

# 2018 DIGITAL MARKETING PLANS

## Survey Summary Report

**Ascend2™**  
RESEARCH-BASED MARKETING

Research Series Conducted in  
Partnership with Leading Marketing  
Technology Companies and Digital  
Marketing Agencies



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## **Methodology**

*Ascend2 benchmarks the performance of marketing technology, strategies and tactics using a standardized online questionnaire and a proprietary 3-Minute Survey format.*

*This survey was fielded to a panel of marketing influencers and research subscribers during the week of November 26, 2017.*

# 2018 DIGITAL MARKETING PLANS

An effective digital marketing plan contains a series of tactics used to achieve your most important marketing objectives.

**Sounds simple, but what will an effective digital marketing plan look like in 2018?**

To find out, Ascend2 and our Research Partners fielded the 2018 Digital Marketing Plans Survey. We applaud the marketing influencers responding to this survey for sharing their valuable insights with us, and you.

This Survey Summary Report, titled *2018 Digital Marketing Plans*, represents the average of all the market segments responding to the survey. Specific market 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!



## Survey Respondents N=271

### Number of Employees

More than 500	35%
50 to 500	39%
Fewer than 50	26%

### Role in the Company

Owner / Partner / C-Level	40%
VP / Director / Manager	46%
Non-Mgmt Professional	14%

### Primary Marketing Channel

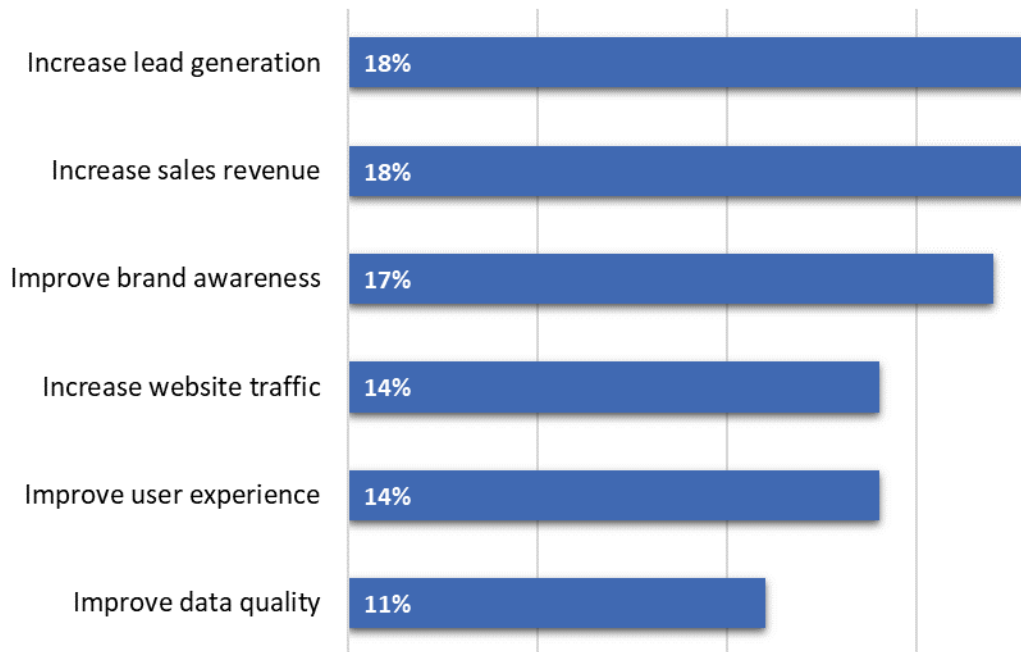
B2B Business-to-Business	43%
B2C Business-to-Consumer	35%
B2B and B2C Equally	22%



## MOST IMPORTANT OBJECTIVES

For 18% of marketing influencers, important objectives for a digital marketing plan to achieve are increasing lead generation and increasing sales revenue. 17% of marketing influencers point to improving brand awareness as a most important digital marketing plan objective.

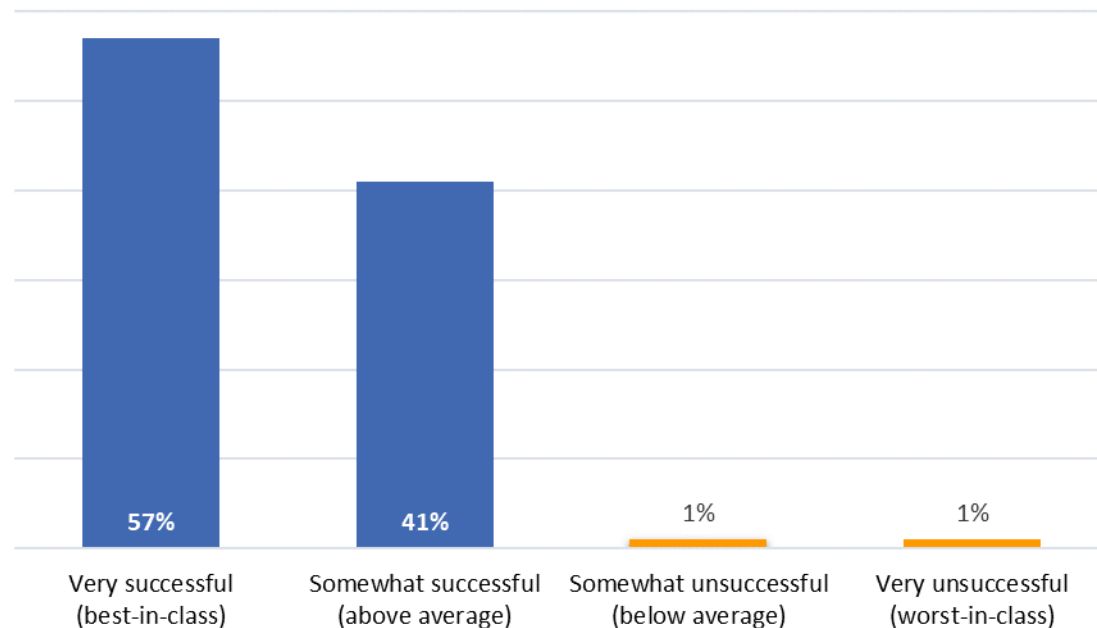
What are the most important OBJECTIVES for a digital marketing plan to achieve?



## SUCCESS ACHIEVING OBJECTIVES

A 57% majority of marketing influencers consider a digital marketing plan very successful at achieving important objectives, describing it as best-in-class. Another 47% consider it somewhat successful. Only 2% pessimistically describe digital marketing planning as unsuccessful at achieving objectives.

Which best describes the SUCCESS of a digital marketing plan at achieving important objectives?

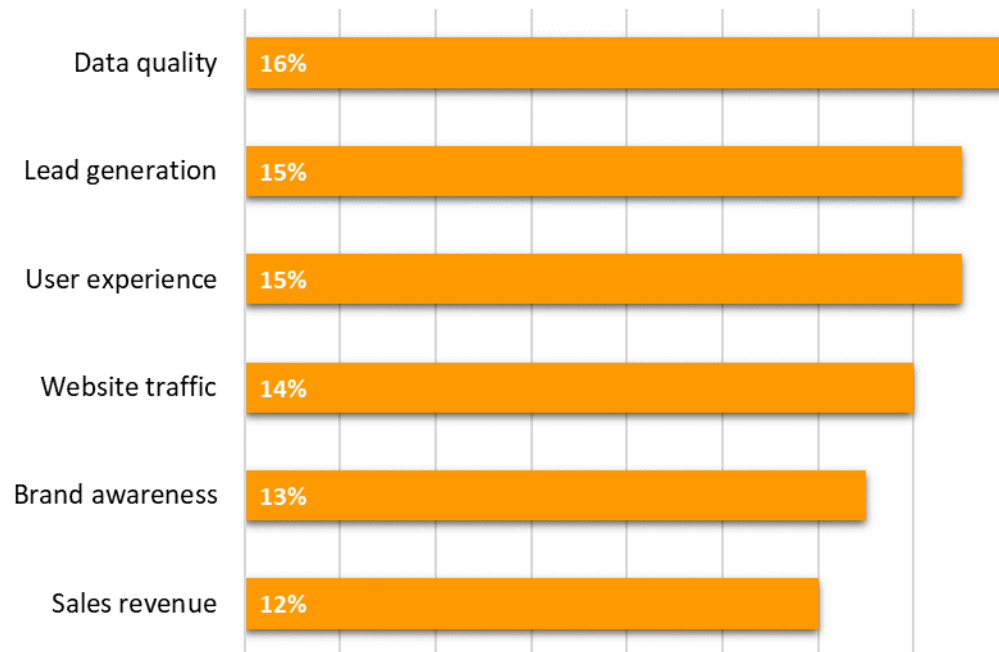




## CRITICAL CHALLENGES TO SUCCESS

A most critical challenge to the success of a digital marketing plan is data quality. Without data quality improvements, advances such as marketing personalization can not be practiced. Lead generation and user experience are also critical challenges for 15% of the marketing influencers surveyed.

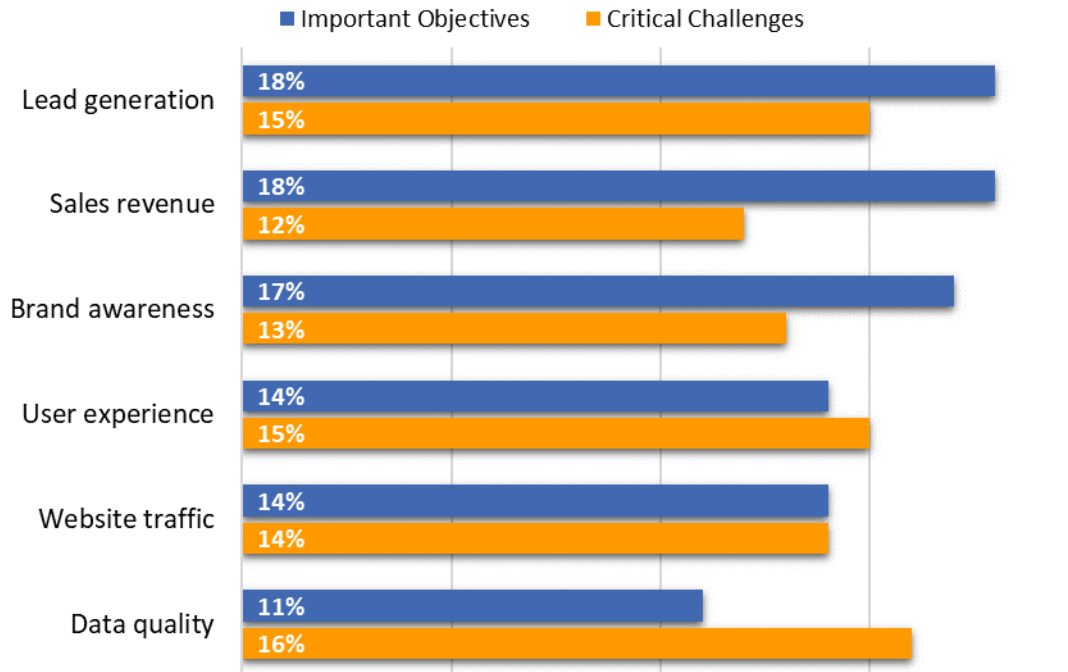
What are the most critical CHALLENGES to the success of a digital marketing plan?



## HOW OBJECTIVES AND CHALLENGES COMPARE

Objectives that are significantly more important than challenging to achieve, such as increasing sales revenue and improving brand awareness, are strategically preferable to objectives that are more challenging than important to achieve, such as improving data quality.

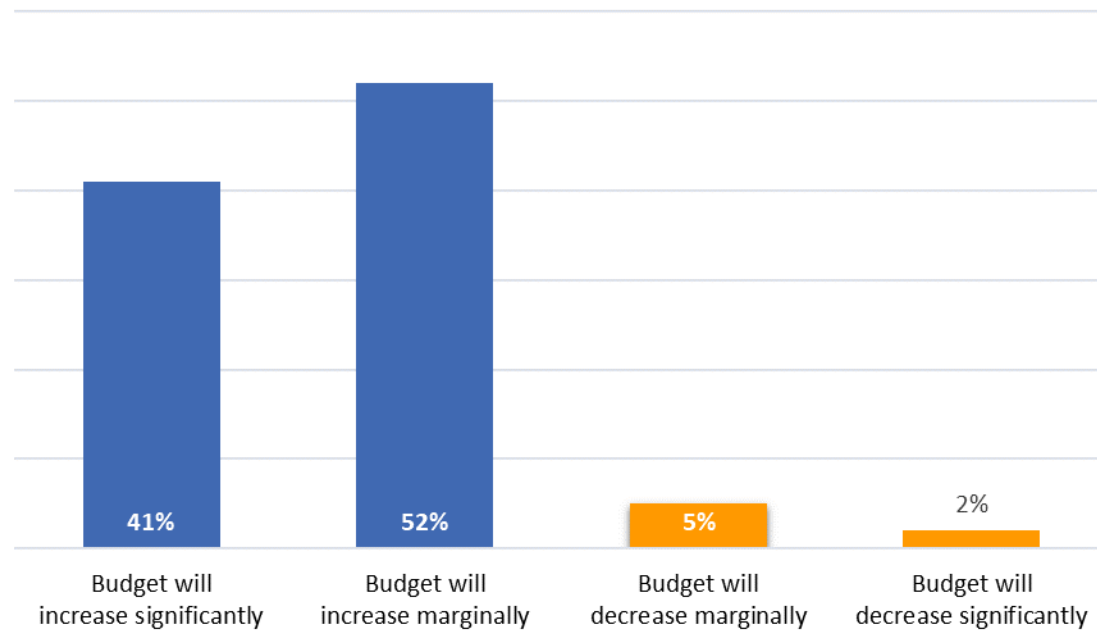
Comparing important objectives and critical challenges.



## BUDGET CHANGES IN THE YEAR AHEAD

The trend for digital marketing budgets continues to increase for a total of 93% of marketing influencers, with 41% describing the increase as significant. This trend may reflect a positive outlook for continued business growth in the year ahead.

To what extent will the digital marketing BUDGET change in the year ahead?

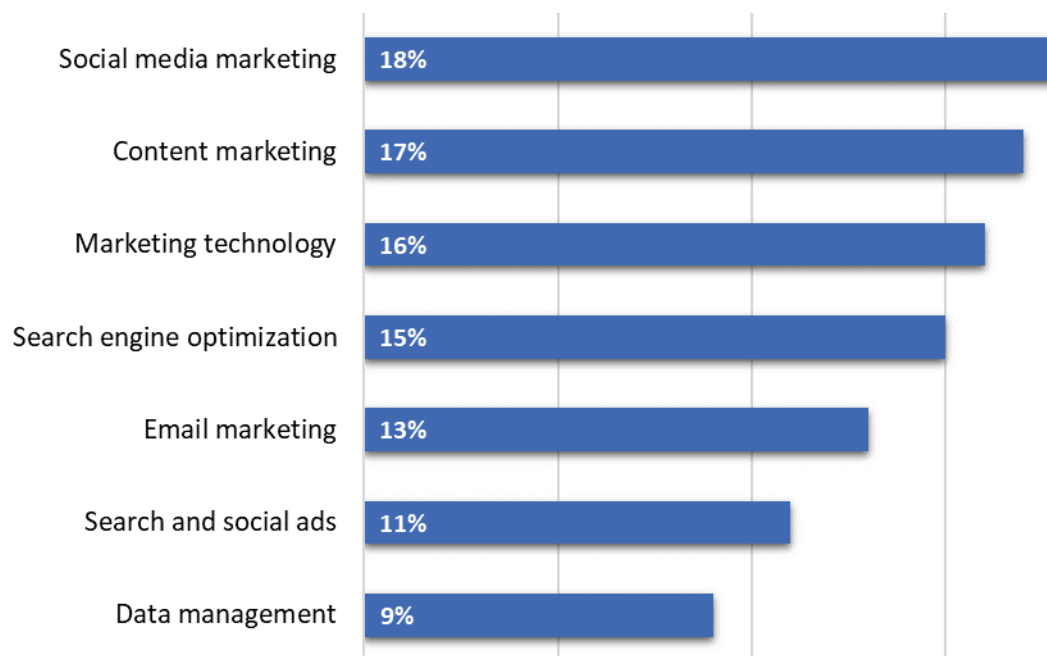




## MOST EFFECTIVE TACTICS

Social media marketing, content marketing and the marketing technology that drives these tactics, are most effective for 18%, 17% and 16% of marketing influencers respectively.

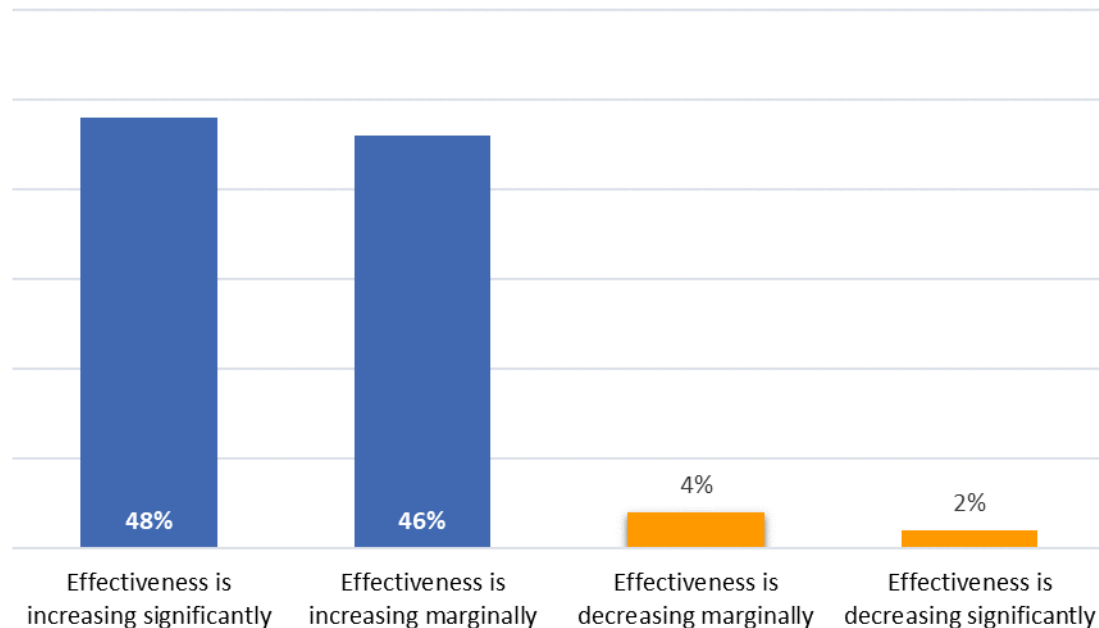
What will be the most EFFECTIVE tactics used in a digital marketing plan in 2018?



## HOW TACTICAL EFFECTIVENESS IS CHANGING

Tactical effectiveness is changing in a very promising way for a total of 94% of marketing influencers, with slightly more than half of those (48%) describing the increase in tactical effectiveness as significant.

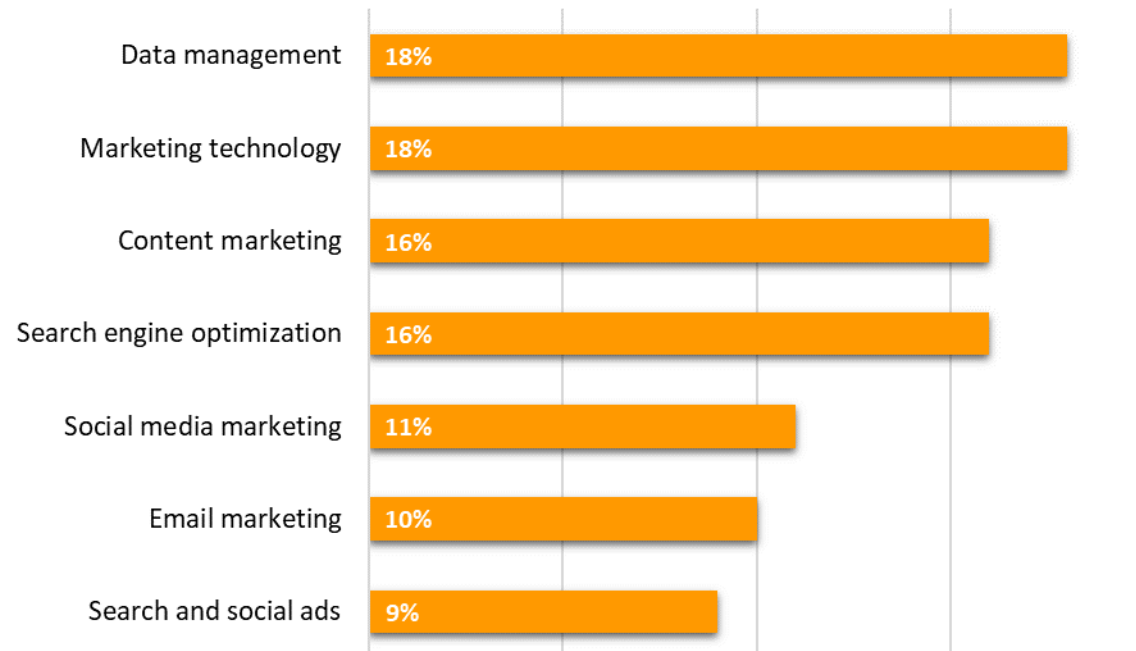
To what extent is the effectiveness of digital marketing tactics  
CHANGING?



## MOST DIFFICULT TACTICS TO EXECUTE

Two very technical tactics – data management and marketing technology – stand out as difficult to execute. This is primarily due to the fact that the skills, capabilities and resources required to execute these technical tactics are not always available in-house.

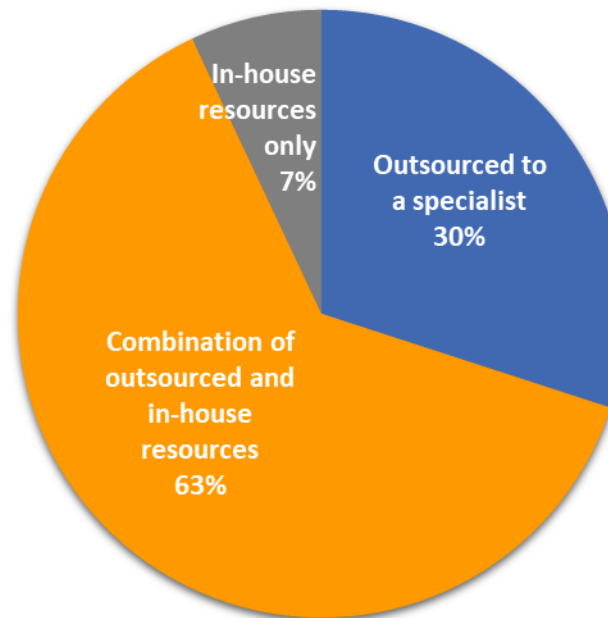
What are the most DIFFICULT tactics to execute in a digital marketing plan?



## RESOURCES USED TO EXECUTE TACTICS

93% of marketing influencers in total say they outsource all or part of the execution of digital marketing tactics to specialists. Nearly two-thirds (63%) consider a collaboration between outsourced and in-house resources the most effective way to execute digital marketing tactics.

Which best describes the RESOURCES used to execute digital marketing tactics most effectively?



## HOW EFFECTIVENESS AND DIFFICULTY COMPARE

Tactics that are much more effective than difficult to execute, such as social media marketing, are more likely to be part of a digital marketing plan than a tactic that is considered less effective than difficult to execute, such as data management. An example of how difficulty can impact perceived effectiveness.

Comparing tactical effectiveness and difficulty.







## Research-Based Marketing for Marketing Solution Providers

Marketing technology companies and digital marketing agencies partner with Ascend2 to reliably generate demand and supplement marketing content for their own business development efforts. Below are just a few of the leading marketing solution providers that Partner with us on research-based marketing programs.

Learn more about us at [Ascend2.com](https://Ascend2.com)



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

*Research-Based Marketing 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 of interest to marketers 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
- And more!

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



*This Survey Summary Report is part of a monthly research series conducted in partnership with marketing solution providers.*

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