THE FUTURE OF THE MARTECH STACK

2025

Research Created for Marketers

Ascend2
RESEARCH-BASED MARKETING

IN THIS REPORT...

PUT THIS CONTENT TO GOOD USE!

HOW TO USE THIS REPORT:

TIP #1: ENGAGE YOUR AUDIENCE by turning the charts and insights into your own content.

TIP #2: DISCOVER STRATEGIES, TACTICS AND TRENDS that are working for fellow marketers.

TIP #3: IMPROVE YOUR OWN STRATEGY by using data that is relevant to your business.

This Survey Summary Report is part of a series conducted in partnership with our participating Research Partners.

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METHODOLOGY

Ascend2 benchmarks the performance of marketing strategies, tactics and the technology that drives them with a standardized online questionnaire and a proprietary 3-Minute Survey format.

This survey was fielded to a panel of marketing professionals and marketing research subscribers.

SURVEY RESPONDENTS

N = 311 Marketing Decision-Makers

Primary Marketing Channel

B2B (Business-to-Business)	22%
B2C (Business-to-Consumer)	51%
B2B and B2C Equally	27%

Number of Employees

More than 500	23%
50 to 500	29%
Fewer than 50	48%

Primary role in company

Owner / Partner / C-Level	55%
Vice President / Director / Manager	28%
Non-Management Professional	17%

THE FUTURE OF THE MARTECH STACK 2025

Welcome to another year of Ascend2 research on the martech stack. As we add to our collection of marketing technology studies, one thing is sure: the martech stack is rapidly evolving.

What have we learned in recent years? Marketing professionals need their martech stack to support data-driven strategies, personalized experiences, and seamless integrations across many digital channels. We also discover that artificial intelligence and machine learning are set to play pivotal roles, enhancing capabilities like customer segmentation, predictive analytics, and automated personalization. This dynamic shift reflects an ongoing demand for technology that enables marketers to deliver impactful, responsive, and relevant experiences in an increasingly competitive environment.

This year, Ascend2 and our Research Partners conducted the Future of the Martech Stack Survey on October 24-28, 2024. We thank the 311 marketing professionals who participated in the survey. Our goal is that you use this research as a tool to plan and prepare for 2025.

Here are a few marketing technology reports in the Ascend2 research library:

- The Future of the Martech Stack 2024
- The Process of Evaluating and Changing Martech
- The State of Marketing Automation
- Explore the Ascend2 Research Library for more topics.

The *Future of the Martech Stack 2025* Survey Summary Report represents the opinions of all the market segments responding to the survey. Our participating research partners report specific market segments separately and exclusively.

This report, produced by Ascend2 for your benefit, is a practical tool for your marketing strategy. Use it to enhance your understanding, clip the charts for reference, write about the findings in your blog, or share them on social media. We encourage you to share this research, always crediting it as published, to help others in the industry benefit from the insights.
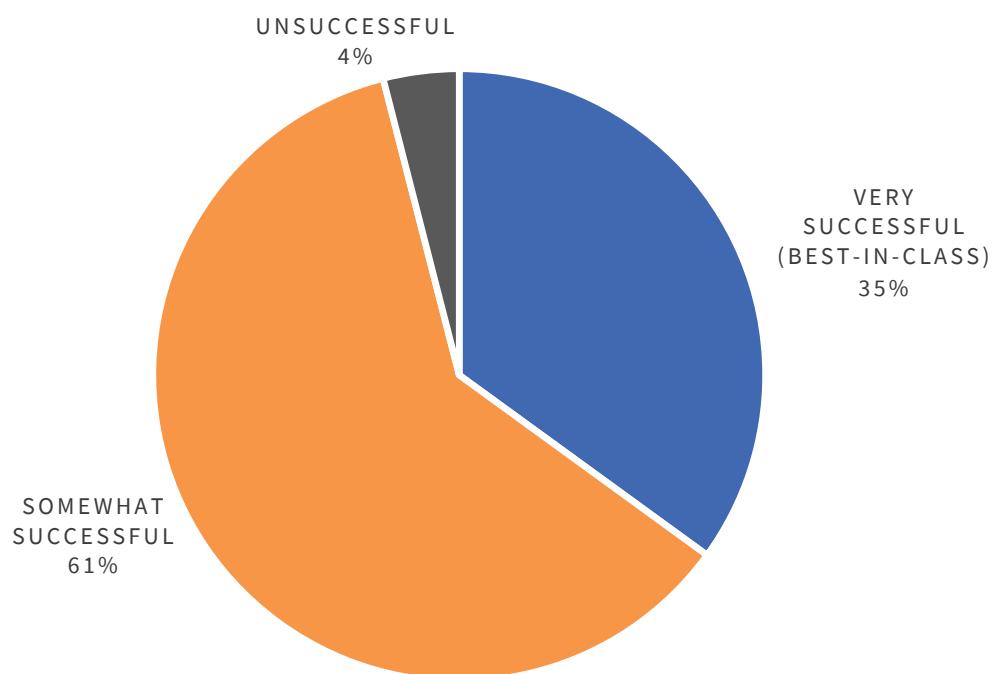
Enjoy the journey of discovery and learning that this report offers, and may it assist you in optimizing your martech stack.

The Ascend2 Research Team

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MARKETING TECHNOLOGY SUCCESS

A significant 96% of marketing professionals view their marketing technology as successful in achieving strategic objectives, with 35% rating it as "very successful" or best-in-class. The majority, 61%, find their martech stack somewhat effective, reflecting general satisfaction but indicating room for improvement. Only a small portion, 4%, consider their marketing technology unsuccessful, suggesting that most organizations derive measurable value from their current setups.

RATE THE OVERALL SUCCESS OF YOUR MARKETING TECHNOLOGY IN HELPING YOU ACHIEVE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES.

UNSUCCESSFUL
4%

VERY SUCCESSFUL (BEST-IN-CLASS)
35%

SOMEWHAT SUCCESSFUL
61%
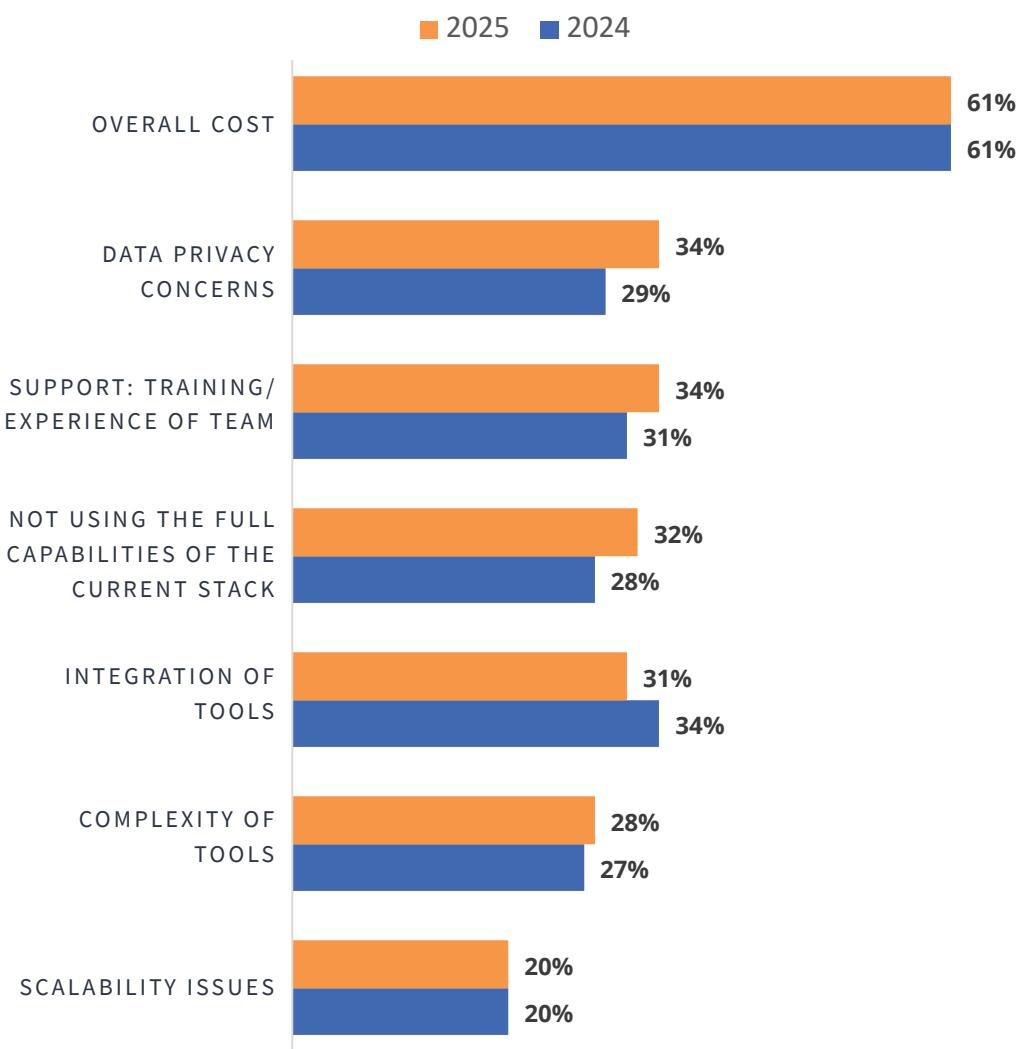
TOP CHALLENGES

Overall cost remains the top challenge with the current martech stack, with 61% of marketing professionals citing it as a critical concern, consistent with 2024. Data privacy concerns and team support also rose slightly as issues, highlighting the growing need for skilled teams and secure data practices. Additionally, 32% report not using the full capabilities of their martech stack, up from 28%, indicating a possible gap in training or alignment between technology and strategic needs.

Tip: To reduce the overall cost of your martech stack in 2025, consider consolidating tools to eliminate redundant functionalities and streamline vendor contracts. Leverage open-source or lower-cost solutions for specific functions like analytics or project management, balancing functionality with budget. Additionally, ensure your team is fully trained on existing tools to maximize their capabilities and avoid unnecessary upgrades or new purchases.

WHAT ARE THE TOP CHALLENGES WITH THE CURRENT STRUCTURE OF YOUR MARTECH STACK?

Legend: ■ 2025 ■ 2024

| Challenge	2025	2024
OVERALL COST	61%	61%
DATA PRIVACY CONCERNS	34%	29%
SUPPORT: TRAINING/ EXPERIENCE OF TEAM	34%	31%
NOT USING THE FULL CAPABILITIES OF THE CURRENT STACK	32%	28%
INTEGRATION OF TOOLS	31%	34%
COMPLEXITY OF TOOLS	28%	27%
SCALABILITY ISSUES	20%	20%
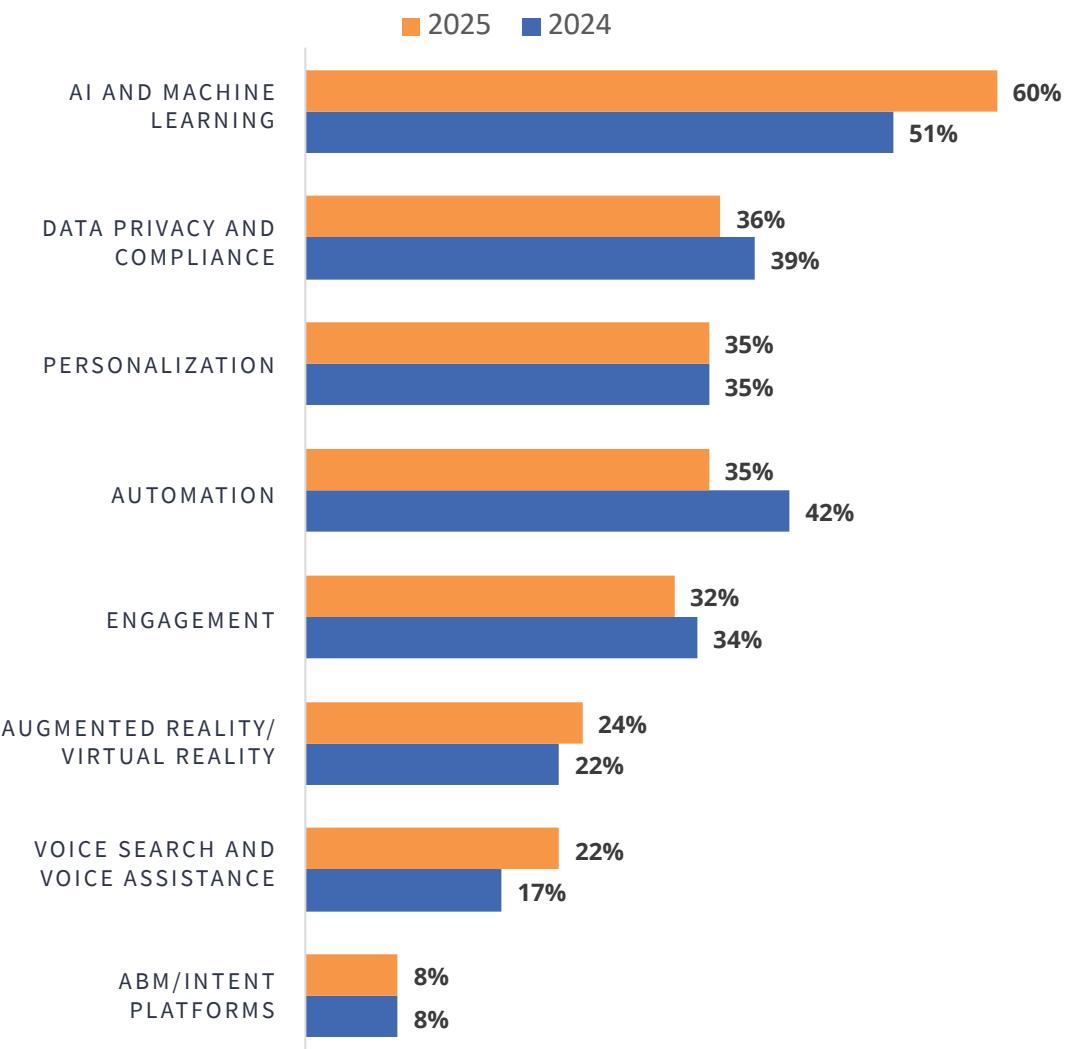
MARTECH IMPACT

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning are expected to significantly impact digital marketing strategies in the next five years, with 60% of respondents identifying them as crucial—an increase from 51% in 2024. Voice search and virtual/augmented reality are also gaining traction, reflecting a shift towards more immersive and accessible customer experiences. While personalization remains essential, it has slightly decreased in priority, possibly due to the rising focus on automation and data privacy, both of which support a more compliant and scalable approach to personalization efforts.

AI Strategy: Marketing professionals can leverage AI to enhance predictive analytics, enabling more accurate targeting and personalization by anticipating customer needs. AI-driven automation streamlines campaign management, optimizing budgets and resources by dynamically adjusting content and timing based on real-time data. To support these AI tasks, your martech stack should integrate data sources, provide robust machine learning capabilities, and offer tools for seamless automation, ensuring that insights are actionable and processes are efficient.
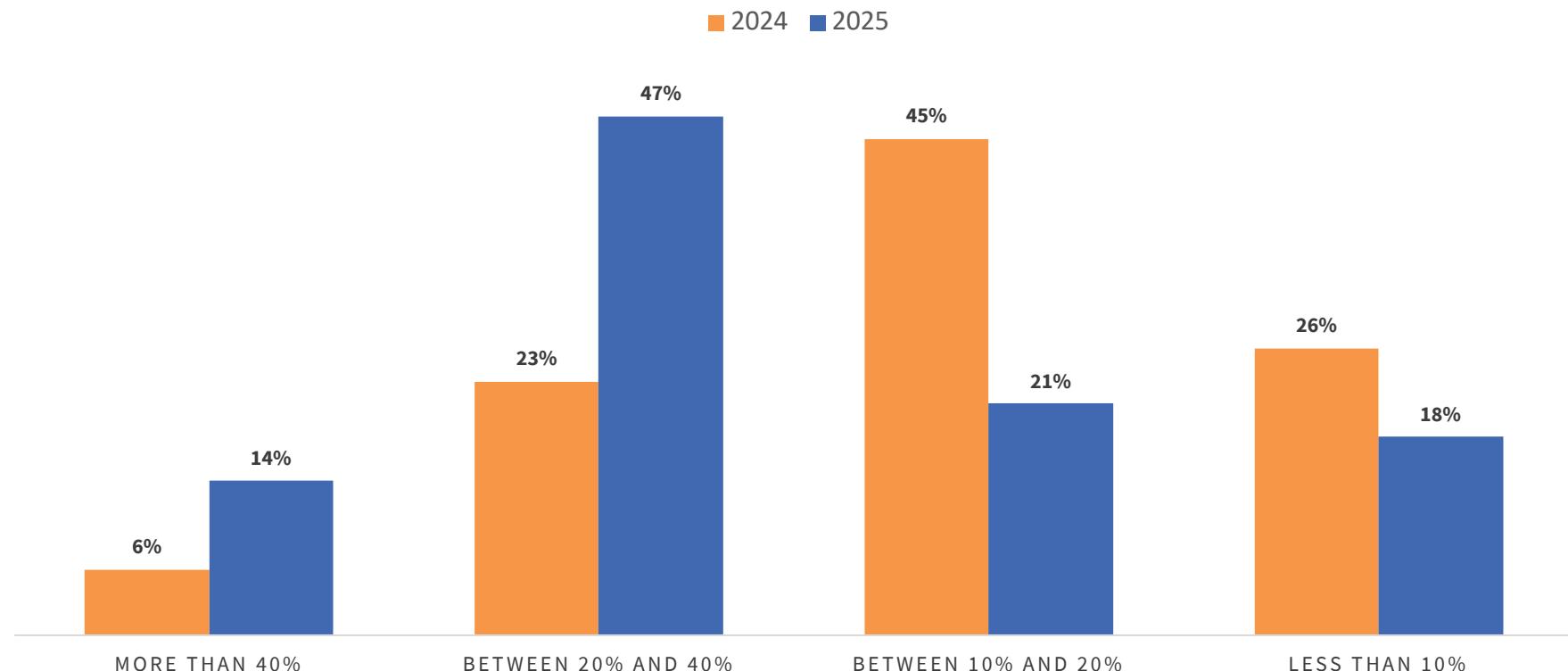
WHICH MARKETING TECHNOLOGY TRENDS WILL HAVE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS?

Legend: ■ 2025 ■ 2024

Trend	2025	2024
AI AND MACHINE LEARNING	60%	51%
DATA PRIVACY AND COMPLIANCE	36%	39%
PERSONALIZATION	35%	35%
AUTOMATION	35%	42%
ENGAGEMENT	32%	34%
AUGMENTED REALITY/ VIRTUAL REALITY	24%	22%
VOICE SEARCH AND VOICE ASSISTANCE	22%	17%
ABM/INTENT PLATFORMS	8%	8%

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The Future of the Martech Stack 2025
Conducted by Ascend2 and Research Partners
PublisheD December 2024

UPDATING TECHNOLOGY

In 2025, a significantly larger portion of organizations (14%) plan to allocate over 40% of their marketing budget to martech, up from just 6% in 2024. The shift suggests an increasing commitment to investing in technology, with nearly half (47%) of respondents now earmarking between 20% and 40% of their budgets, reflecting martech's growing role in achieving strategic marketing goals.
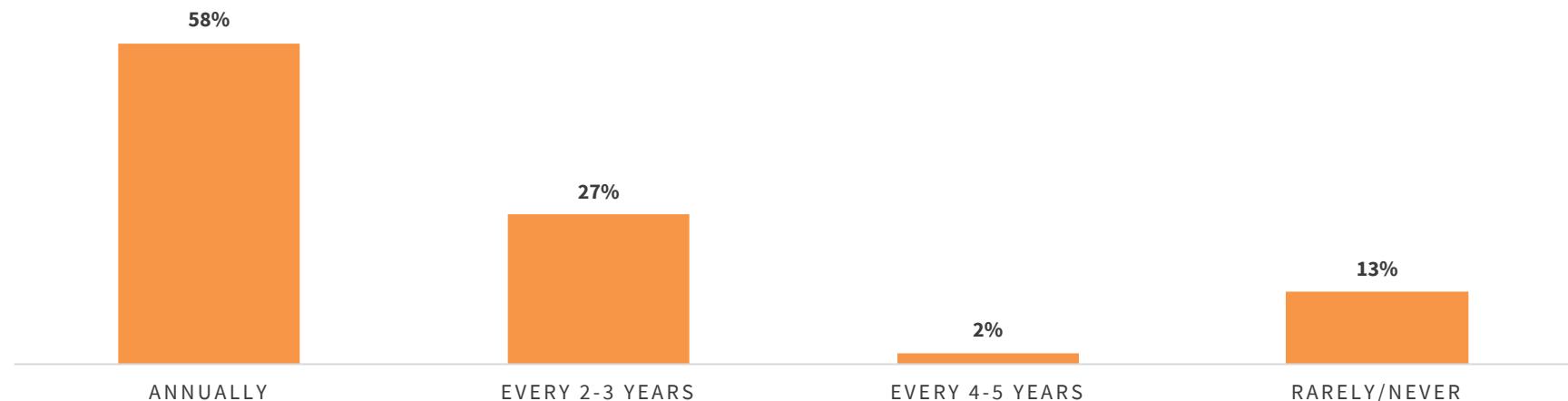
APPROXIMATELY HOW MUCH OF YOUR OVERALL MARKETING BUDGET WILL BE ALLOCATED TO MARKETING TECHNOLOGY?

Legend: 2024, 2025

	MORE THAN 40%	BETWEEN 20% AND 40%	BETWEEN 10% AND 20%	LESS THAN 10%
2024	6%	23%	45%	26%
2025	14%	47%	21%	18%

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UPDATING TECHNOLOGY

The majority of marketing professionals (58%) evaluate or update their martech stack annually, indicating a proactive approach to staying current with technology advancements. However, 13% rarely or never review their stack, which could lead to outdated tools and missed opportunities for optimization.

**HOW FREQUENTLY DO YOU EVALUATE OR UPDATE YOUR MARTECH STACK?**

ANNUALLY	EVERY 2-3 YEARS	EVERY 4-5 YEARS	RARELY/NEVER
58%	27%	2%	13%

Five Steps to Analyze a Martech Stack:
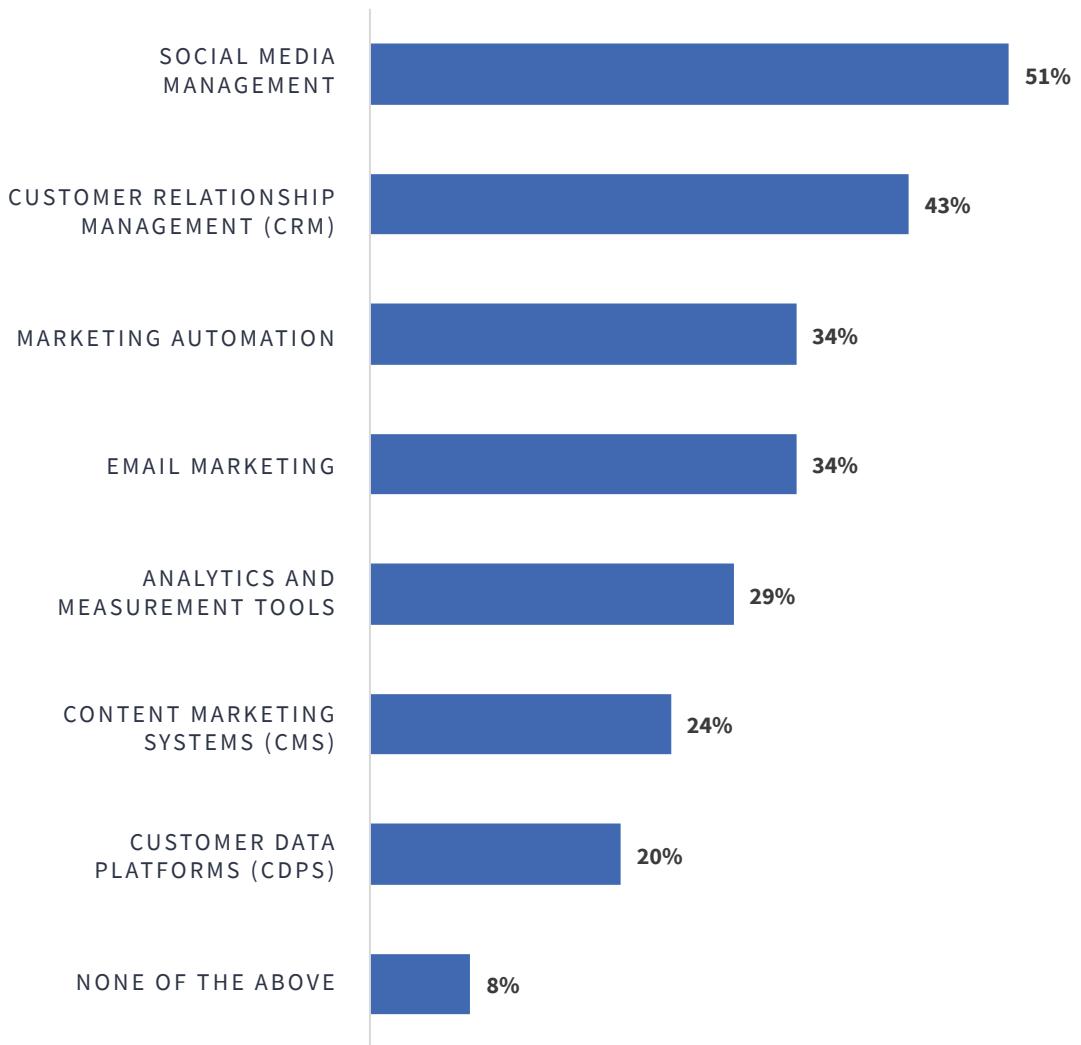
1. **Assess Tool Usage and Redundancy:** Identify underused or redundant tools and consider consolidating or removing them.

2. **Evaluate ROI:** Analyze the return on investment for each tool, focusing on its impact on key metrics.

3. **Check Integration and Data Flow:** Ensure tools are well-integrated and that data flows smoothly between them.

4. **Update for Compliance:** Review tools for compliance with data privacy regulations to avoid risks.

5. **Get Team Feedback:** Gather user input on tool effectiveness and ease of use to inform decisions.

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FUTURE INVESTMENTS

Social media management (51%) and customer relationship management (CRM) (43%) are the top areas where marketing professionals plan to invest within their martech stack over the next year, reflecting a strong focus on customer engagement and relationship-building. Additionally, investments in marketing automation and analytics tools highlight a trend toward using technology to drive efficiency and measure campaign effectiveness.

WHICH ASPECTS OF YOUR MARTECH STACK DO YOU PLAN TO INVEST THE MOST IN OVER THE NEXT 12 MONTHS?

|	
SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT	51%
CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (CRM)	43%
MARKETING AUTOMATION	34%
EMAIL MARKETING	34%
ANALYTICS AND MEASUREMENT TOOLS	29%
CONTENT MARKETING SYSTEMS (CMS)	24%
CUSTOMER DATA PLATFORMS (CDPS)	20%
NONE OF THE ABOVE	8%
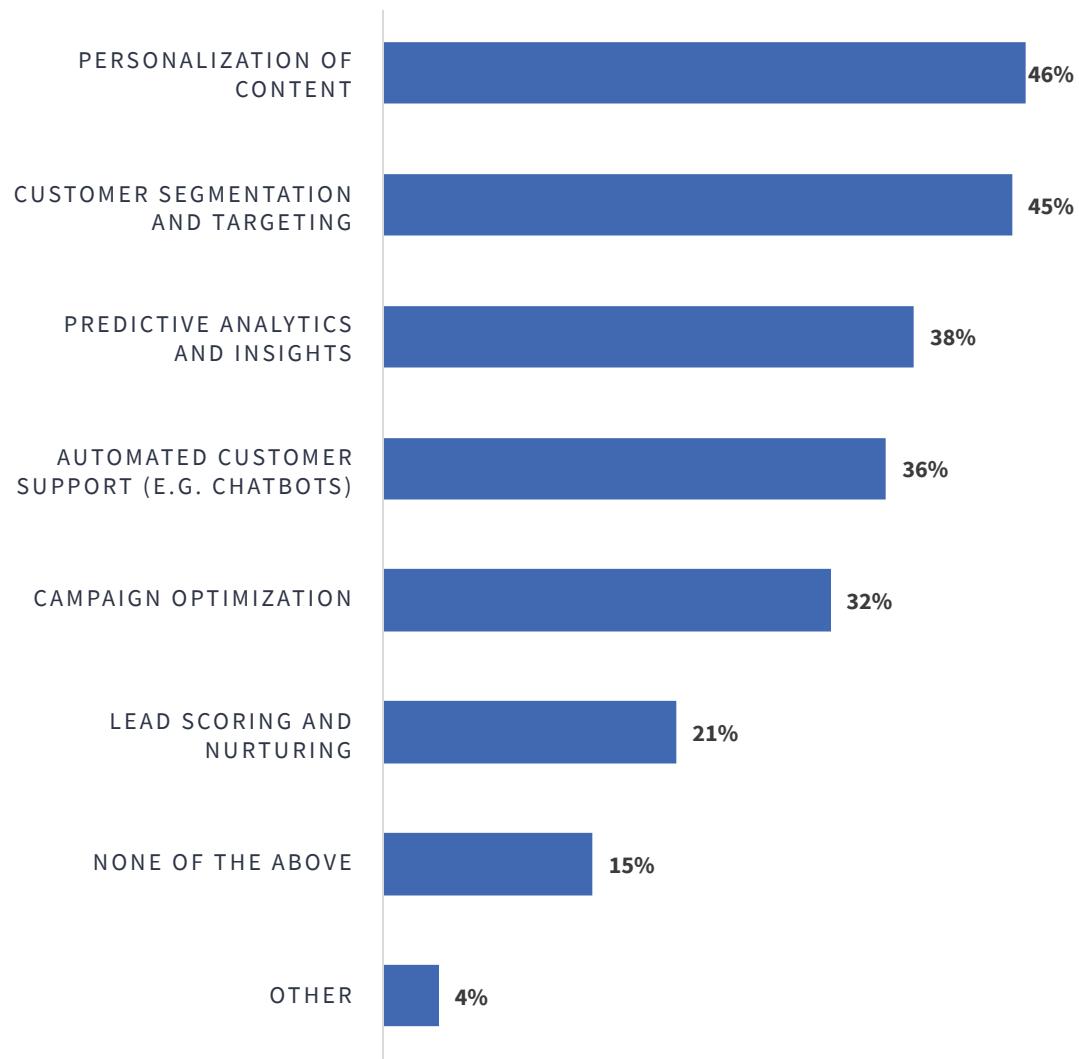
USE OF AI IN MARTECH

Personalization of content (46%) and customer segmentation and targeting (45%) are the top areas where marketing professionals plan to enhance AI capabilities within their martech stack, indicating a strong focus on delivering tailored customer experiences. Additionally, the interest in predictive analytics (38%) and automated customer support (36%) highlights a trend toward leveraging AI to improve customer insights and streamline interactions across touchpoints.

Using AI to Enhance Content Personalization

1. **Leverage Customer Data:** Use AI to analyze customer behavior and preferences, allowing for dynamic content that aligns closely with individual interests and buying signals.

2. **Implement Real-Time Personalization:** Apply AI to deliver real-time, contextually relevant content based on factors like location, device, and previous interactions to enhance engagement.

3. **Use Predictive Analytics:** Integrate predictive AI models to anticipate what content users will most likely engage with next, enabling proactive and personalized content recommendations across channels.

WHICH AREAS OF YOUR MARTECH STACK ARE YOU PLANNING TO ENHANCE WITH AI CAPABILITIES IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS?

| Area	Percentage
PERSONALIZATION OF CONTENT	46%
CUSTOMER SEGMENTATION AND TARGETING	45%
PREDICTIVE ANALYTICS AND INSIGHTS	38%
AUTOMATED CUSTOMER SUPPORT (E.G. CHATBOTS)	36%
CAMPAIGN OPTIMIZATION	32%
LEAD SCORING AND NURTURING	21%
NONE OF THE ABOVE	15%
OTHER	4%

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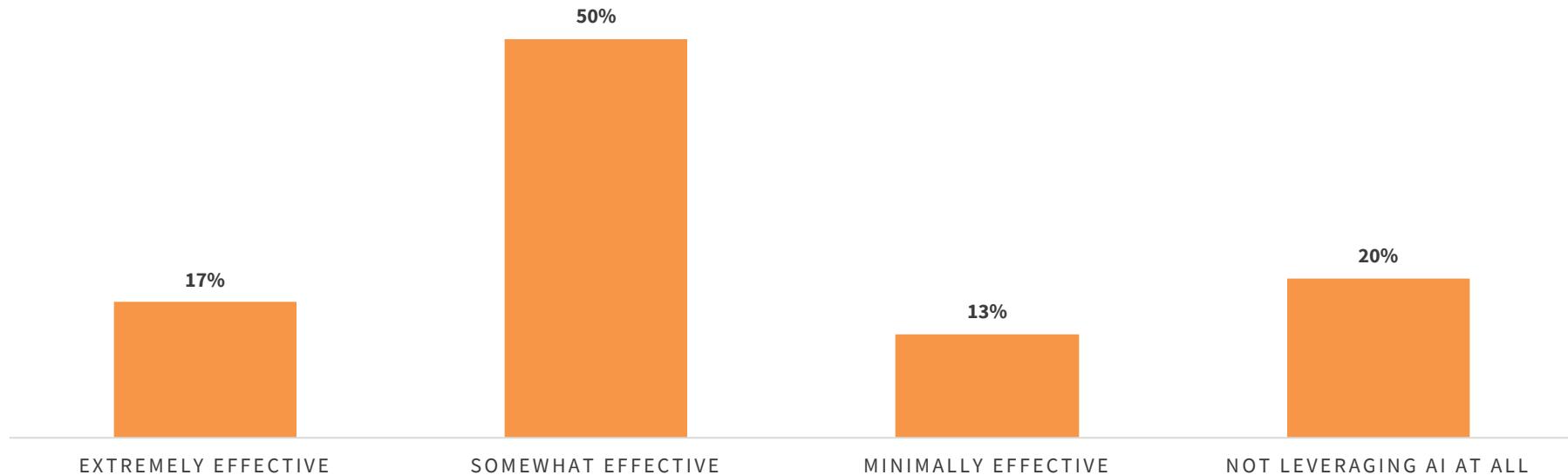
AI EFFECTIVENESS WITHIN MARTECH

Half of the respondents (50%) feel their organization is "somewhat effective" in leveraging AI within their current martech stack, showing moderate adoption and use of AI-driven capabilities. However, 20% report not using AI at all, suggesting a gap in AI adoption that could limit competitiveness in data-driven personalization and automation efforts.

Don't Wait -- Start Now With AI. Organizations must begin leveraging AI in marketing to stay competitive, as AI enables deeper personalization and predictive insights that improve customer engagement and drive conversions. As data privacy regulations evolve, AI can help brands maintain compliance by enabling more innovative data management and secure personalization. Additionally, early adoption of AI provides a strategic advantage, allowing organizations to optimize processes, reduce costs, and build capabilities that will be essential as AI-driven tools become standard in the industry.

HOW EFFECTIVELY IS YOUR ORGANIZATION LEVERAGING AI WITHIN YOUR CURRENT MARTECH STACK?

EXTREMELY EFFECTIVE	SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE	MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE	NOT LEVERAGING AI AT ALL
17%	50%	13%	20%

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CUSTOMIZED B2B RESEARCH
delivered to you with a plan to use it.

We find the right audience, ask the right questions, and gather insightful data to create useful and affordable research that will help you generate demand and increase engagement.

Join the industry powerhouses that use Ascend2 to create compelling research content that speaks to their audience.

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Don't just take it from us... Here's what some of our customers say.

"Ascend2 had the requisite knowledge, skills, and resources to achieve our weighty objectives. Further, the program was affordable (even for an early-stage startup), and the results to date are **already surpassing our ROI goals.**"

-David Crane, VP Marketing, Intentsify

"Ascend2 was a pleasure to work with and helped us to design a thoughtful survey that uncovered **truly actionable and noteworthy findings.** They work smart and fast and even helped to promote and place the research results at launch. Ascend2 is at the top of our list for future projects."

-Nick Olsson, CEO, Olsson Communications

"**The firm truly embeds itself into the research and data needs of your organization**...The team is communicative, easy to work with, and willing to partner in other ways to make sure the data story comes to life through content, comms, social and PR efforts.

-Jillian Ryan, Senior Director of Content Strategy, Brightcove

"Ascend2 research is esteemed in the marketplace, so even press contacts that you don't know will pick it up — and **Ascend2 rates allowed me to do more with my budget** (always a plus!). Adding an Ascend2 original research project is almost always part of my content strategy." Waynette Tubbs, Director, Content Marketing, Oracle

-Waynette Tubbs, Director, Content Marketing, Oracle

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