

14TH EDITION



2021 B2B
MARKETING MIX REPORT

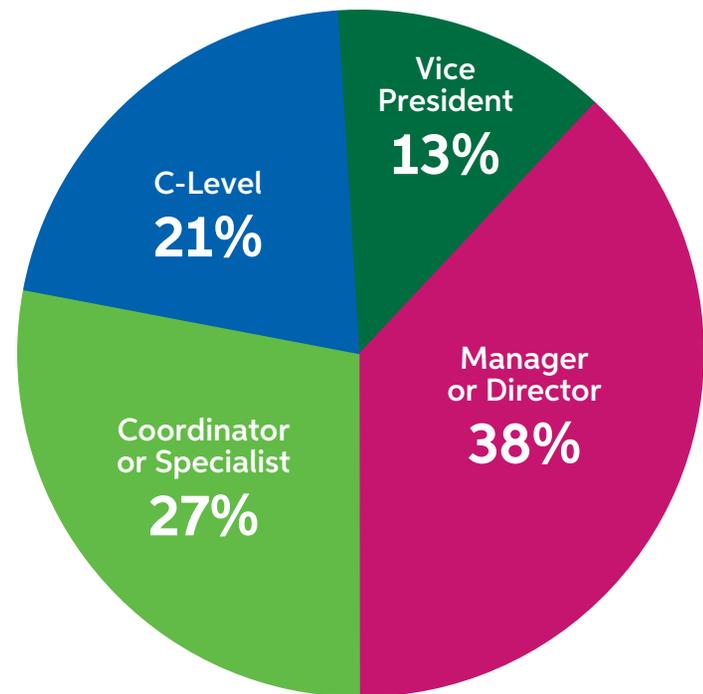
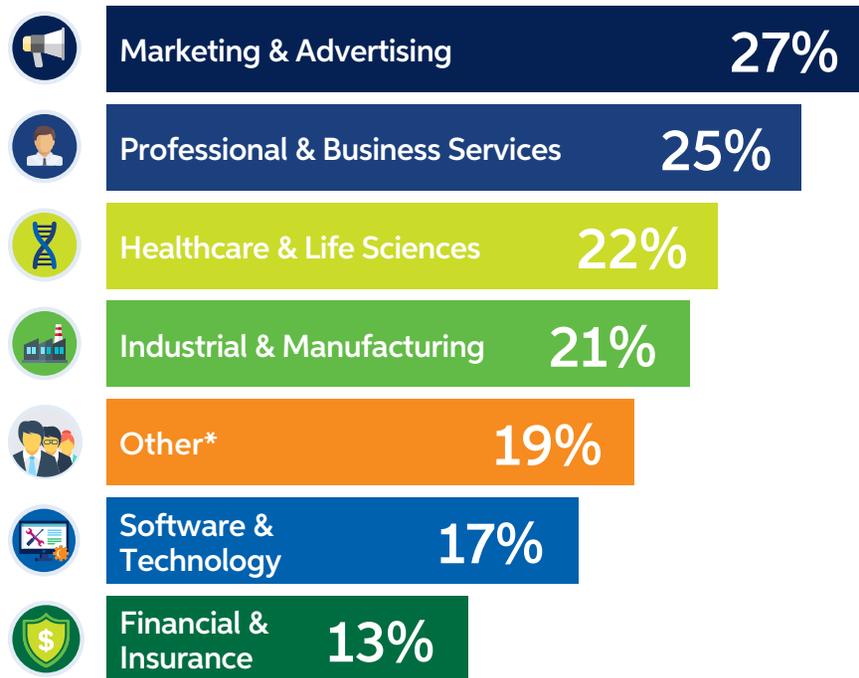
SAGEFROG MARKETING GROUP

Welcome to the fourteenth annual B2B Marketing Mix Report by Sagefrog Marketing Group.

Beginning with a survey of B2B professionals in industries ranging from healthcare and technology to professional services and manufacturing, this report forecasts the marketing climate for the year ahead.

The B2B Marketing Mix Report is a useful source of information on trends and emerging tactics that marketing professionals can consider as they plan their 2021 marketing budget and program.

Whom We Surveyed



Respondents had the option to choose multiple industries as applicable to their field

*Transportation and Logistics, Consulting, Engineering, Automotive

2020 vs. 2021: What's the Same?

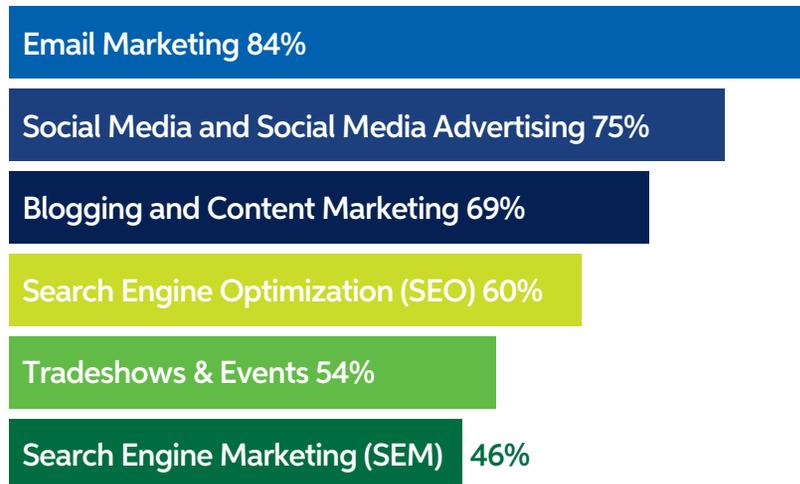
Most B2B professionals still answered “yes” when asked if they have a formal marketing plan.



The majority of companies surveyed still use a balance of in-house and outsourced marketing.

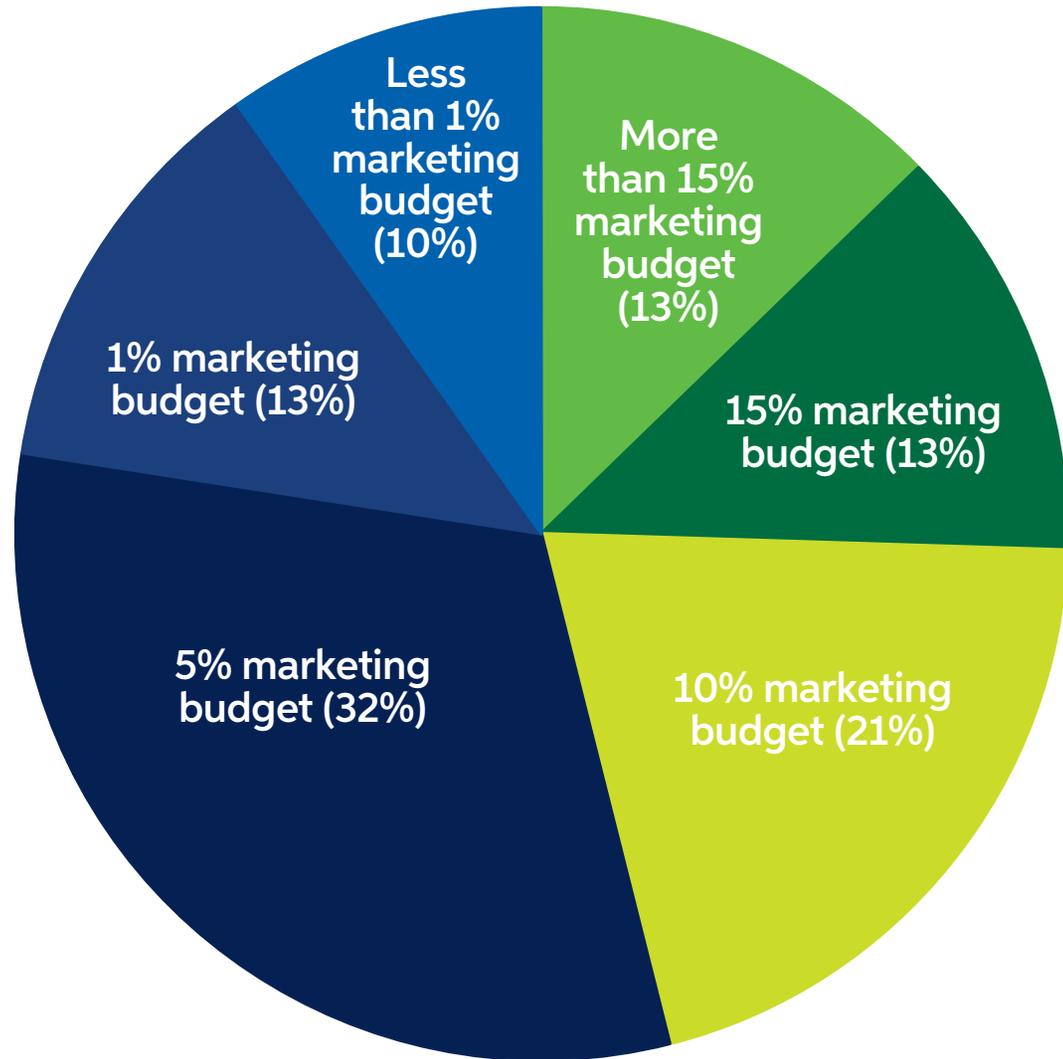


The most implemented marketing tactics are similar to last year.



Investments in Marketing Are Increasing

The percentage of budget allocated to marketing grew across the board this year compared to 2020 and 2019. Throughout this report, you'll learn about the strategies and tactics marketing professionals are focusing on in the year ahead—many of which include third-party spend to Google or social media channels. This shift, combined with an increased need for branding services as companies pivot to accommodate the changing needs of the world, are major contributors to budget increases.



Websites and Digital Marketing Lead the Way

It shouldn't come as a surprise that digital marketing and website development have taken the lead as the top areas of marketing spend. However, what we couldn't have predicted was how COVID-19 fast-tracked the use of digital marketing and websites in industries that are historically slow to modernize.

Branding also climbed the ranks this year, jumping from 17% last year to 27% this year. Similarly, marketing and sales collateral saw a significant increase from 6% to 21%. With many companies pivoting their service and product offerings to meet new COVID-era demands, we're not surprised to see that branding and its activation through collateral are emerging as top priorities.

Top Areas of Marketing Spend



*Reputation Management

Top Marketing Objectives for 2021

Lead generation continues to be the top marketing objective as we move from 2020 to 2021. Last year, we saw a major push for enhanced marketing and sales alignment in B2B companies, and we're encouraged to see this trend continue as lead generation and sales conversions top the objectives for marketers. Further in this report, you'll learn that account-based marketing is a top-trending strategy. For B2B companies with rigorous conversion goals, ABM will be an important strategy.

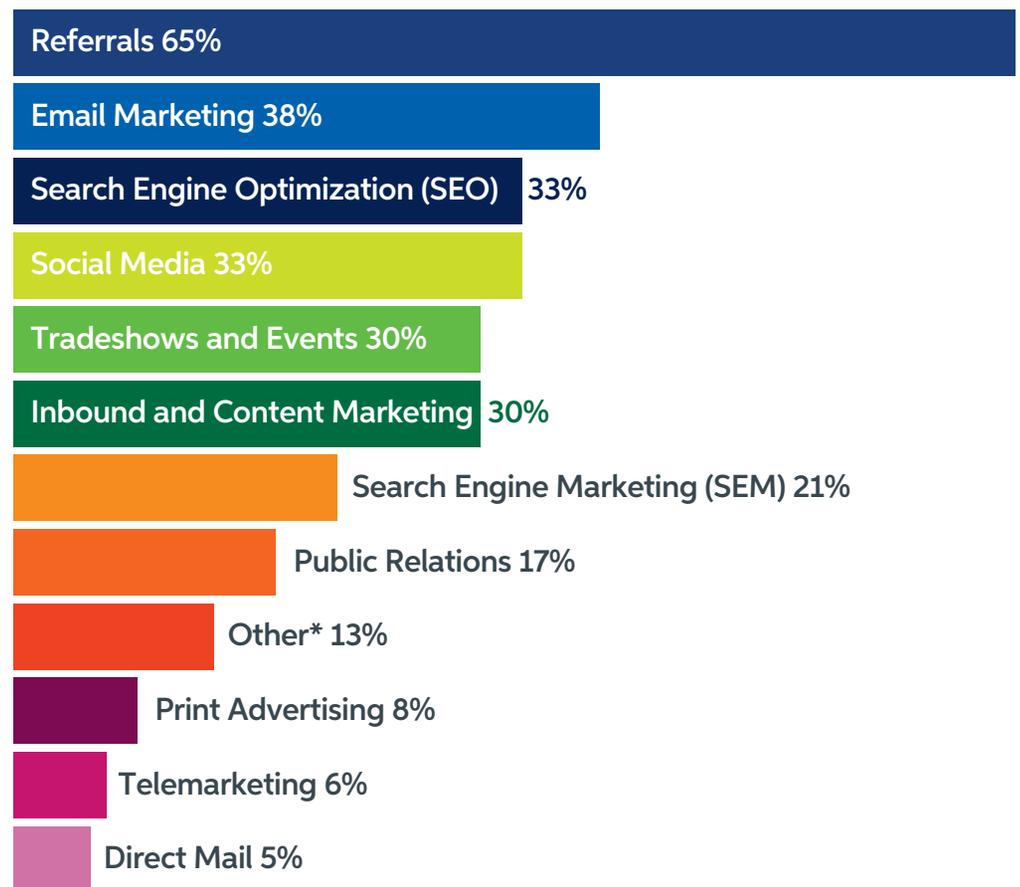
- 1 Increasing Sales Leads**
- 2 Converting Leads to Customers**
- 3 Increasing Brand Awareness**
- 4 Producing Thought Leadership**

Referrals, Email, and SEO Are Your Go-To Lead Sources

Year after year, referrals emerge as the top source of qualified marketing and sales leads in B2B, which is not surprising since B2B is fueled by networking and interpersonal connection. Professionals are more likely to invest their time and money working with a company if there's a personal connection. B2B purchases are big investments that require department- or company-wide approval, so it makes sense that personal touches are influential in gaining trust to move forward.

Beyond referrals, email marketing and SEO climbed the ranks as top sources of leads. Email marketing doesn't surprise us as it's the most implemented and relied upon tactic of the year, driven by the conditions of the pandemic. Seeing SEO top the charts validates the importance of ongoing website optimization and content creation in 2021.

Top Sources of Sales and Marketing Leads

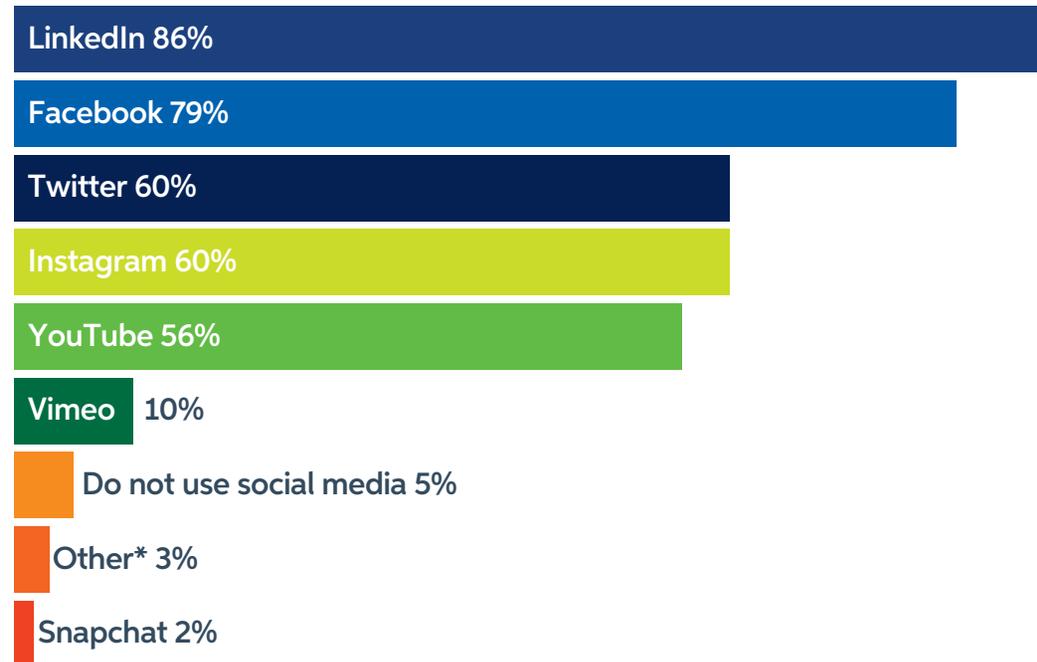


*Online Directories, RFP Bidding, Cold Calls, Traveling Sales

Instagram and YouTube Are Here to Stay

LinkedIn continues to be the most used social media channel for B2B marketing professionals. Additionally, we were pleased to see that Instagram use increased nearly 30% from last year. This jump demonstrates the growing influence of social media on job candidates, as they're looking to Instagram for a look inside a potential employer's culture—something that companies need to get creative with as remote work becomes more commonplace. YouTube also saw a significant jump, increasing by 20%. In a world where Zoom and video conferencing are now the norm, it makes sense that companies who were slow to adopt video marketing now see it as a valuable and easy-to-implement tool.

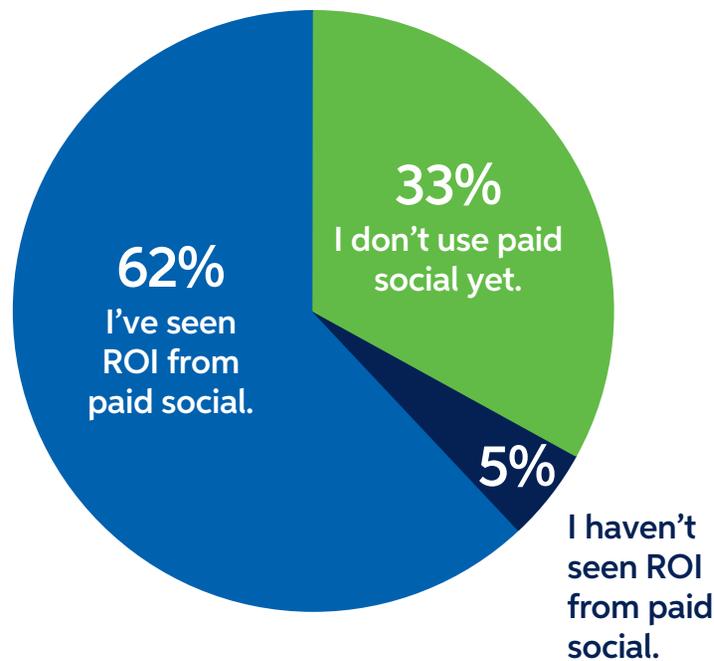
Most Used Social Media Channels



*Pinterest

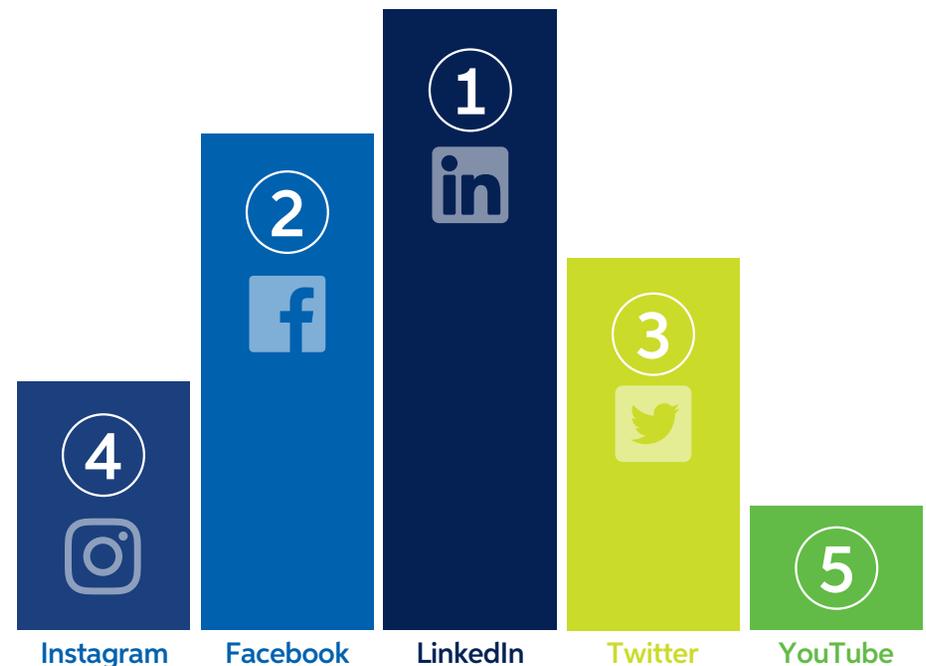
Paid Social Media Is Coming On Strong

Most respondents reported using paid social media and seeing ROI from it.



LinkedIn Is the Most Used and Engaging Channel

LinkedIn has introduced many new advertising options in the past few years, specifically designed to drive engagement, open rates, and lead generation. LinkedIn Sponsored Content and LinkedIn InMail are incredibly effective engagement tactics. While other social channels have some advertising options, there's no other channel focusing on engagement more than LinkedIn.



Marketers Will Reignite ABM in 2021

Account-based marketing is a B2B marketing approach that can be executed in conjunction with traditional marketing, content marketing, “smarketing,” and other methods to identify, communicate with, and eventually secure desired business accounts. ABM has slowly but surely gained traction in the past few years as marketers focus more on their target markets.

Through ABM tools like LinkedIn InMail, which lets you specifically target key accounts and personnel, marketers are bringing back this “old-school” marketing method and modernizing it for the digital age.

New Marketing and Sales Strategies for 2021



*CRM, Digital Marketing, Social Media Marketing

HubSpot Wins Most Popular Automation Platform

Nearly 50% of marketers use HubSpot as their preferred marketing automation platform. With functionality across marketing, sales, and CRM, we're not surprised that marketers are using and loving this platform for the convenience and alignment it brings between departments.

Most Popular Marketing Automation Platforms



*Includes ActiveCampaign & Oracle

Top Takeaways from This Year's Report

- » Value Email Marketing and Search Engine Optimization
- » Build Out Your Instagram and YouTube Channels
- » Regain Brand Awareness If You've Pivoted Services
- » Try Account-Based Marketing Strategies on LinkedIn
- » Demo HubSpot to Learn Why It's the Top Platform

Use This Report to Your Advantage

We couldn't have predicted the impact that COVID-19 would have on how the world conducts business today. The results of this report, however, can help us predict how marketers in a variety of industries see 2021 playing out. Consult the data in this report to plan your marketing program and budget, ensuring it's on par with how other B2B companies and industries are adapting in 2021.

If some of these strategies, tactics, or platforms are new to you—we can help you explore them in ways that complement the rest of your marketing program and budget. We've all learned in 2020 that things can change on a dime, and there's no sense in getting too comfortable. This lesson applies to your marketing program as well: Don't get complacent. Try new things. Lean on others for help and support.



About Sagefrog Marketing Group

Sagefrog Marketing Group is a top-ranked B2B marketing agency specializing in healthcare, technology, industrial, and business services. With offices in Doylestown, Princeton, Lehigh Valley, and Philadelphia, Sagefrog is dedicated to accelerating client success through brand building and integrated marketing. Sagefrog provides branding and strategy, website and digital marketing, content and inbound marketing, and traditional marketing services through its proven JumpStart™ process.

Contact us to put the insights from this report into action for your company.

[sagefrog.com](https://www.sagefrog.com) • (215) 230-9024 • info@sagefrog.com