy been at achieving 2021 goals?



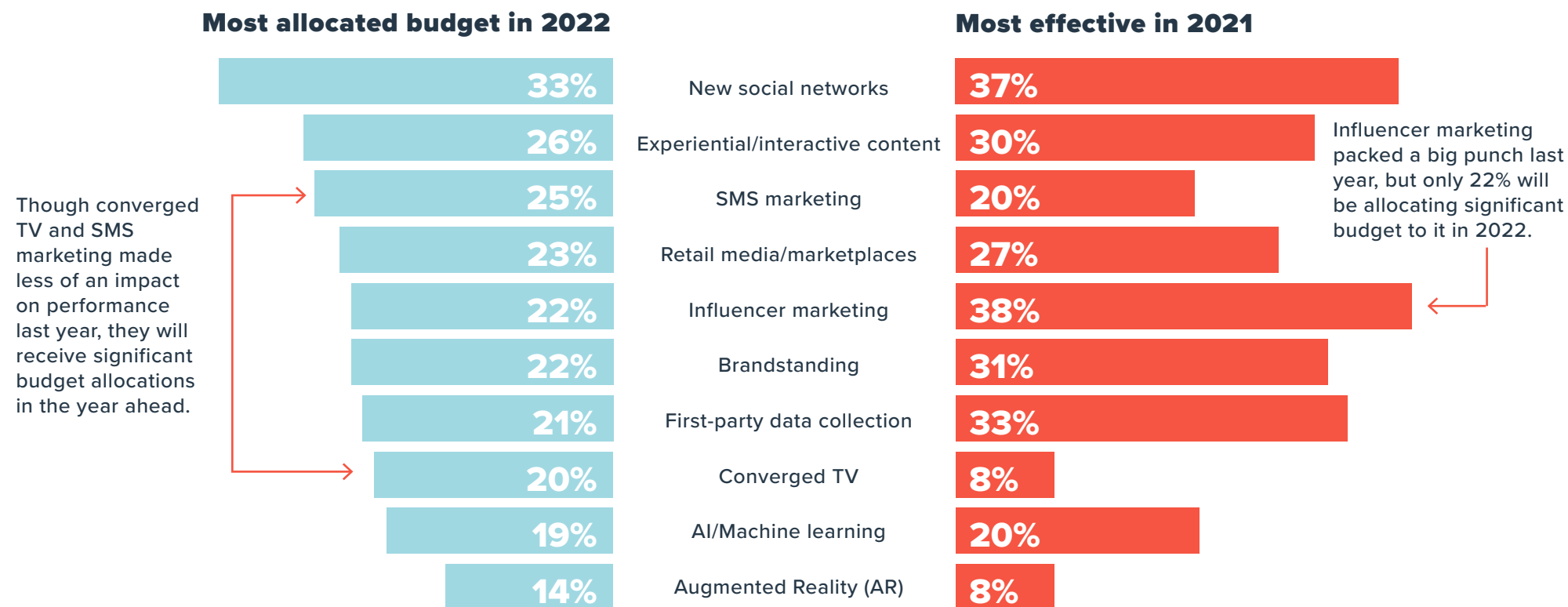
Learning From the Best

40% of the 210 B2C marketing leaders who participated in this survey rate their 2021 marketing strategy as "Very Successful" at achieving their desired goals. Throughout this report, we'll be taking note of the choices this "Best-In-Class" segment is making for 2022 and what you can learn from it. Where are they the most confident? How are they spending their budgets? In which channels?

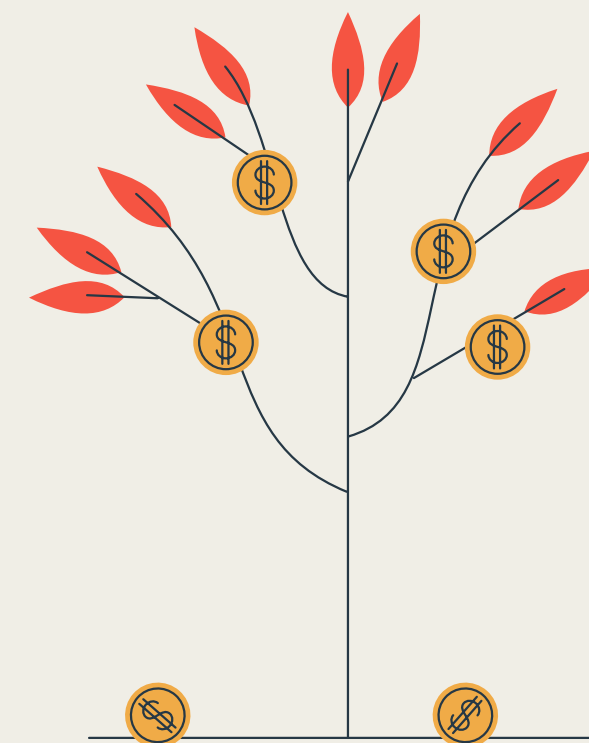
LEARN WHAT
THE MOST
SUCCESSFUL
MARKETERS
ARE DOING
DIFFERENTLY.



Is 2021 performance driving budget allocation in 2022?

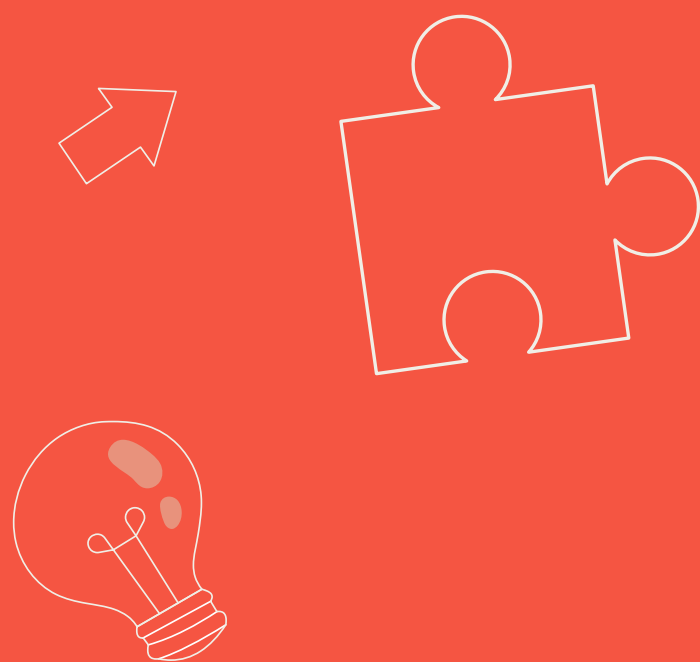


41% of marketing leaders feel strongly that they will receive a sufficient budget to meet desired goals in 2022.



STRATEGY SPOTLIGHT**The Risk of Neglecting First-Party Data Collection**

Only 21% of marketing leaders report that first-party data collection will be a top budget item in the year ahead. As data privacy restrictions roll out and tried-and-true data sources narrow in scope, investment in a strong data foundation and new strategies is non-negotiable if you want to stay ahead of the competition. One key change for smart marketers is shifting up the funnel when it comes to data collection by offering an exchange of value through interactive content. It's no longer sufficient to collect at the conversion point, but remember: you have to make it worthwhile for you customers if you're asking them for information.

[EXPLORE INTERACTIVE CONTENT](#)

Planning for 2022

As the landscape continues to change, marketers and brands need to be ready for anything. One essential risk mitigation tactic is social media diversification. Every marketing platform has experienced some turbulence in the last year, and it's not safe to put all of your eggs in one basket, even if it's been fruitful in the past.

Make sure your media mix is not overdependent on one channel and make space in your budget to start trying new platforms. The bonus? You'll be able to cast a wider net and reach new customers as you dip into additional channels.

Included in 2022 Planning

40%

New social networks

40%

First-party data collection

39%

SMS marketing

39%

Brandstanding/values or mission-based marketing

38%

Experiential/interactive content

33%

Influencer marketing

31%

Retail media/marketplaces

27%

AI, machine learning, or advanced modeling

19%

Converged TV

13%

Augmented Reality (AR)

Net New for 2022

31%

New social networks

27%

Brandstanding/values or mission-based marketing

27%

Influencer marketing

25%

SMS marketing

23%

AI, machine learning, or advanced modeling

23%

Retail media/marketplaces

23%

First-party data collection

23%

Experiential/interactive content

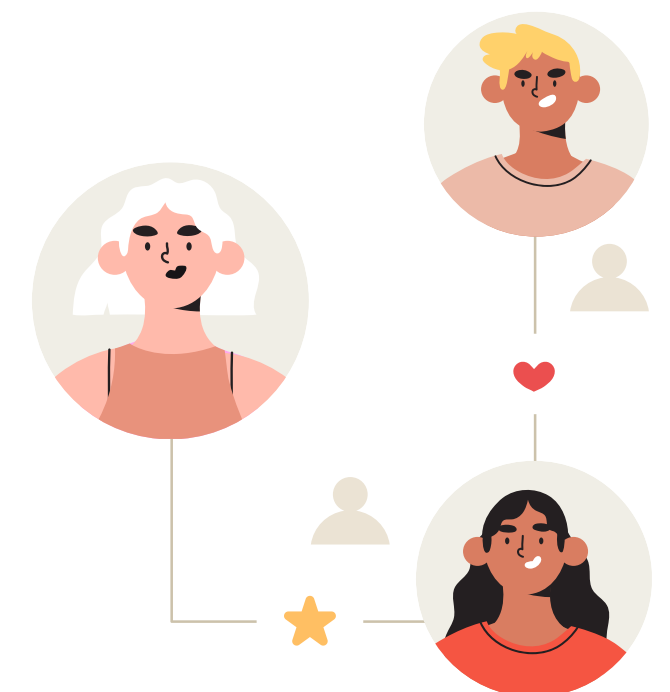
23%

Augmented Reality (AR)

23%

Converged TV

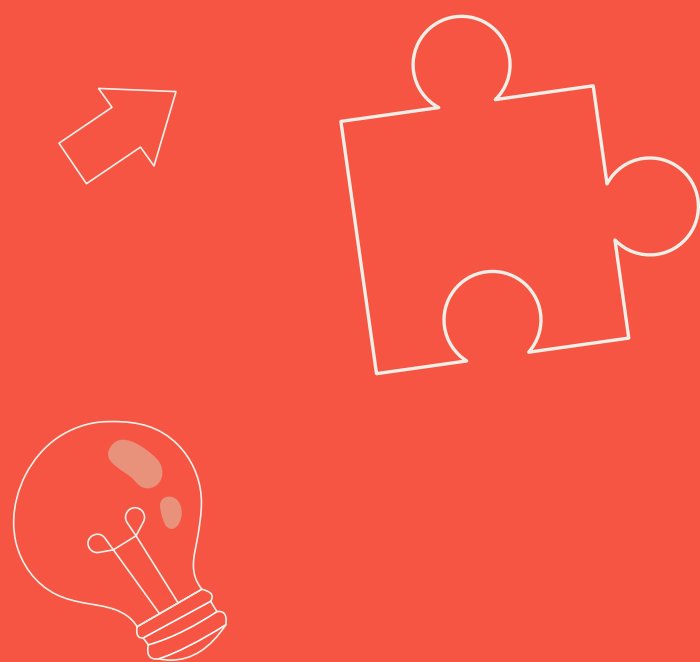
New social networks will be included in 40% of marketing strategies in 2022.



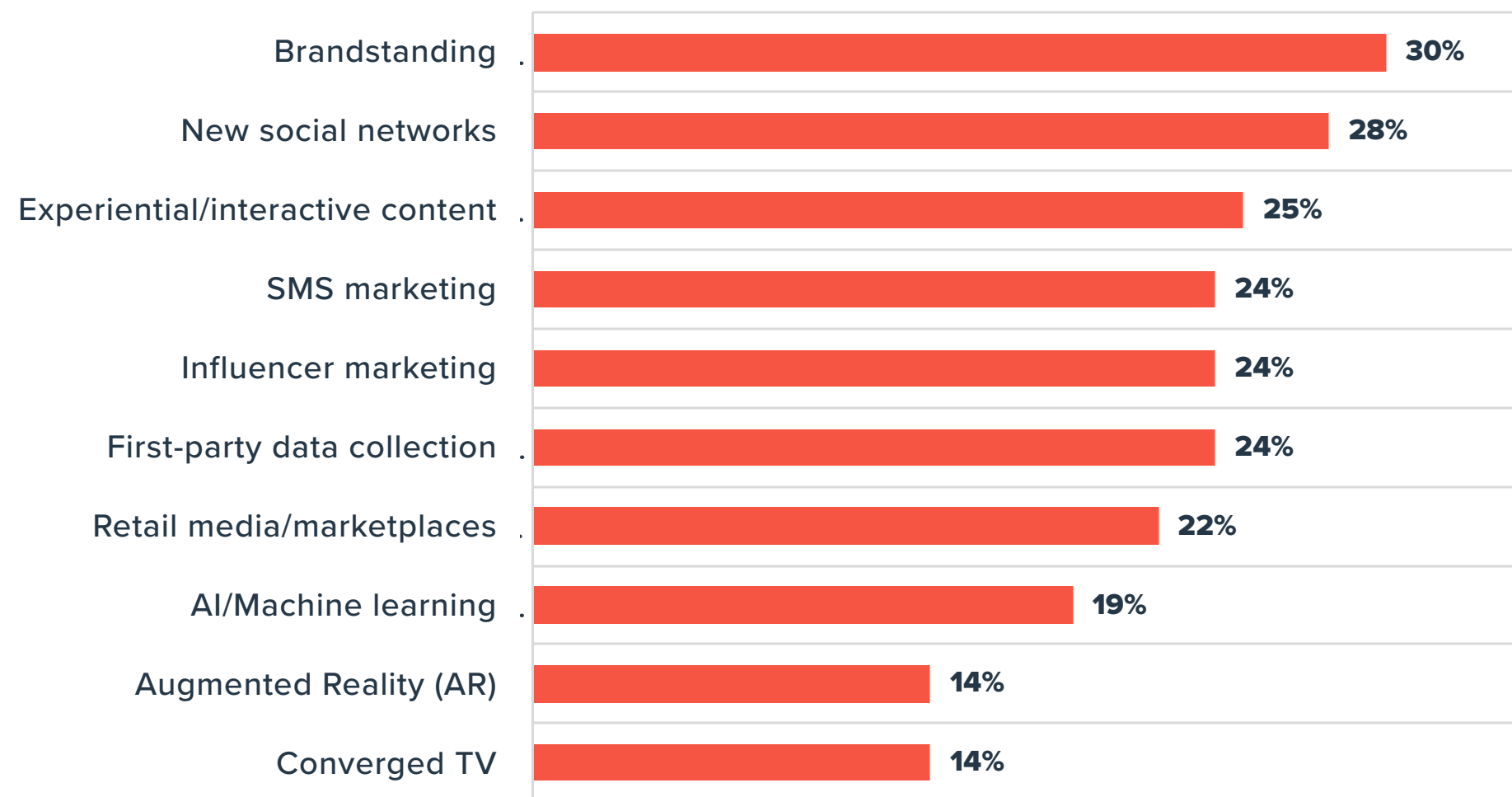
STRATEGY SPOTLIGHT**Exploring New Social Opportunities**

Nobody knows what the Next Big Social Network is going to be, but at least 10% of your budget should be allocated to experimentation. New social media networks you might consider in 2022 include Clubhouse, TikTok, and Twitter Spaces, and it's also worth considering platforms like Snapchat that have made significant investments in their direct response offerings.

DIVERSIFY YOUR SOCIAL STRATEGY



Which strategies or tactics will have the most impact on marketing performance in 2022?



Retail

(Fashion / Online shopping / Grocery / etc.)

New social networks 39%

Brandstanding 29%

SMS marketing 27%

Retail media/marketplaces 27%

Professional Services

(Insurance / Finance / Banking / Legal / etc.)

Influencer marketing 32%

Brandstanding 31%

Experiential/interactive content 31%

SMS marketing 27%

Health & Personal Care

(Medical / Dental / Wellness / Beauty / etc.)

First-party data collection 40%

New social networks 33%

Brandstanding 33%

SMS marketing 25%

Brandstanding, or mission- or value-based marketing, is becoming more of a priority for both customers and brands.

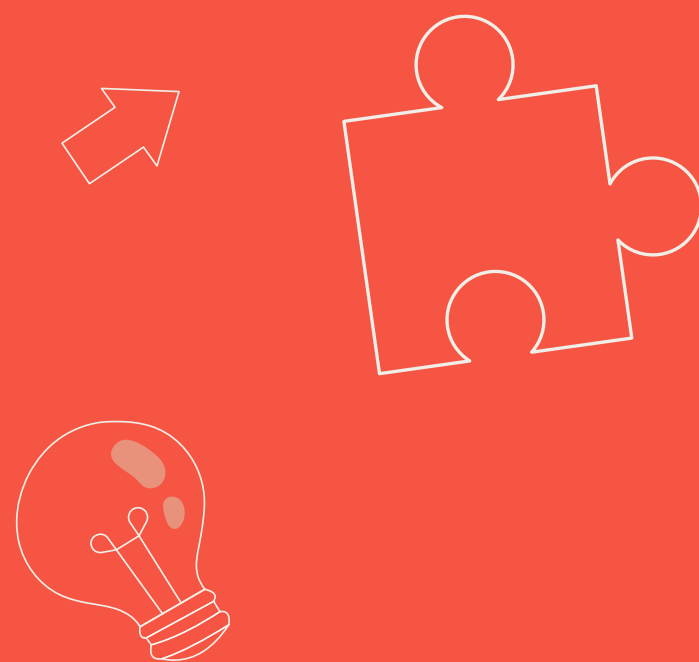
STRATEGY SPOTLIGHT

Building Loyalty With Brandstanding

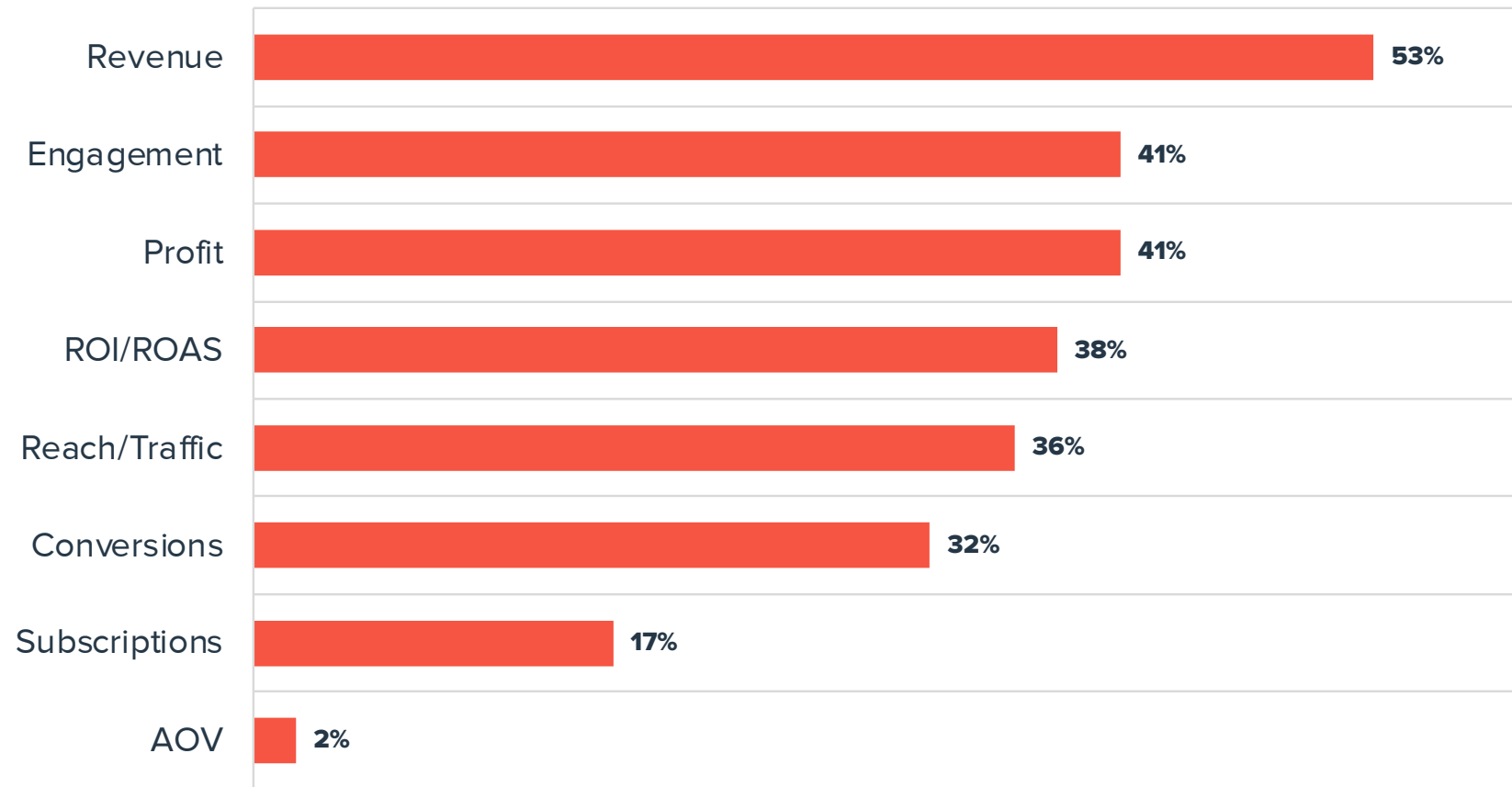
Brandstanding landed at the top of marketing strategies expected to make an impact in 2022, but it shows up much further down on the list of budget priorities.

Marketing leaders recognize the importance of taking a stand as more and more customers want the brands they buy from to align with their values, but it's much harder to understand its impact on performance. The biggest problem when it comes to brandstanding is coming across as inauthentic or opportunistic because your business isn't fully committing to making a mission or a set of values central to the business, not just using brandstanding as a marketing tool.

[GO BEYOND PRIDE IN LGBTQ+ CAMPAIGNS](#)



Which KPIs MOST EFFECTIVELY MEASURE the performance of your overall marketing strategy?



Over 90% of marketing leaders agree that performance metrics play a major role in determining the allocation of marketing budget. More than half of those surveyed report that revenue is the most effective KPI for measuring performance, while 41% say that engagement and profit top the list of most useful performance metrics.



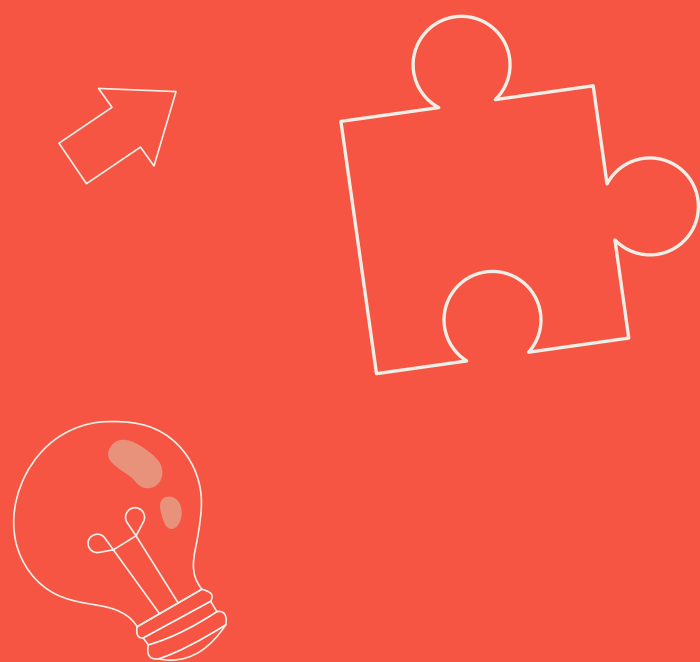
STRATEGY SPOTLIGHT

Finding A Better Attribution Model

Marketers have depended for too long on single-touch attribution models, especially last-touch models. But blindly giving all credit to a single touchpoint is really a misuse of the data you have at hand.

Algorithmic multi-touch attribution models break down attribution across every user action to understand how they truly contribute to conversion. They help marketers more accurately assign credit to various customer touchpoints by broadening our understanding of how different channel interactions are directly impacting marketing performance.

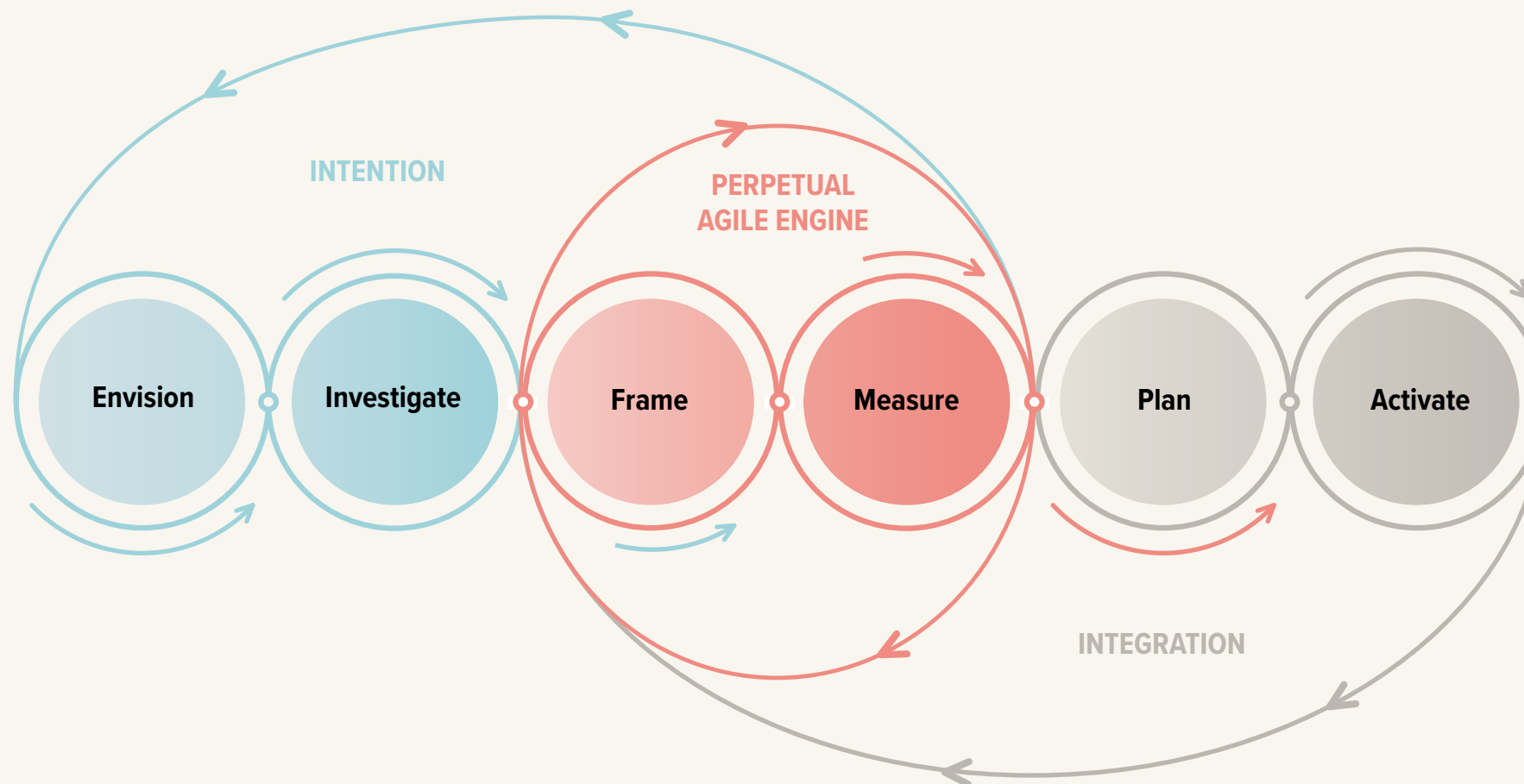
[FIND OUT MORE ABOUT MULTI-TOUCH ATTRIBUTION](#)



STRATEGIC DEEP DIVE

Alignment With Business Objectives

It is essential to collaborate across teams and build out a strategy that aligns with your business goals, which is why we built the Challenger Framework. You need to understand your marketing strategy as a performance machine: a data-driven ecosystem encompassing the full customer journey that generates opportunities for new customer acquisition, retention, and loyalty at scale.



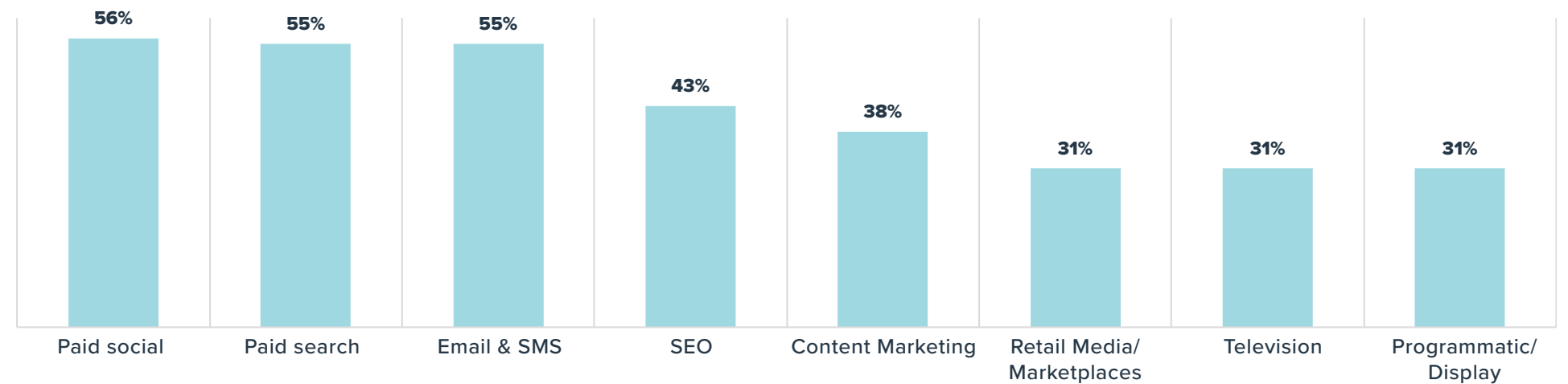
The Challenger Framework is built around the following steps:

- 1 | **Envision:** Set your core business objectives, audience, channels, budget, and vision for the future.
- 2 | **Investigate:** Understand what has already been done, what worked what didn't, and identify low-hanging fruit.
- 3 | **Frame:** Set an integrated marketing strategy that correlates to and supports business performance and goals.
- 4 | **Measure:** Align what you're measuring with your media principles and direction so you can translate data into action.
- 5 | **Plan:** Build the tactical program that will bring your strategy to life for users at every stage of the funnel and across channels.
- 6 | **Activate:** Turn on your fluid, agile, omnichannel approach that makes space for unknowns and includes experimentation.

DISCOVER THE CHALLENGER FRAMEWORK

Marketing Channels

Which channels will be included in your 2022 marketing strategy?



Paid social media, paid search and email are the top channels executives plan to include in B2C marketing plans for 2022.

BEST-IN-CLASS PERSPECTIVE

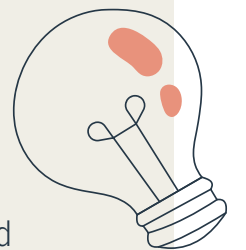
The most successful marketing leaders will be dedicating the most budget to paid search (52%) and SEO (36%) in the year ahead.

STRATEGY SPOTLIGHT

Paid Search + SEO

Pay-per-click (PPC) search campaigns often outpace organic marketing (or SEO) investment for a couple of reasons: they're agile, they start getting results the moment they're turned on, and attribution is much easier. But looking at paid search and SEO separately is a mistake; they need to work together to get the maximum impact. Organic campaigns fill the funnel and drive qualified traffic you can capture and convert with the right mix of performance marketing tactics on the paid side. Overinvesting at the bottom of the funnel means you're leaving opportunities to create new demand that powers ongoing direct response performance on the table.

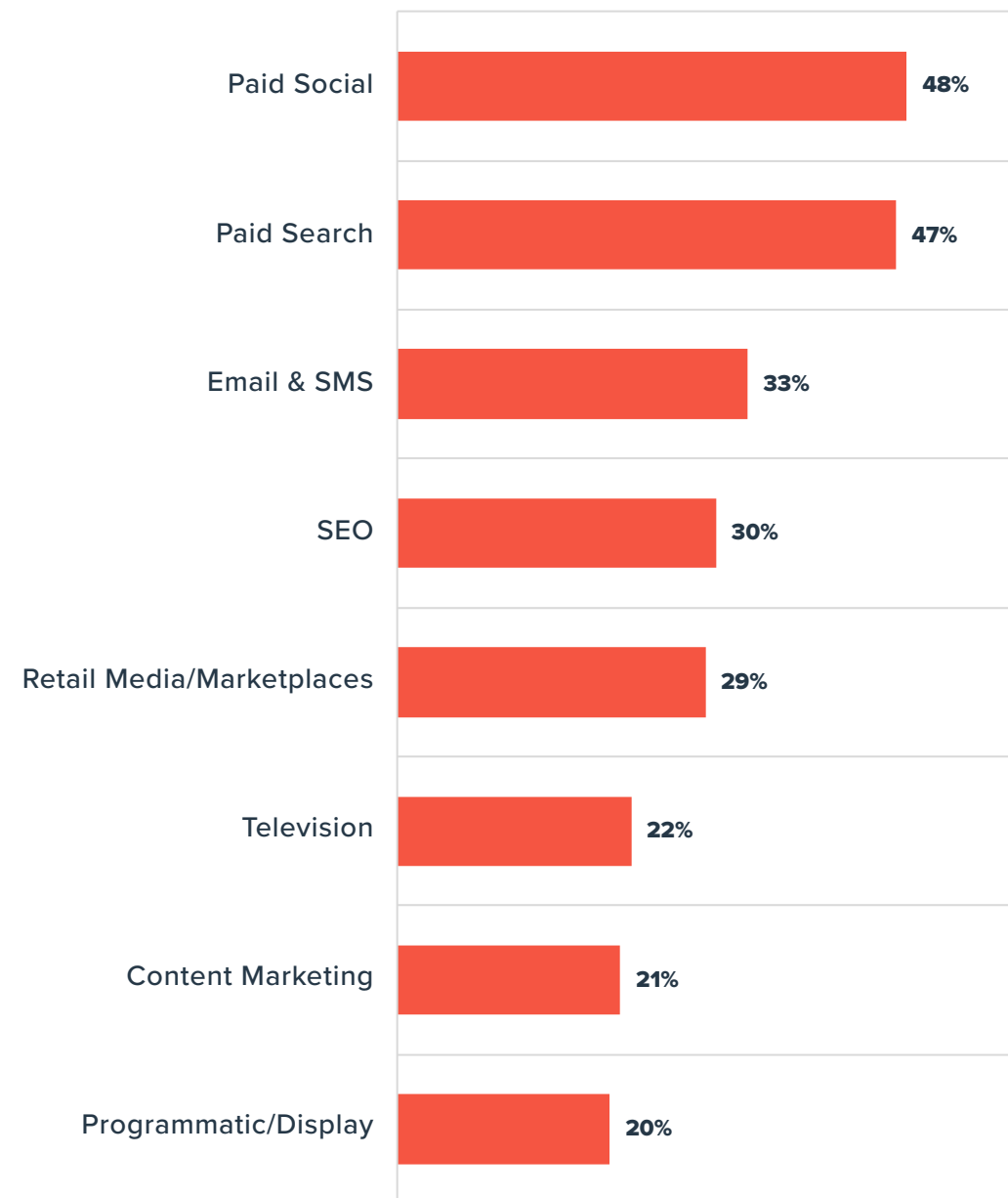
DRIVE MORE DEMAND WITH EARNED MEDIA



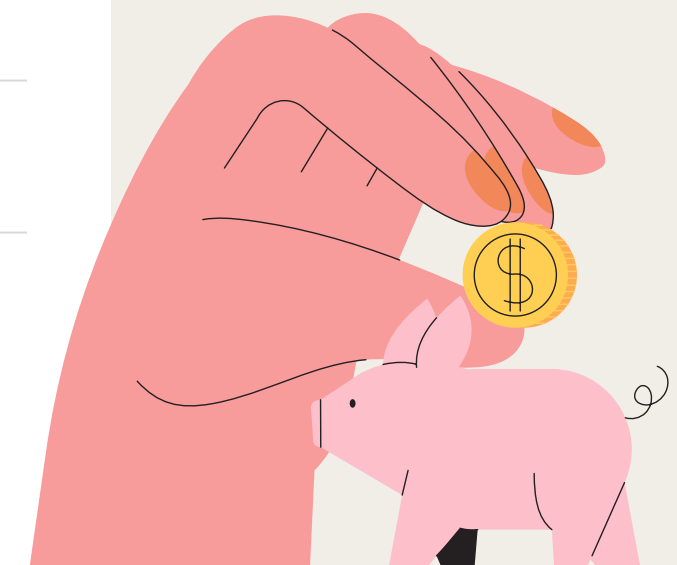
Most Budgeted For Marketing Channels in 2022



Which channels do you plan to increase budget for in 2022?



Retail media cracks the top 5 channels where marketers plan to increase budget in 2022.



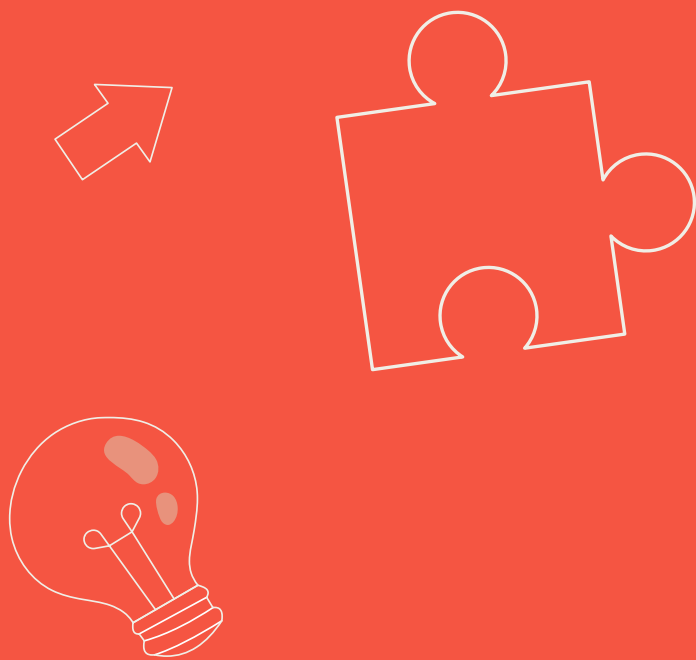
STRATEGY SPOTLIGHT

2022 Planning, By The Budget

Nearly half (46%) of B2C marketing leaders will be allocating the most budget to paid search in the coming year. Email and paid social media will also account for significant parts of the budget pie for 38% and 37% of those surveyed, respectively.

But paid social is on the rise, just edging out paid search as the top channel for budget increase in 2022. Remember that a holistic strategy is key here; don't do your channel planning in a silo. You need to figure out what core business objectives your entire marketing strategy is working toward.

IDENTIFY YOUR CORE BUSINESS OBJECTIVES



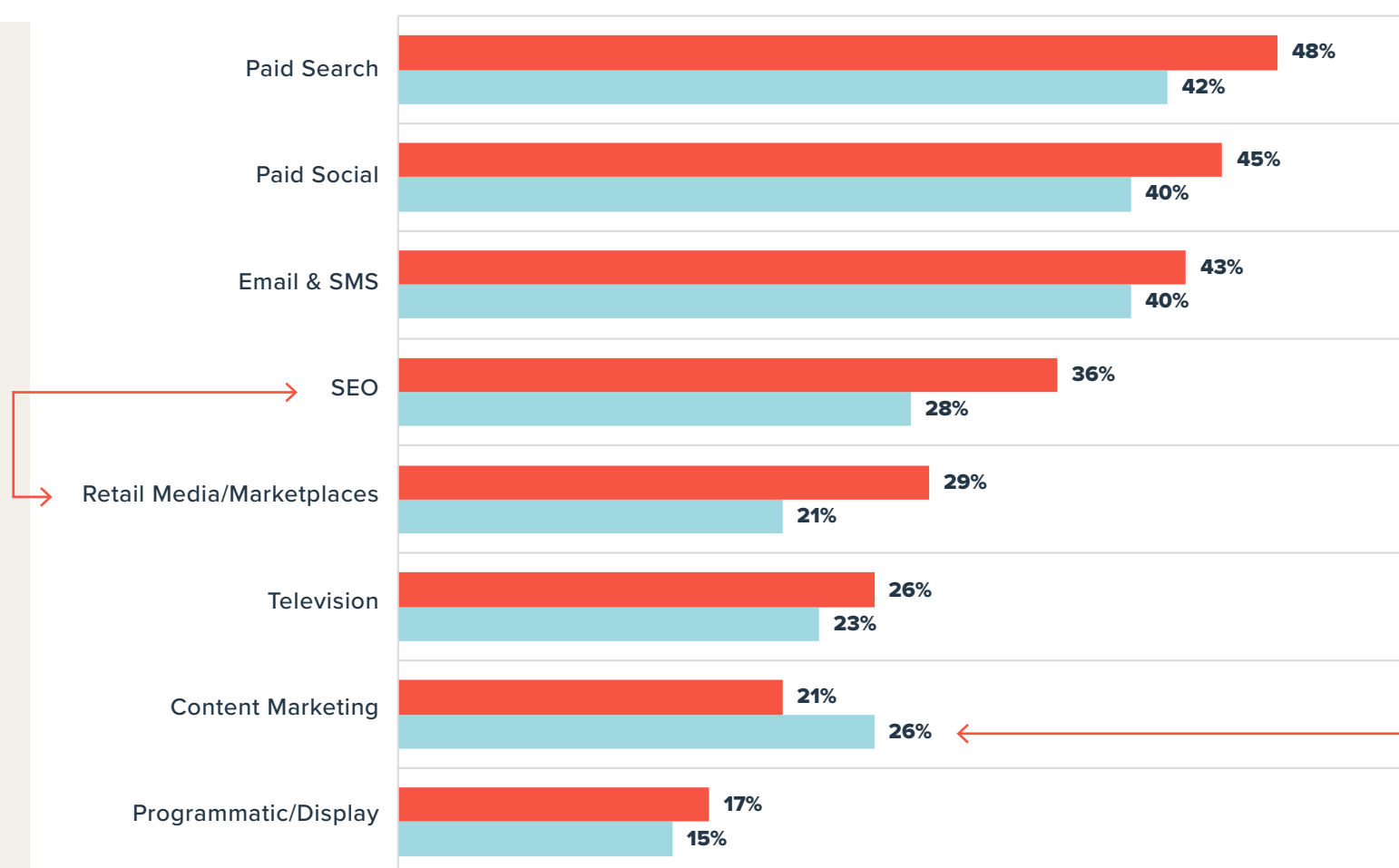
What worked in 2021 and how does this impact confidence in 2022?

Which channels were most effective in helping to achieve marketing objectives in 2021?

Which channels do you feel will have the most impact on marketing performance in 2022?

Wavering Confidence?

More marketing leaders pointed to channels like SEO and retail media shopping and online marketplaces (such as Amazon) as the most effective when it came to achieving their marketing objectives last year. But fewer feel they will have a significant impact on marketing performance in 2022.



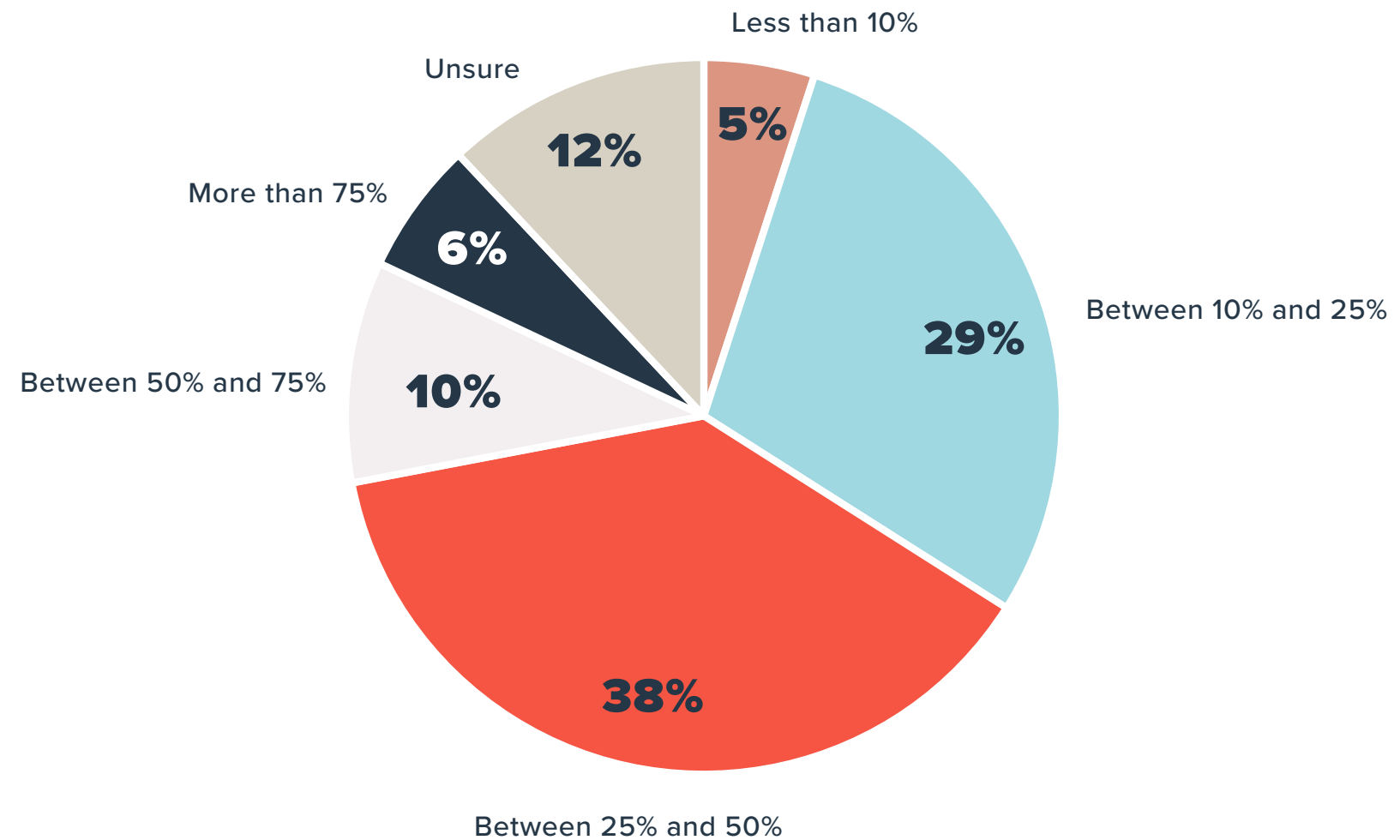
Content Marketing

Marketers identified content marketing as a tactic that will increase in importance in 2022. Content marketing drives brand awareness, builds trust with your audience, establishes credibility, and strengthens your reputation. It also drives long-term loyalty and customer lifetime value while priming new audiences for lower funnel tactics.

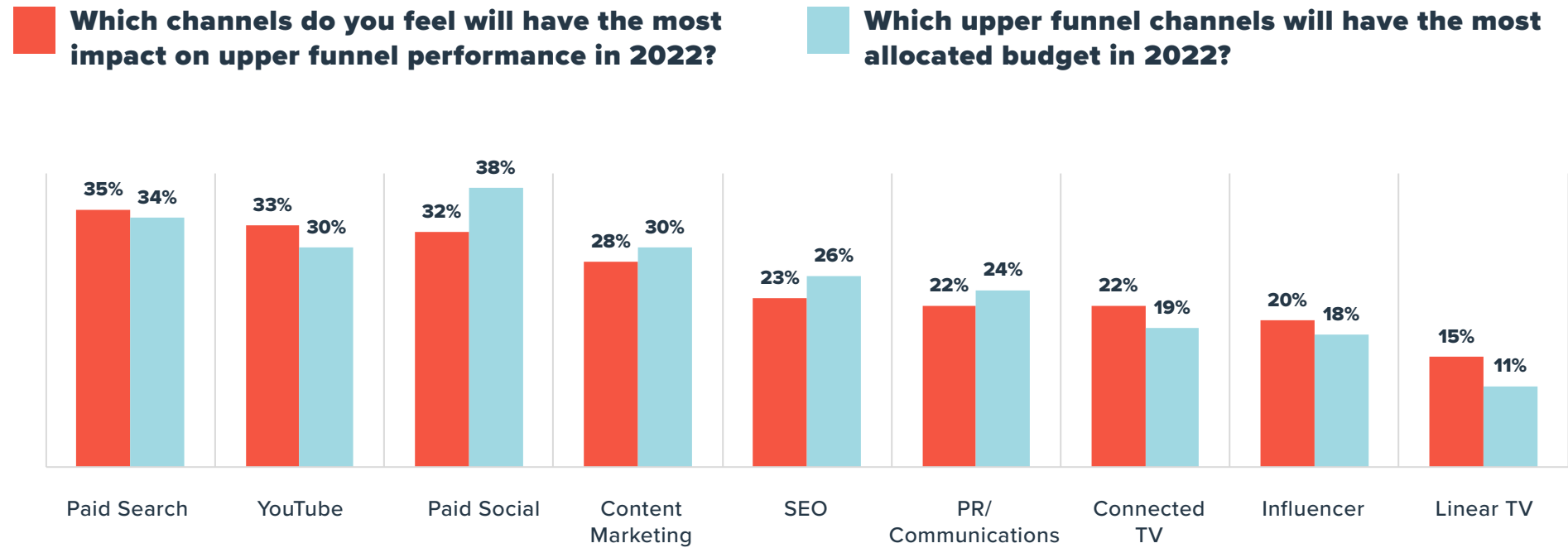
The Upper Funnel



What percent of your overall marketing budget will be allocated to UPPER FUNNEL initiatives in 2022?



OVER HALF OF MARKETING LEADERS WILL BE ALLOCATING 25%+ OF THEIR BUDGET TO THE UPPER FUNNEL IN 2022



Despite identifying content marketing as the most effective upper funnel channel in 2021, marketing leaders indicate they will heavily favor paid channels that produce swift and easily measurable results when it comes to the upper funnel next year. Only 30% of marketing leaders plan to allocate a significant portion of budget to content marketing for 2022, while 38% are allocating the most upper funnel budget to paid search.

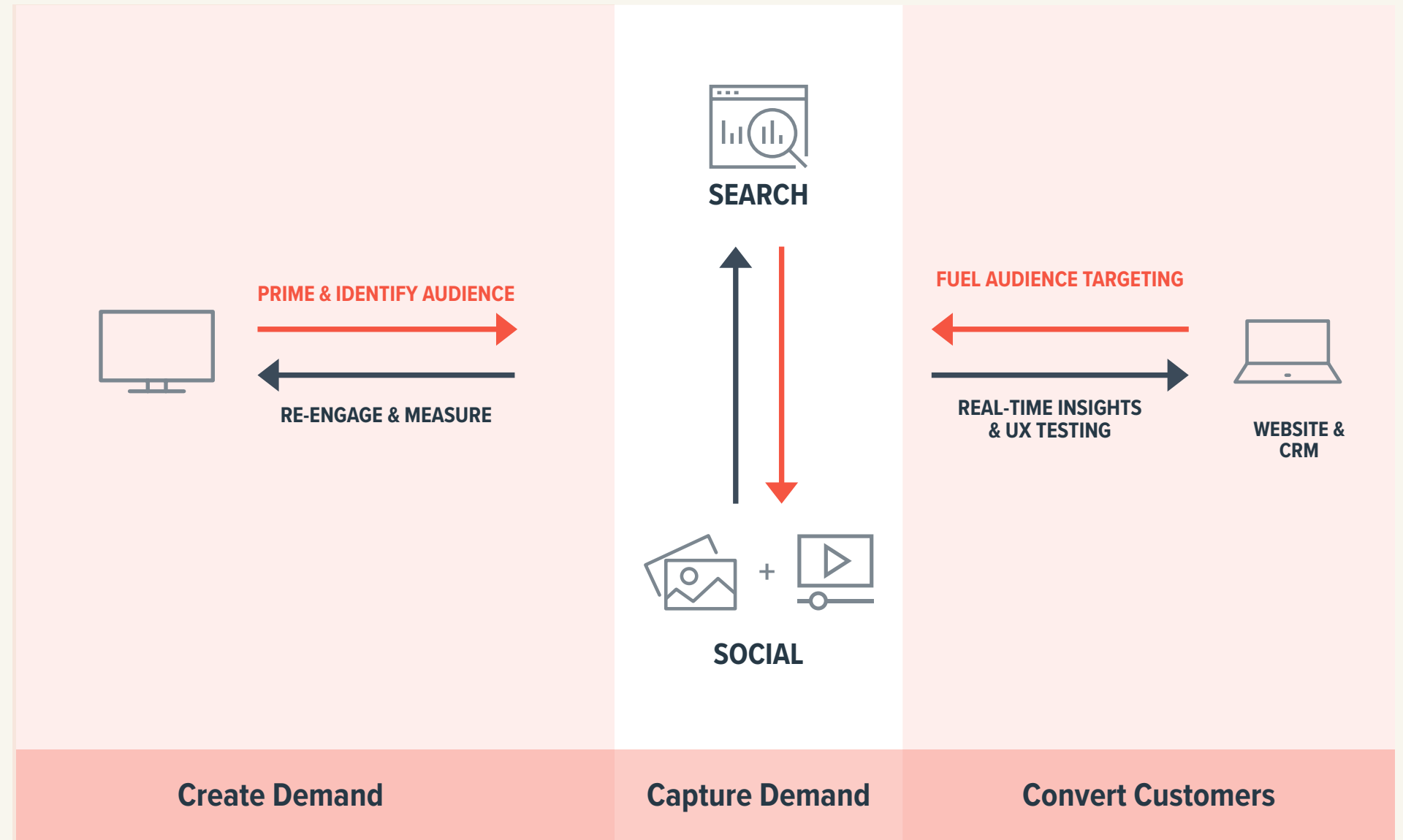
The gap in 2021 performance and 2022 confidence in content marketing is curious, but not entirely unexpected. Content influences on nearly all facets of a marketing strategy. Many initiatives owe a percentage of lift, engagement, and priming to content, but attribution models chronically underreport and underrepresent content and other upper funnel initiatives that don't lead to an immediate purchase.

STRATEGIC DEEP DIVE

Sharing Your Brand Story With Converged TV

One major opportunity to share a deeper story that drives long-term customer loyalty is converged TV. When it comes to raw narrative power, there's never been a more powerful performance engine than TV. And the proliferation of streaming services and increased targeting capabilities on both linear and OTT mean the time is ripe to make your move.

Your customers don't see channel, they see your brand. They expect the journey to be seamless as they go from platform to platform, which they're often experiencing at the same time. And if you're trying to connect at a deeper level and share a mission or a set of values, TV is a great fit.



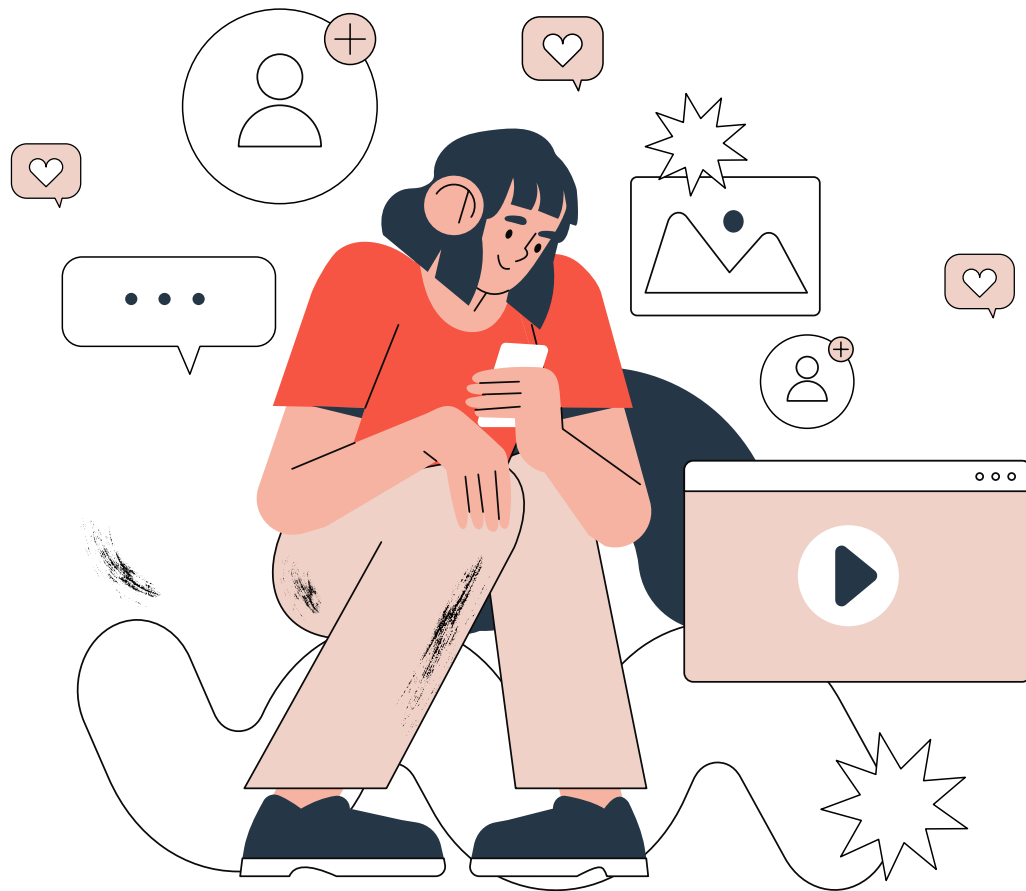
You have to consider the full picture of how audiences are engaging with your brand—and how effectively your ads are priming the audience to actually convert and purchase further down the funnel. The goal of any marketing investment should be business

growth. The upper funnel is essential for creating more demand. To get the full benefit of your TV ads, you need to create a digital dovetail so you can extend the reach and impact of your spots with real-time digital activations that can capture demand in the moment.

There are some ground rules when it comes to converged TV:

- 1 | **Put your audience first:** everyone is consuming media differently, and you need to understand your audience and what they're looking for.
- 2 | **Take a unified approach to the customer journey:** instead of just looking at the funnel, you need to map customer touchpoints and how they're flowing between channels.
- 3 | **Plan to play in as many of these channels as possible:** get the full benefit of a diversified marketing strategy while prioritizing a seamless customer experience.
- 4 | **Assess performance holistically:** invest in converging your measurement, not just your strategy. That's the only way to make smart marketing decisions that align with your business objectives.

[GET THE CONVERGED TV GUIDE](#)

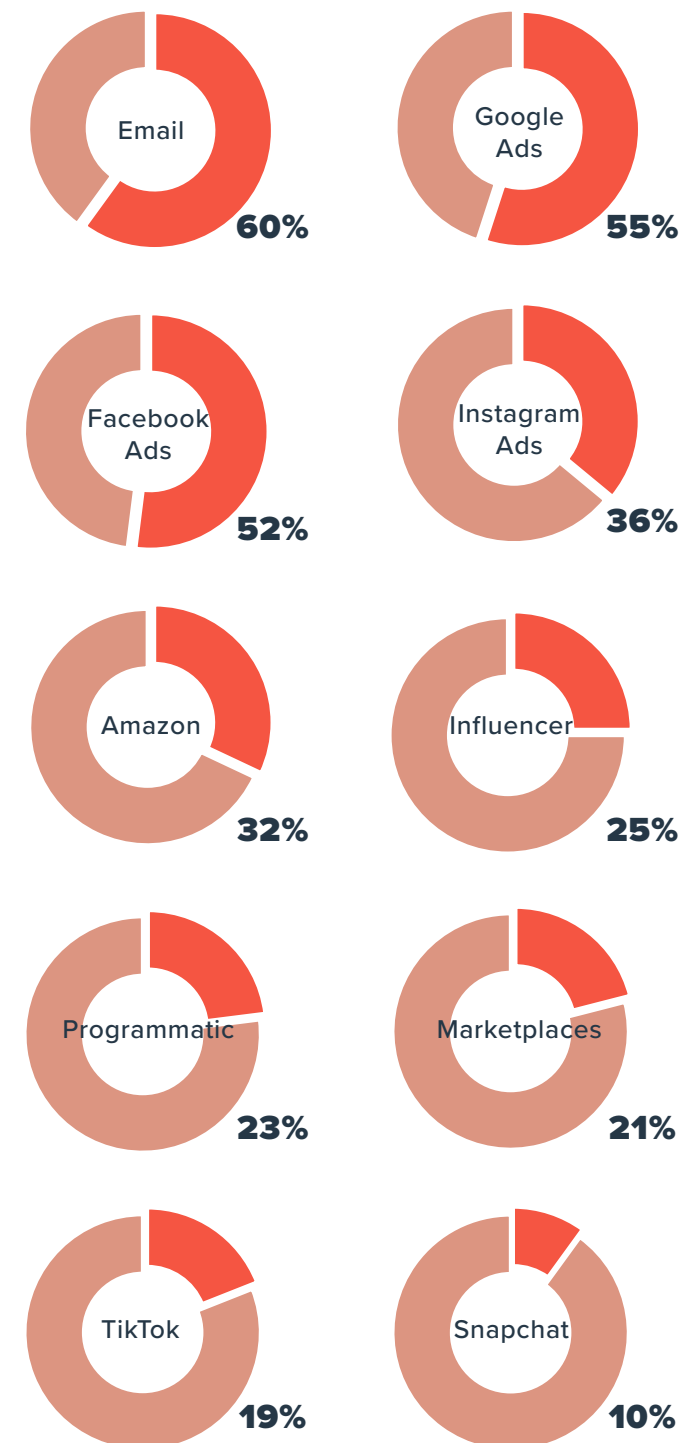


Direct Response

Direct response marketing is designed to cause an immediate response from your target audience. It starts with picking the best channels for your industry, developing campaign copy and design that conveys your unique value proposition through powerful messaging and creative, and a direct powerful call-to-action (CTA) that converts. It's trackable, measurable, and targeted, which is why it is often the tip of the spear for marketers.

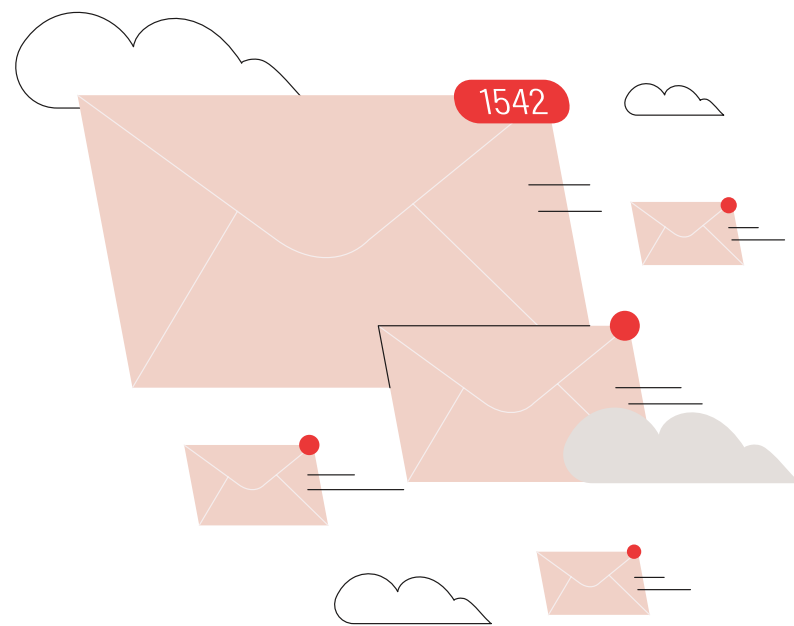
Email, Google Ads, and Facebook Ads will reign supreme in 2022 as the major direct response channels in B2C marketing strategies for most brands.

Which direct response channels will be included in your 2022 marketing strategy?



Email Marketing

Email may be the oldest direct response channel but is still the most frequently used because it is easy to track and measure. It's fairly easy to capture email addresses using other channels and to collect more data to optimize your email campaigns. As first-party data becomes ever more important, email will continue to stay central to marketing strategies in 2022, even as inboxes show signs of strain from the constant bombardment.



Which direct response channels do you feel will have the most impact on marketing performance in 2022?

Retail

(Fashion / Online shopping / Grocery / etc.)

Google Ads 49%

Facebook Ads 37%

Amazon 37%

Instagram 29%

Professional Services

(Insurance / Finance / Banking / Legal / etc.)

Email 51%

Google Ads 44%

Facebook Ads 33%

Influencer 23%

Health & Personal Care

(Medical / Dental / Wellness / Beauty / etc.)

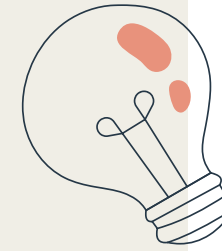
Facebook Ads 40%

Email 38%

Google Ads 35%

Instagram 18%

STRATEGY SPOTLIGHT Expanding Your Brand Identity On TikTok



TikTok represents a conundrum for a lot of enterprise brands; it's exploding popularity across demographic groups represents an enormous opportunity, but (like most social networks in their infancy) the marketing tools currently on offer aren't quite as mature as what we're used to on more mature platforms.

But that doesn't mean you should wait on the sidelines. Instead, remember that TikTok is a different animal than Facebook or Instagram. Audiences on TikTok are looking to be entertained, inspired, and educated, and your content needs to both stand out from the crowd and feel organic to the platform.

START EXPERIMENTING WITH TIKTOK

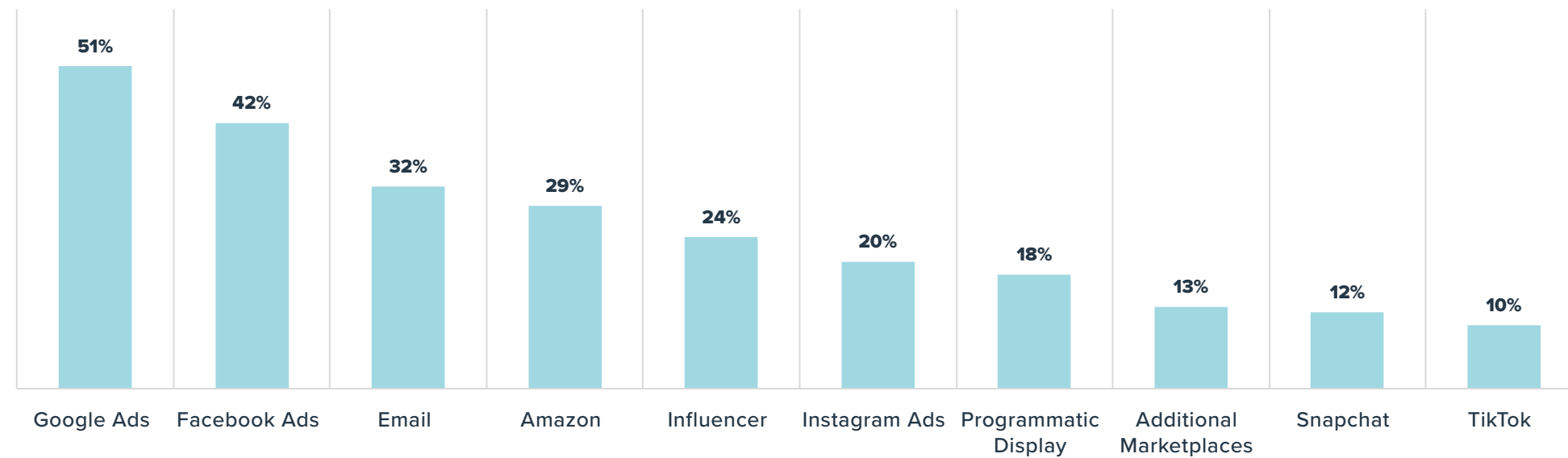
Industry Transformation: Healthcare

The healthcare industry, notorious for being slow to adapt, accelerated into an incredible digital transformation because of the pandemic. In an industry known more for its resistance to change than its agility, we see Facebook Ads carrying more weight than email, and Instagram in the top four most impactful channels in the year ahead.



Don't be afraid to experiment with new direct response channels.

Which direct response channels will have the most allocated budget in 2022?



Although more than half of the most successful B2C marketing leaders reported that email was the most effective direct response channel in the past year, this group will be allocating significantly less budget to email than their less successful counterparts in the year ahead. Why the shift from budgeting for email to paid ads? Successful marketers saw the increase in online shopping in 2021 and jumped at the opportunity to shift budgets to channels that could quickly capture new customers.

BEST-IN-CLASS PERSPECTIVE

Best-in-Class marketing leaders are investing significantly more budget into direct response channels like Google Ads, Amazon, influencer programs, and Snapchat than their less successful counterparts in the year ahead.

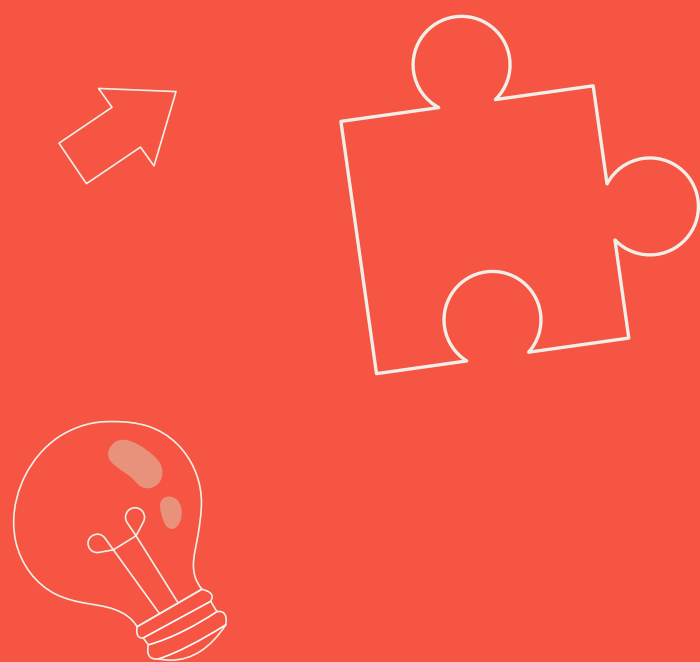
STRATEGY SPOTLIGHT

The Evolution Of Email Includes SMS Marketing

Email is old school and the inbox has never been more competitive. That's why many brands have turned to text messaging as an alternative way to get in touch with their most important customers.

Integrating SMS into your overall mobile marketing strategy is an excellent way to give your customers a more white-glove experience. But you need to use SMS wisely; it's easy to overwhelm and irritate your customers if you're texting them all the time. Provide value like access to exclusive sales or promotions, VIP-only content, or the opportunity to get reminders if they left items in their cart.

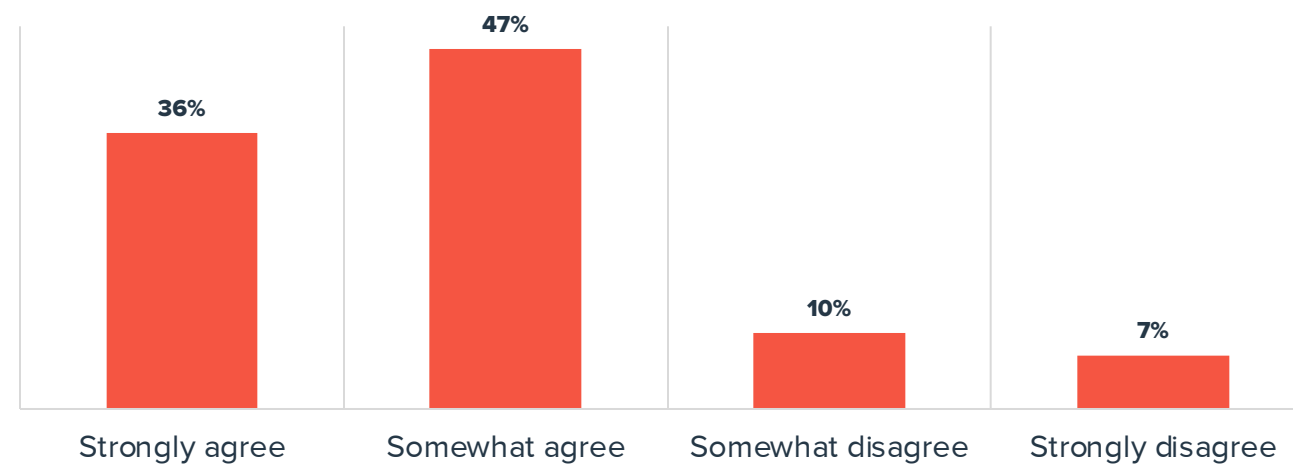
[DIG INTO SMS MARKETING](#)



Agility and Adaptability

Nearly nine in 10 B2C marketing leaders report having confidence in their ability to adapt to unexpected circumstances in the year ahead, but one in five say they won't be receiving sufficient funds to test new marketing initiatives.

In 2022, my marketing department will receive sufficient budget to test NEW marketing strategies.



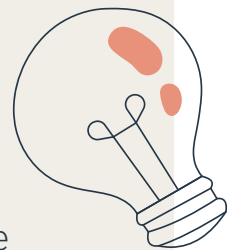
Make sure you have sufficient budget to test new marketing strategies.

STRATEGY SPOTLIGHT

Building An Adaptable Budget To Power Agile Decision Making

The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results, and nowhere is that clearer than in marketing. To make sure your strategy doesn't get stuck in a familiar rut producing declining returns, we recommend allocating 10-20% of your overall marketing budget to testing and experimentation. You also need to make sure your budget is built to be agile and responsive to change; make the case with your finance team for uncapping budgets so you can quickly capitalize on new opportunities, rapidly scale the highest performing channels, and ultimately increase profitability for your business.

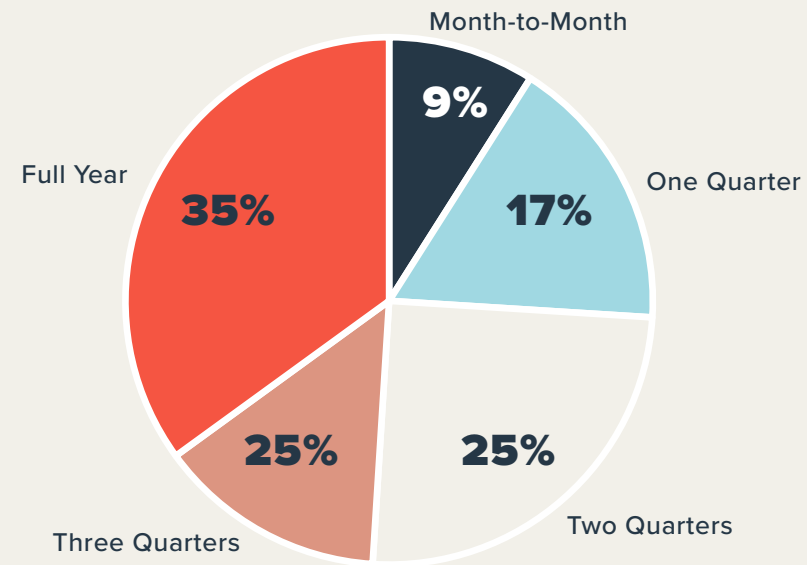
[GET ADVICE FROM GOOGLE'S CHIEF EVANGELIST](#)



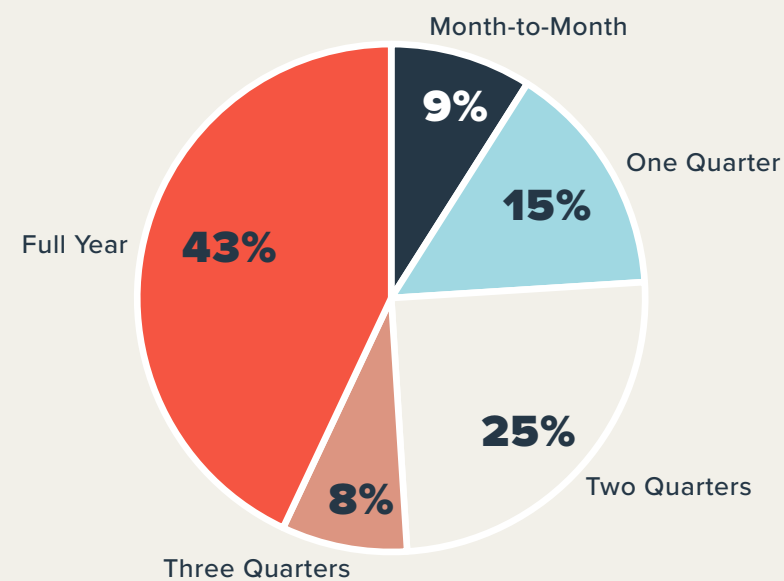
Marketing plans and budgets continue to move away from annual planning after organizations learned the hard way in the last two years what happens to the best laid plans when everything changes very quickly.

Using monthly or quarterly planning and budgeting doesn't mean you need to entirely scrap annual plans, but shorter timeframes will allow you to pivot when needed.

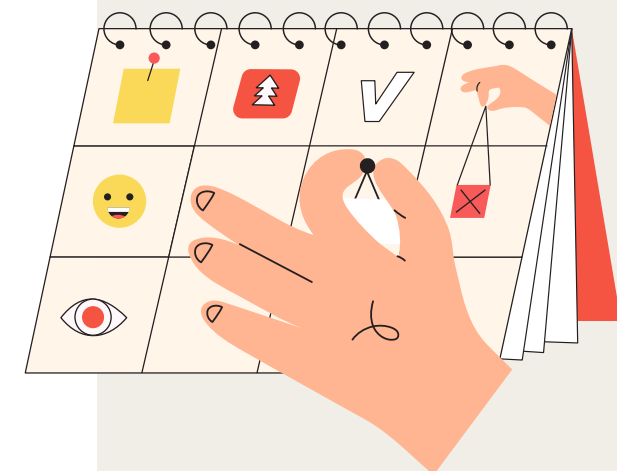
In the year ahead, how far in advance will you plan the overall marketing strategy?



In the year ahead, how far in advance will you allocate marketing budget?



Prepare for strategic pivots, even if you're planning way in advance.



STRATEGIC DEEP DIVE

Unlocking Holistic Channel Integration

One key to agility is integration; no matter how agile your planning is, you can't be fully responsive to changes if you aren't able to move budget across channels effectively and efficiently.

While integrated marketing campaigns can have their own individual goals (e.g. building brand awareness, converting views, increasing ROI, etc.), they should all have one component in common: to support and communicate your brand's value proposition through all of your marketing channels and assets to create a more unified, customer-first experience.



INTEGRATED MARKETING CAMPAIGNS ARE MORE EFFECTIVE AT DRIVING PERFORMANCE

There's no question that integrated marketing campaigns are more effective at driving performance compared to campaigns that run on individual channels, but here are the main ways they impact your bottom line:

- 1 | You can reach a wider audience with integrated campaigns than through single channel campaigns
- 2 | Consistent interactions across multiple channels keep your brand top-of-mind and push visitors closer to conversion

- 3 | Promoting consistent messaging on multiple channels builds trust and mitigates frustration or disconnects with your audience
- 4 | Assets can be shared between and repurposed for different marketing channels, contributing to more efficient budgets

[DOWNLOAD INTEGRATED MARKETING PLAYBOOK](#)

ABOUT THE RESEARCH PARTNERS

Wpromote is an award-winning digital marketing agency with seven offices across the United States. Named the Leader in the Forrester Performance Marketing Wave, Wpromote helps brands Think Like A Challenger to drive transformational growth. Challenger clients include leading brands such as Whirlpool, Zenni, Adobe, TransUnion, Frontier Airlines, and more.

[Learn more about Wpromote](#)

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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