

The Omni-Channel Data Trend Report 2017

This report discusses the findings of a survey of 347 FastStats® software users working within marketing and technology disciplines across a variety of industries.

APTECO

FastStats®
Marketing Analysis & Automation Software

The Omni-Channel Data Trend Report 2017

This report discusses the findings of a survey of 347 FastStats® software users working within marketing and technology disciplines across a variety of industries. Read on to discover what they are predicting will be the most important data driven trends for their organisations in 2017; from the customer journey to hyper-personalisation and what real-time interaction data they really want to utilise. Uncover which channels and software they use, whether they are already achieving an omni-channel communication strategy and whether implementing marketing automation systems has been as straightforward as they first supposed. Comparing the data to the previous year's results, this report reveals trends in the adoption of marketing automation, existing data volumes and growth.



Introduction

Key findings:



Email continues to be the most widely used channel but it is clearly supported by a wide range of other important **channels** to offer multi-channel communications. Notably social channels are used by 6 out of 10 respondents and direct mail by 8 out of 10 respondents.



Just 11% of respondents classify their communication strategy as **omni-channel** whereas the vast majority view their communications as **multi-channel.** Offering a consistent 'anywhere, anytime' brand experience remains elusive for many marketers but is essential to master in the coming years.



Are practical challenges and organisational barriers slowing **marketing automation** implementations down? There has been no growth in implementations as the same number of respondents are saying they have automation software in place as last year. However, this remains high on the agenda for marketing data teams as 9 out of 10 respondents either have, or plan to implement marketing automation software in the future.



Twice as many delegates reported databases with billions of transactions compared to the previous year. A quarter of respondents are now predicting more dramatic data volume increases in 2017 of 50%, double or many fold, compared to only 14% last year. Whilst the term **big data** is often misused, it is interesting to see that data volumes are expected to grow significantly in the future.



The demand for **real-time** data remains high so that marketers can utilise up to the minute information to trigger timely analysis and campaign automation. The most sought after live data feeds for 7 out of 10 respondents are email events and web visits, closely followed by financial transactional data feeds from operational systems.



The top two most **important trends** for organisations in 2017 are the customer journey for 80% of respondents, followed by data protection compliance for 70%. In third place came omni-channel, closely followed by real-time. The customer journey represents a major challenge to marketers because it is complex to track and optimise, yet critical to get right. The response to this question shows that delegates strongly believe that the customers' experience will determine the long-term success of brands.

Note: All charts and data visualisations in this report have been created using FastStats Discoverer™

About the respondents

The survey was carried out at the 2016 annual FastStats® User Group Conference on November 24th at the British Film Institute, London. 347 Apteco partners and their FastStats® clients were provided with voting handsets so that they could immediately respond to a range of quick-fire questions about their current and future marketing plans. Survey respondents came from a range of industries including retail, publishing & media, charities, financial services, energy, travel and marketing services providers.

Respondents by job titles & roles

A range of job titles and roles are represented across marketing and technology disciplines within the fields of data analytics, data strategy, CRM, insight, database management and campaign planning.



Respondents by country



90%

of respondents are from organisations in the UK



the other

10%

are mainly from Europe.

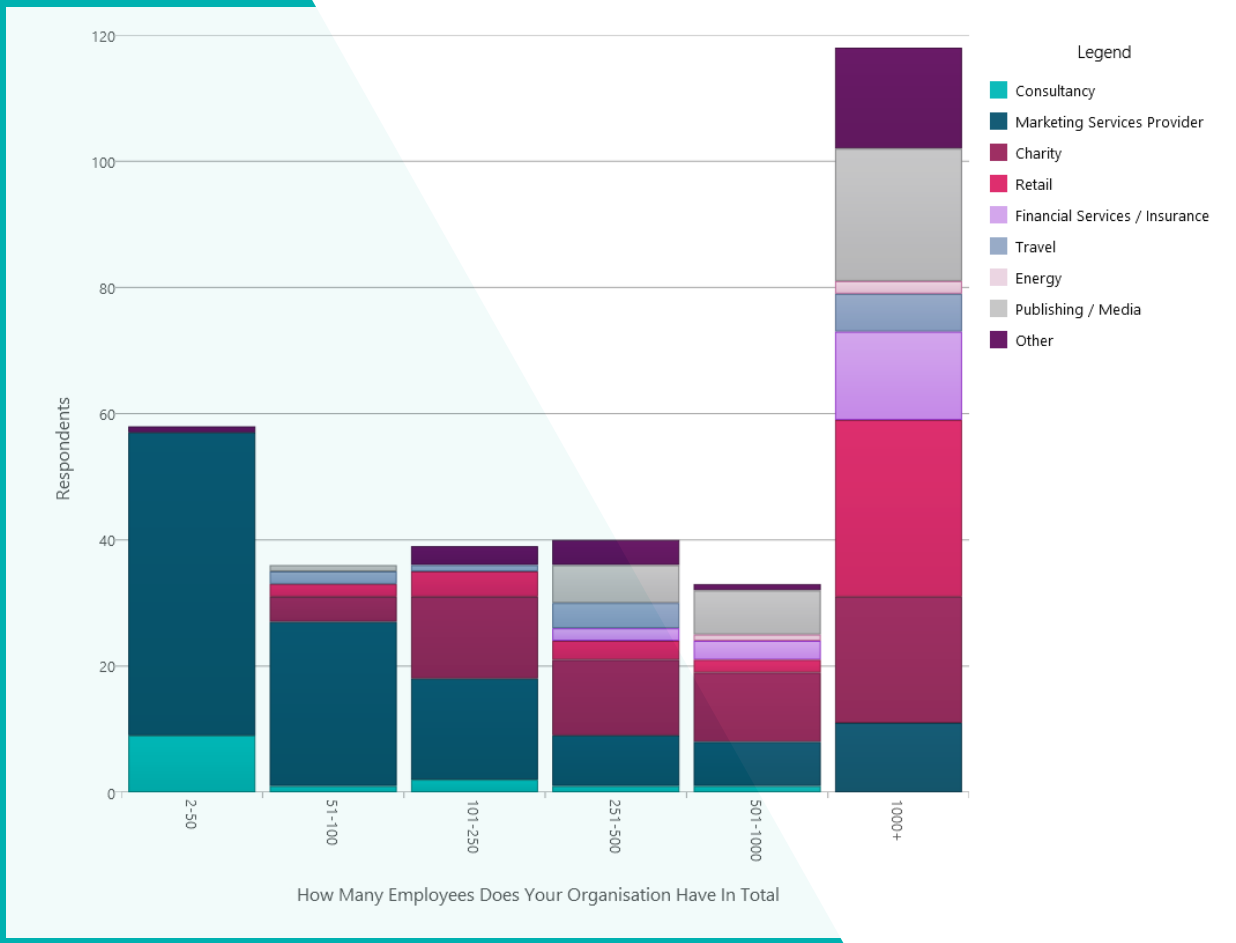
Marketers vs Techies



There was an even split between those delegates that regarded themselves as a marketer or techie.

Organisational size & industry

Almost half of all respondents work for organisations with over 500 employees. They are from a range of industries, including retail, publishing & media, charities, financial services, energy, travel and marketing services providers.

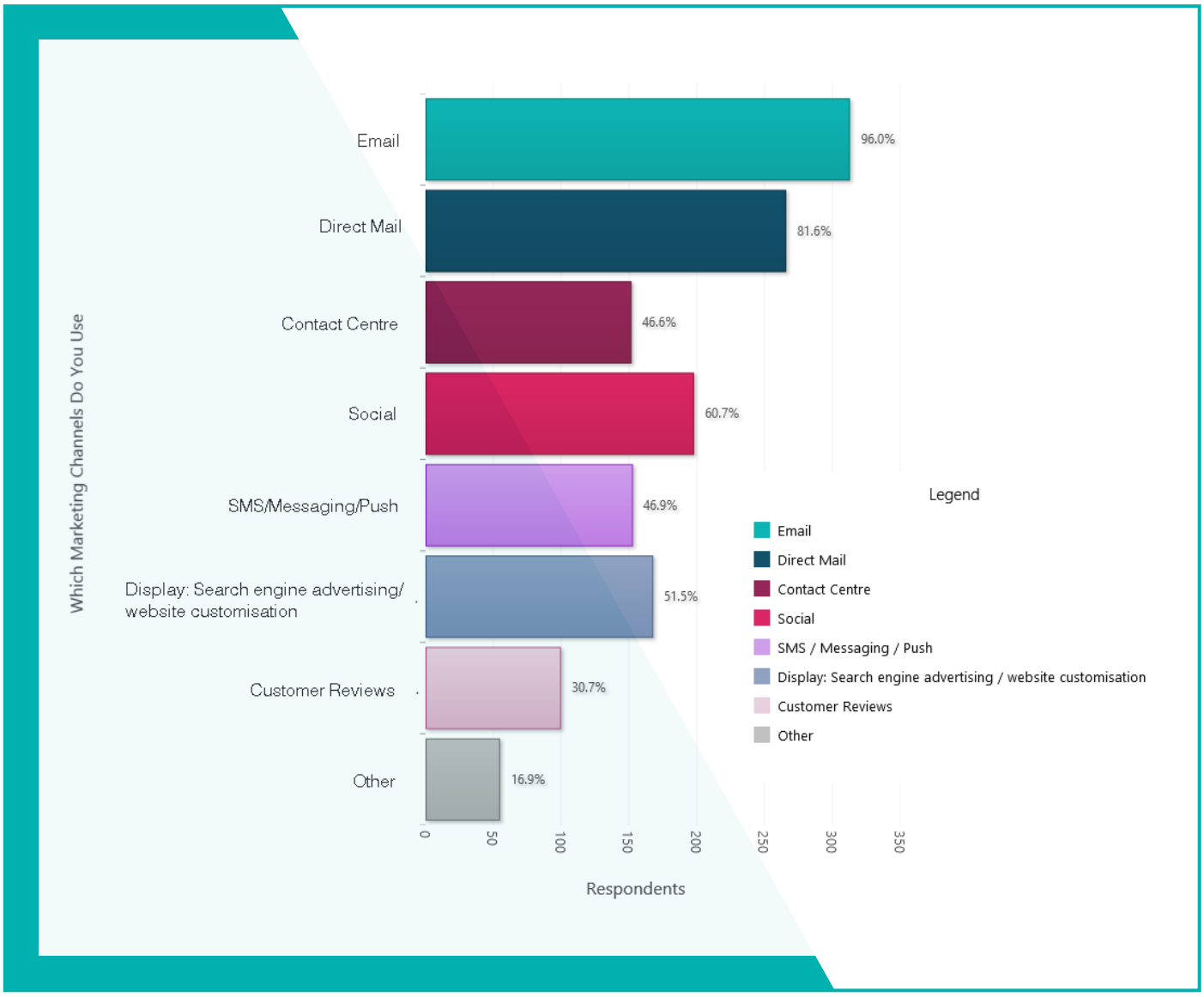


Channels

Which marketing channels do you use?

In previous surveys we have asked respondents to identify their single most dominant channel, however this year we have allowed respondents to identify all of the channels they use. It is interesting to note that email, direct mail, social and display are the most widely used channels.

Email, which has always previously been identified as the most dominant channel and continues to be the most widely used, is clearly supported by a wide range of other important channels to offer multi and omni-channel strategies.



Notably **social media**, formally selected by less than 1% of respondents as their most dominant channel in last year's report, **is actually used by**



6 out of 10 respondents.

Direct mail, selected by 30% as the dominant channel last year, **is used by**



8 out of 10 respondents.

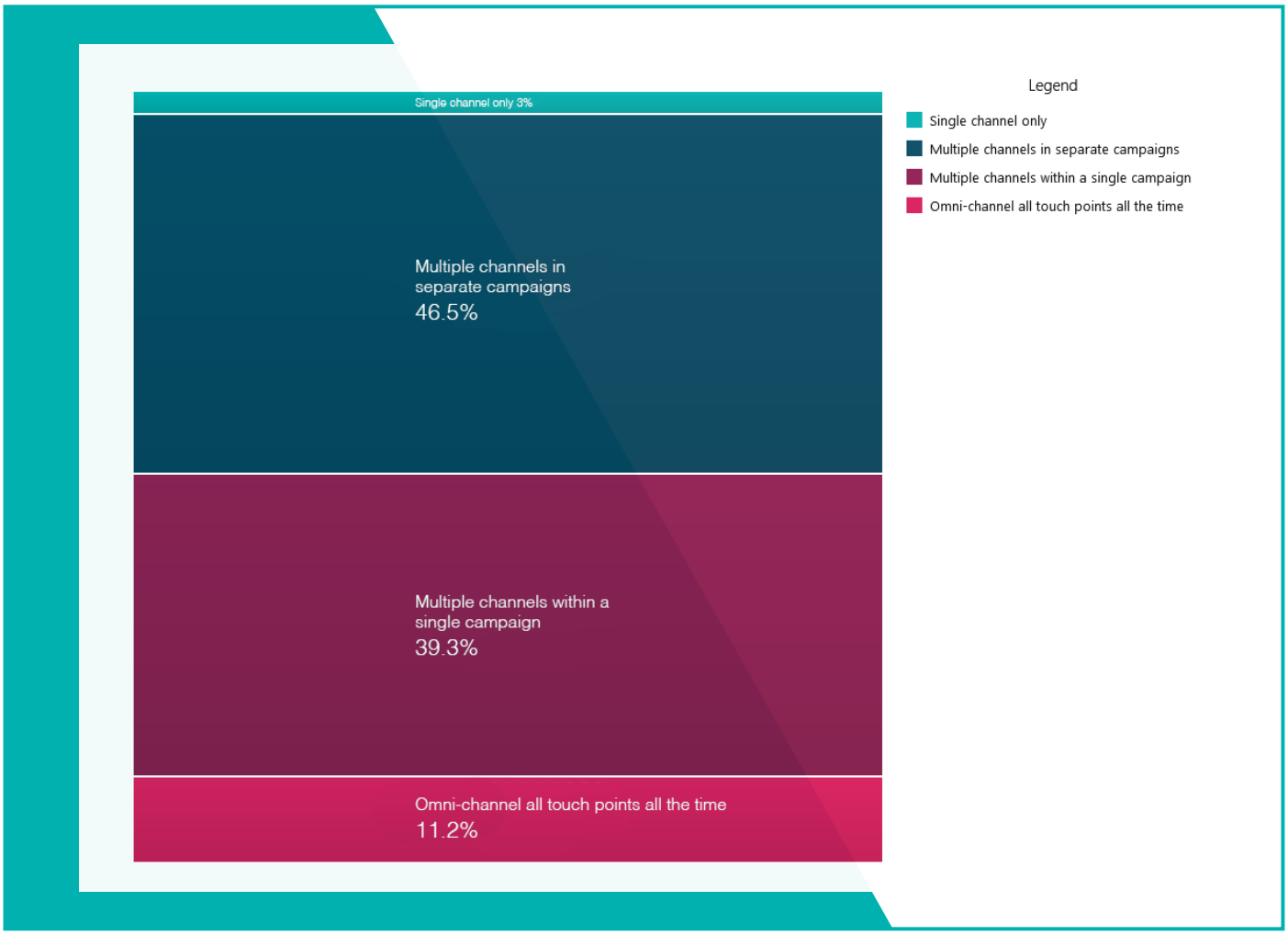
Multi-Channel vs Omni-Channel

How would you classify your communication strategy?

Just 11% of respondents classify their communication strategy as "omni-channel", reaching all touch points all of the time. The vast majority (86%) view their communications as "multi-channel" whether they are using multiple channels across separate campaigns (46.5%) or using multiple channels within the same campaign (39.3%). Only 3% use a single channel only.

There is clearly a long way to go before organisations are able to navigate the complexities of creating true omni-channel campaigns, which requires all areas of an organisation to align customer touchpoints in a consistent manner.

Many organisations are still on the path to achieving true omni-channel marketing, with most still communicating via single channels in separate campaigns or multiple channels in separate campaigns. Offering a consistent 'anywhere, anytime' brand experience remains elusive for many marketers but is essential to master in the coming years.



Marketing Automation

Do you plan to implement marketing automation software?

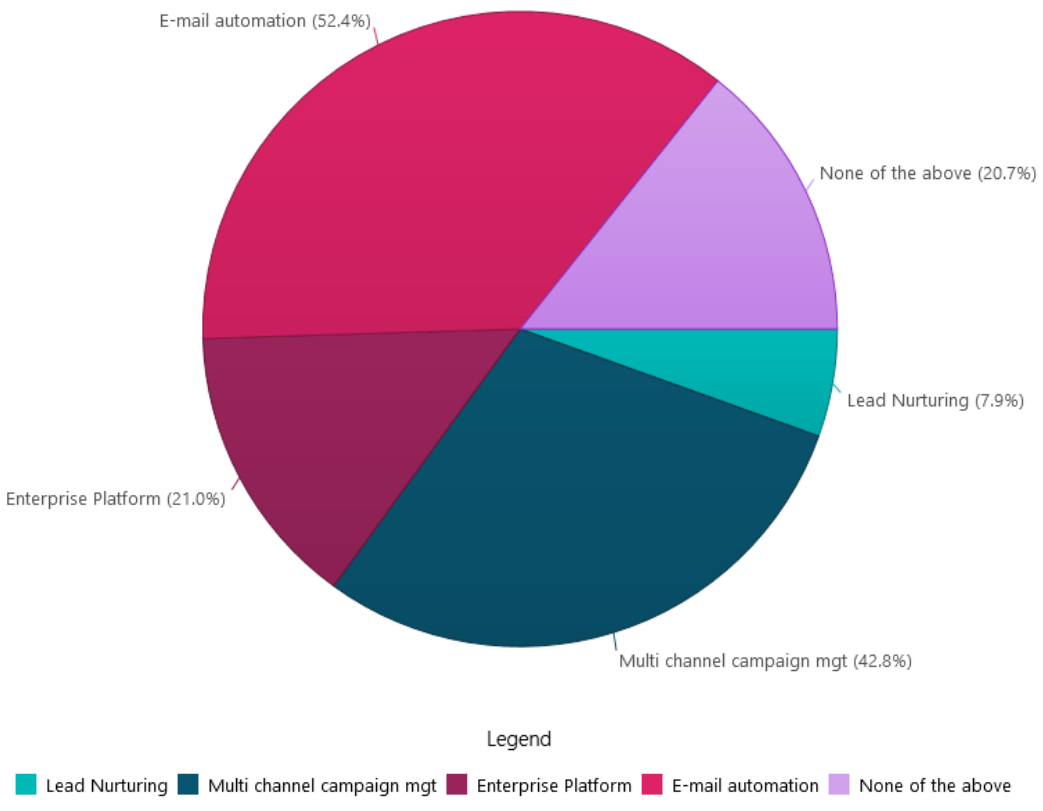
This year more respondents are saying automation software implementation is an aspiration (from 13% up to 23%) rather than something they are going to do now or within the next year (26% down to 21%). There has been no growth in implementations as almost exactly the same number of respondents are saying they already have automation software in place as last year. It seems that those aspiring to implement marketing automation last year didn't manage it, and with all of this combined it seems to show that there are practical challenges and organisational barriers that are slowing marketing automation implementations down.

Overall 9 out of 10 respondents either have or plan to implement marketing automation software and so this remains high on the agenda for marketing data teams.



What marketing automation software do you have?

Not surprisingly at a FastStats user conference 43% of the audience have systems like Apteco's FastStats PeopleStage multi-channel automation software. Interestingly, the majority (52%) have email automation systems in place such as Silverpop, ExactTarget and other ESPs, only a fifth of delegates (21%) have enterprise platforms such as Adobe, IBM or SAS, and less than a tenth (8%) have lead nurturing software such as Eloqua, Hubspot or Marketo.



Respondents could give multiple answers to this question so it is also interesting to look at the cross over between the automation software in place and the main crossover is with email service providers.

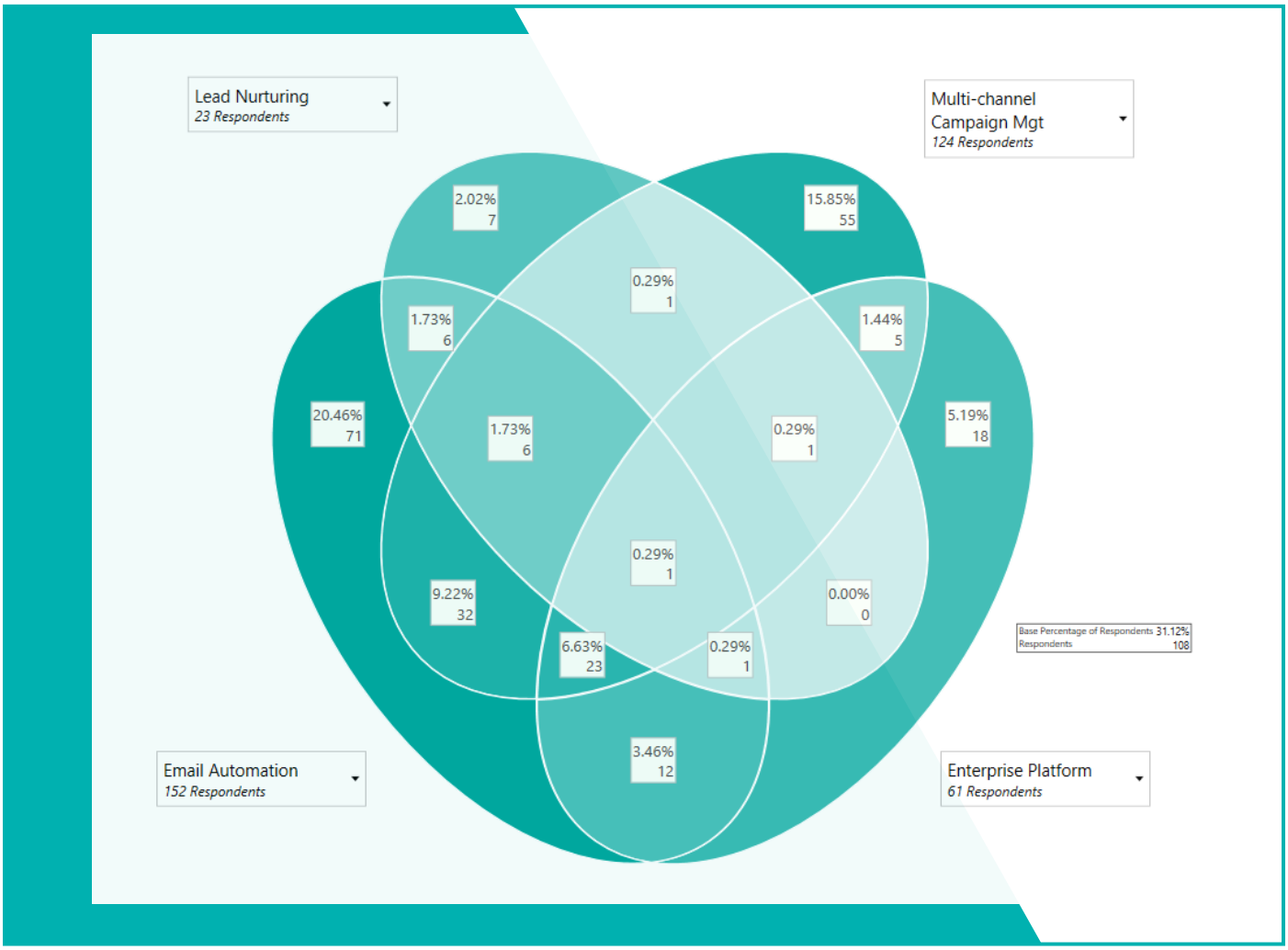


The largest, although modest cross over of automation tools is between multi-channel campaign management software and email automation (9%), which is predictable as systems like FastStats PeopleStage integrate with email service providers rather than offering their own broadcasting platform.



This may also be why enterprise platforms have some cross over with email automation too if organisations opt to use their preferred digital broadcasting platforms (3.5%).

Although email providers offer automation solutions this is only for one channel (email) and may not support the data structures required to perform complex campaigns. As transactional data is often used for personalisation there might also be concerns about holding this data in the cloud.



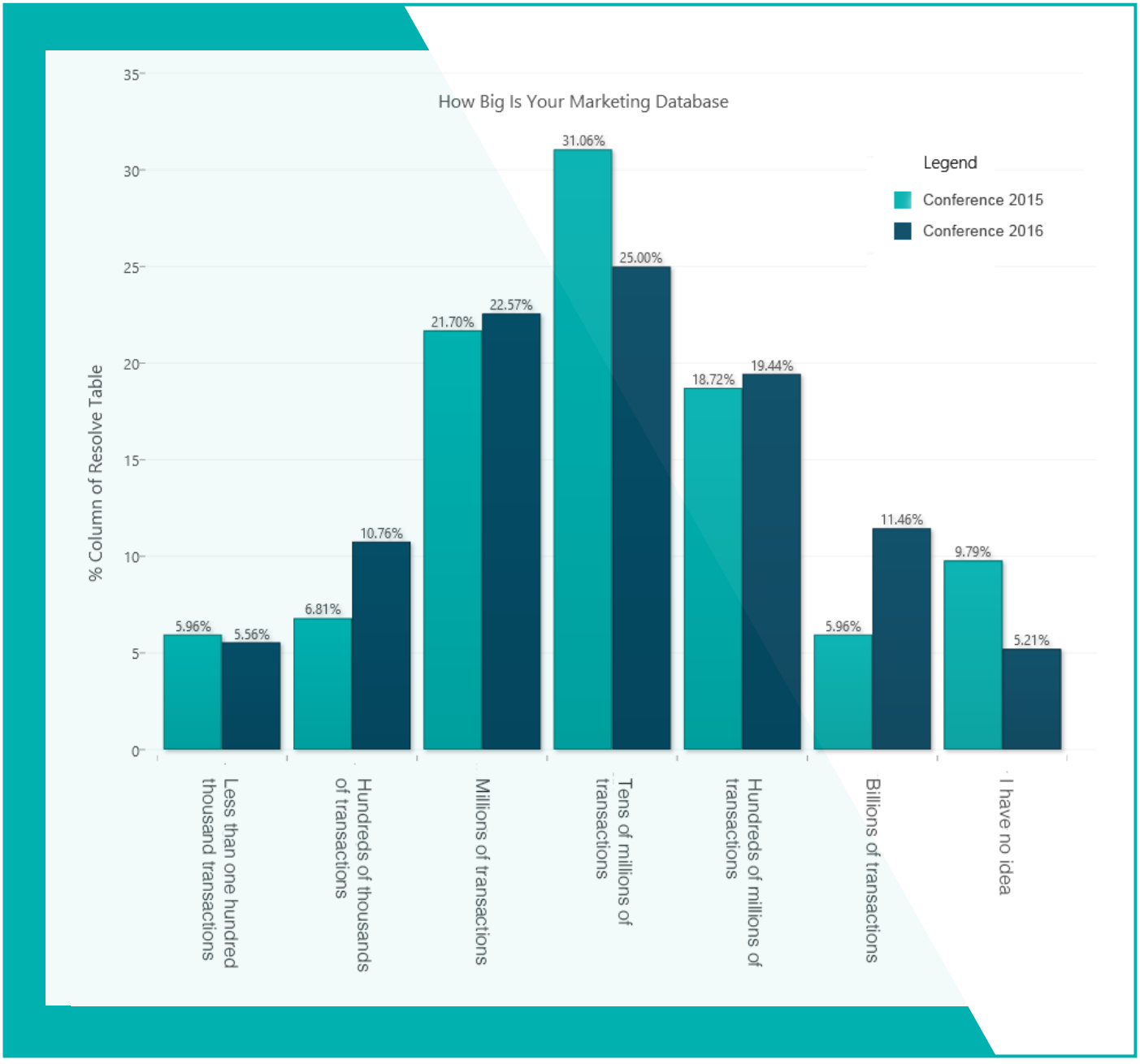
Notably multi-channel campaign management, enterprise platforms and email automation systems have the second largest crossover (7%), perhaps showing that enterprise installations sometimes need support from lighter weight and nimbler software installations.

Note that those organisations with lead nurturing software don't show much cross-over at all, indicating that perhaps these provide a good all in one package, although again they may be mainly focused on limited channels, such as online and email.

Data Volumes & Growth

How big is your marketing database?

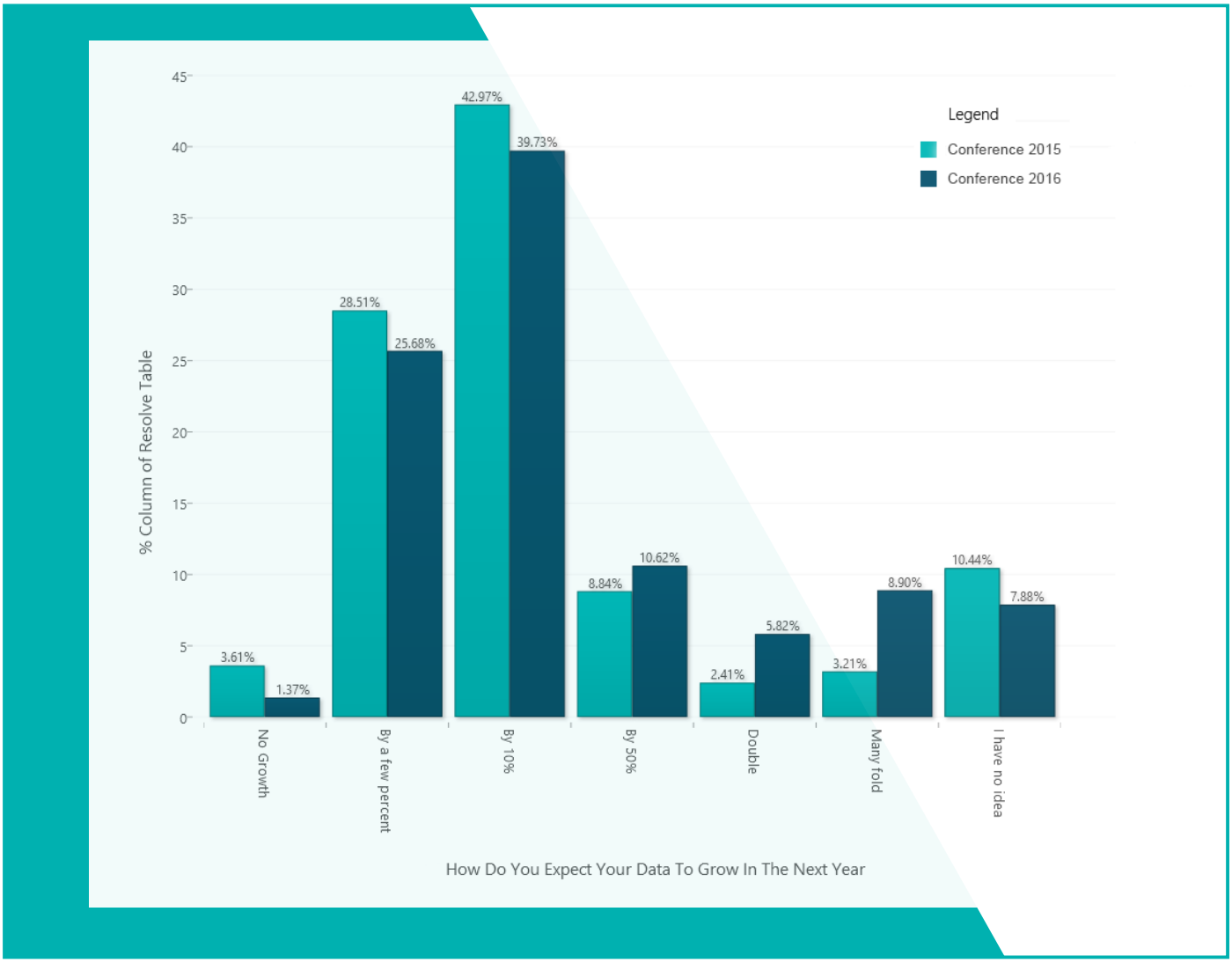
This year, delegates reported that their marketing databases are less likely to contain tens of millions of transactions (31% of respondents to 25%), but there are twice as many delegates reporting billions of transactions (from 5.96% in 2015 to 11.46% in 2016). Two-thirds of delegates have databases in the range millions to hundreds of millions of transactions. Perhaps big data is starting to become a reality for more organisations!



How do you expect your data to grow in the next year?

Last year it was noted that respondents didn't expect their data to grow at such a rapid pace compared to their expectations in the previous year. In this year's survey 66% of delegates are still predicting modest growth (up to 10%) for 2017, however this number is down nearly 10% from 75% last year. Interestingly 25% are now predicting more dramatic increases of 50%, double or many fold, compared to only 14% last year.

Perhaps expectations are starting to pick up pace again as the reality of big data still beckons. Whilst the term 'big data' is often being misused, it is interesting to see from our survey that data volumes are expected to grow significantly in the future. This is perhaps not surprising as organisations add more and more previously 'siloed' channel data into their Single Customer View databases to help deliver on omni-channel marketing.



Real-Time

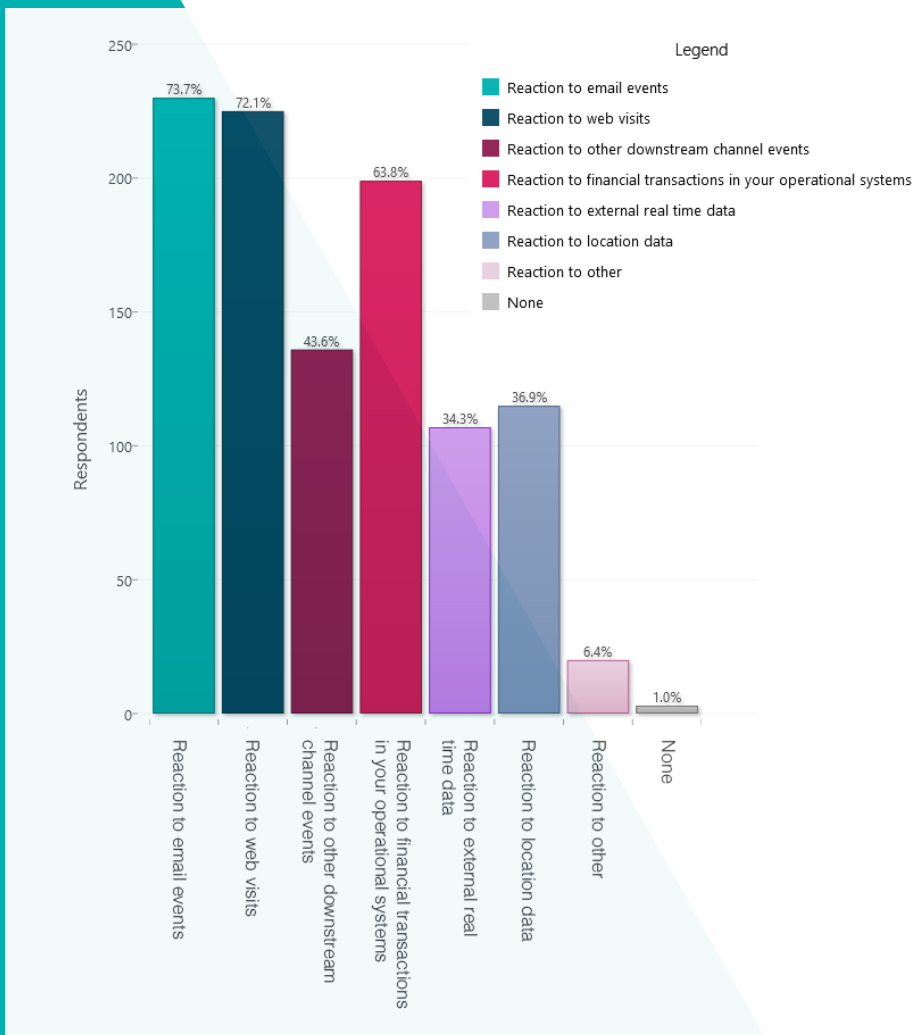
What type of real-time interaction do you need?

Real-time data interaction is a hot topic, but exactly what live data feeds do marketers want to react to in their campaigns and communications?

The most sought after live data feeds for 7 out of 10 respondents is clearly email events and web visits, closely followed by financial transactional data feeds from operational systems for 6 out of 10 respondents.

Note that respondents could give multiple answers to this question and the crossover is interesting.

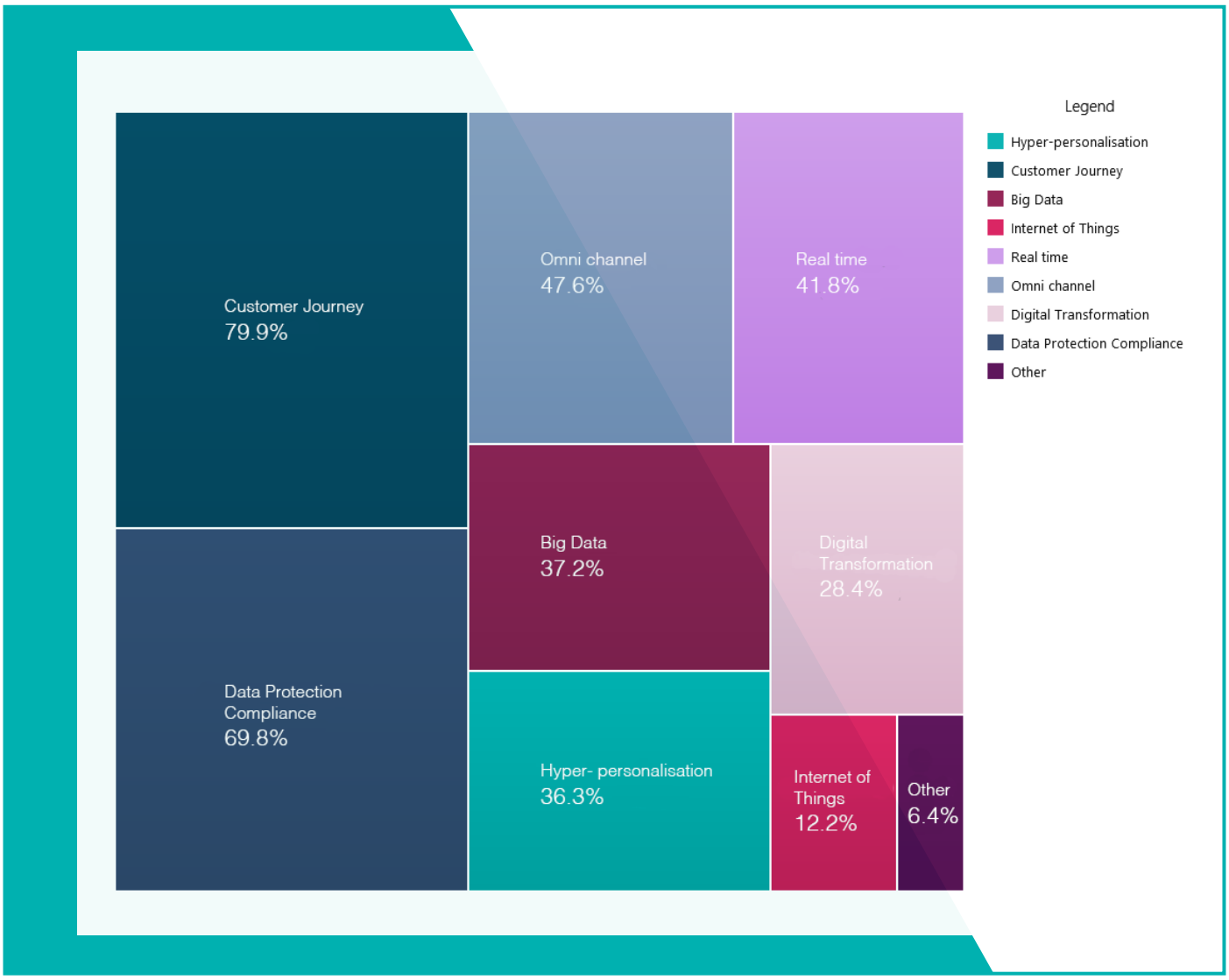
The most popular combination is for all of the top 5 answers for 16% of respondents, which are email events, web visits, financial transactions, other downstream channel events and location data. The second most popular combination is email events, website visits and financial transactions identified by 11% of respondents.



2017 Trends

What are the most important trends for your organisation in 2017?

The top two most important topics for organisations in 2017 are; the customer journey for 80% of respondents, followed by data protection compliance for 70% of respondents. In third place came omni-channel (almost 48%), closely followed by real-time (42%). Note that respondents could give multiple answers to this question.



The customer journey represents a major challenge to marketers because it is complex to track and optimise, yet critical to get right. The customers' experience will determine the long-term success of brands.

Marketing analytics are likely to play a key role in enabling marketers to understand how customer journeys evolve, before and after purchases. For example, analysis will allow the measurement of touchpoint interactions across channels as well as how customers migrate through marketing segments over time. This understanding will help marketers to design campaign flows that mirror the most common customer journeys, ensuring a consistent and positive customer experience along the way.

For those wanting to understand and optimise their customer journeys and achieve omni-channel marketing, having a real-time capability isn't optional – it is a must have and hence it is no surprise to see its importance ranked here. The earlier question regarding the different types of real-time interaction required by respondents helps to explain in more detail what is covered within this all-encompassing term.



Marketing analytics are likely to play a key role in enabling marketers to understand how customer journeys evolve.

The new GDPR regulation that will come into effect in May 2018 represents a significant challenge to marketers (particularly in the UK), as compliance will not only be encouraged by a carrot but enforced with the stick of hefty fines for data protection and security breaches. No wonder it is forefront of mind for the marketing department!

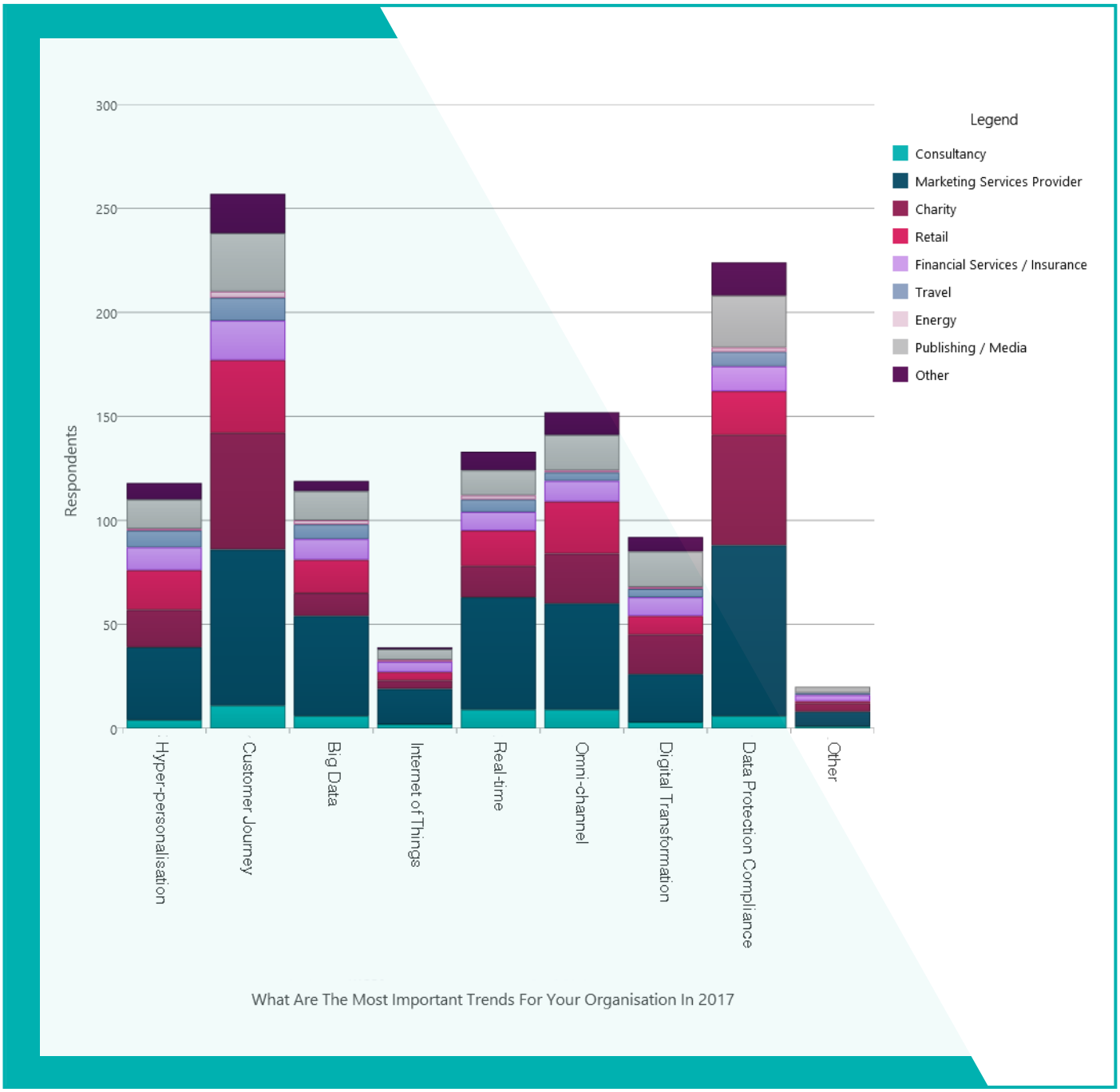
As marketing evolves from personalised to individualised communications, where every content block in a communication is hyper-personalised to give a truly individual message, it is no surprise to see that hyper-personalisation represents a top priority for companies to master using the latest analysis and campaign automation tools.

Interestingly digital transformation, a term that is often used by large corporations to encompass organisational, technical and process changes isn't regarded by marketers as one of their top-5 trends to take into account heading into 2017. Whilst the 'Internet of Things' remains a buzzword that is gaining prominence (e.g. connected car, industry 4.0 etc.), it is seen as quite a far off trend impacting data-driven marketers right now. It will be interesting to see whether this changes in the coming years.



Trends by sector

The customer journey and data protection compliance are seen as important trends across most sectors. Marketing services providers understandably seem to be particularly interested in data protection compliance, whereas retail organisations predict that the customer journey and omni-channel will be most important to them, whilst for the charity sector the top two issues are data protection and the customer journey.



About Apteco

Apteco Ltd develops marketing data analysis and campaign automation software. Using the latest visualisation and analytical techniques for customer segmentation, data mining, predictive modelling, profiling, multi-channel campaign management, reporting, and much more, Apteco's FastStats® software suite provides marketers with access to the information in their business. With a fast, visual and truly easy to use interface, FastStats® enables marketers to gain valuable insight and achieve better targeted, easier to measure and more cost effective marketing. FastStats® is proven in hundreds of installations with thousands of users worldwide.

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