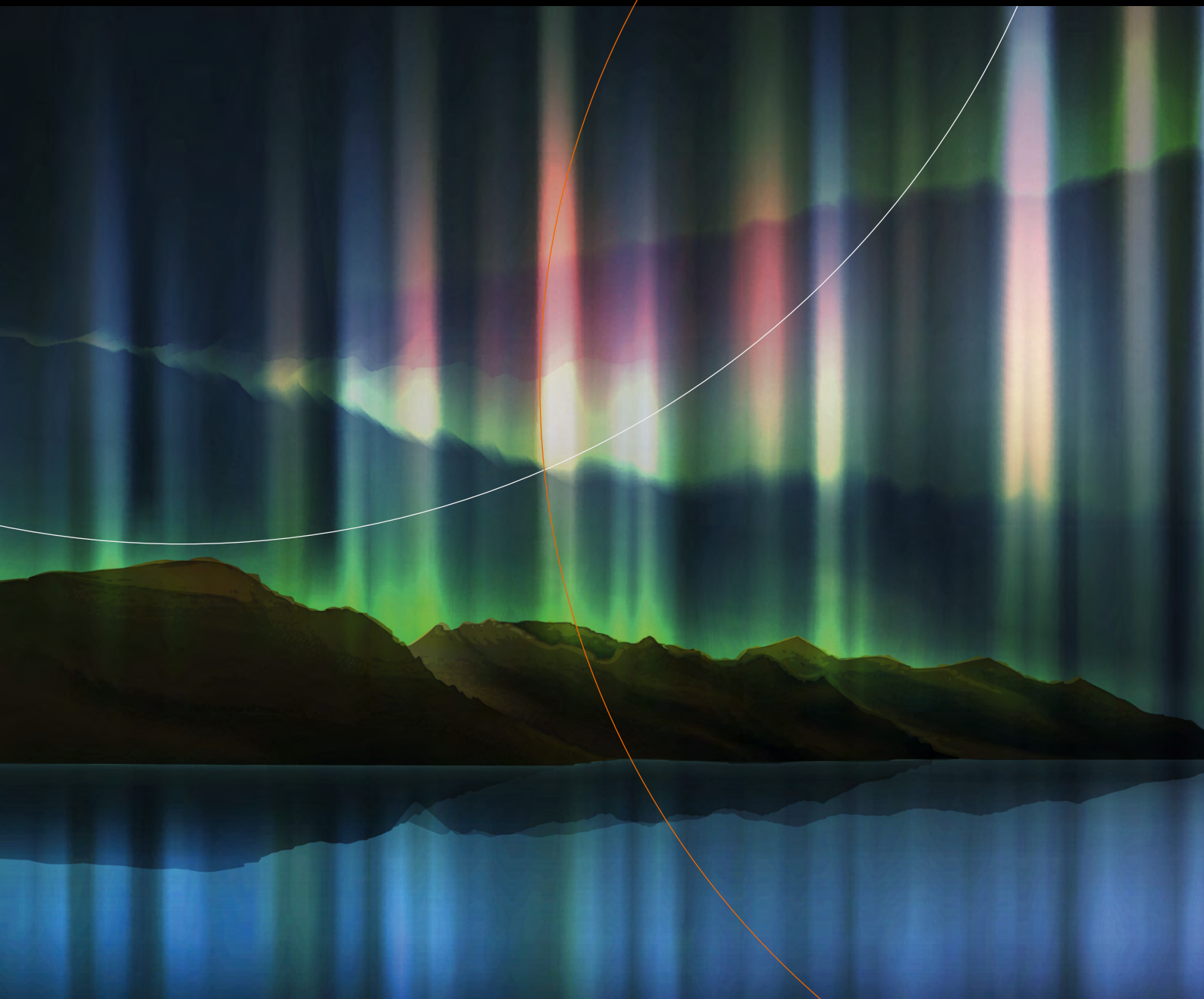
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The Nordics marketing automation sophistication index 2018

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A picture of MA in the Nordics

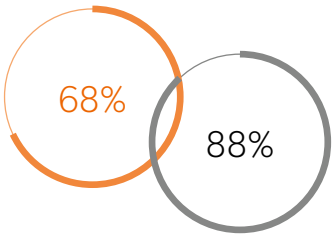
Average length of time using MA

20.5 months

Average satisfaction with current MA platform

7/10

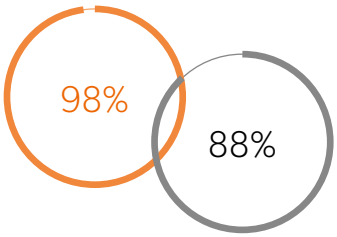
Effectiveness



68% of Nordic marketers feel their organisation's MA is effective.

88% believe it's good value for money.

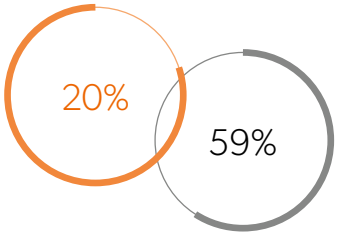
Goals



98% believe MA is helping meet overall marketing goals.

88% see it helping them meet strategic goals.

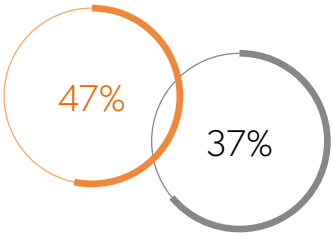
Success



20% have a formal evaluation process in place.

59% evaluate informally.

Efficiency



47% of the features within MA platforms are being used.

37% have fully integrated MA with their CRM.

Benefits achieved so far

1. Better lead management
2. Delivering more relevant messaging and content
3. Better insight into conversion stages.

Benefits anticipated

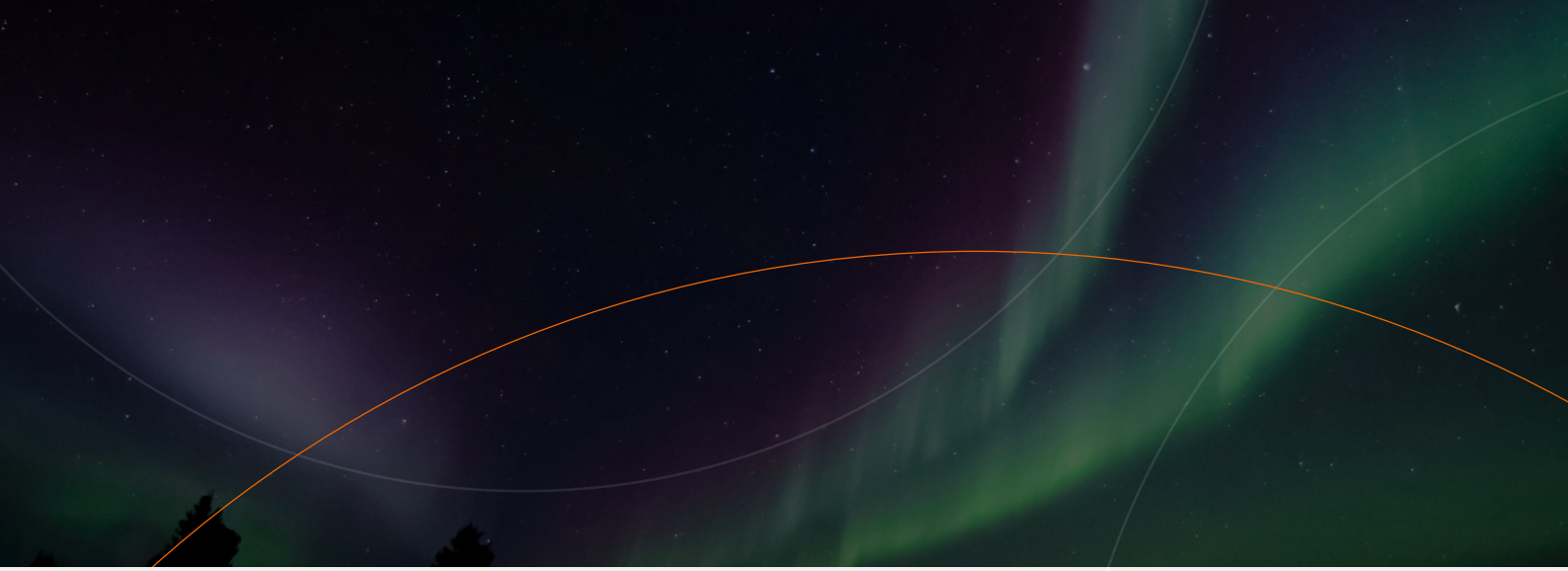
1. Better lead management
2. Increased lead quality
3. Delivering more relevant messaging and content.

Biggest ongoing challenges

1. Data integration
2. Skills shortages
3. Resource shortages .

Confidence levels in the Nordics are equivelent to where they were in the UK two years ago:

Nordics in 2018	User confidence level	UK in 2016
35%	Basic	38%
49%	Confident	42%
16%	Expert	20%



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Introduction

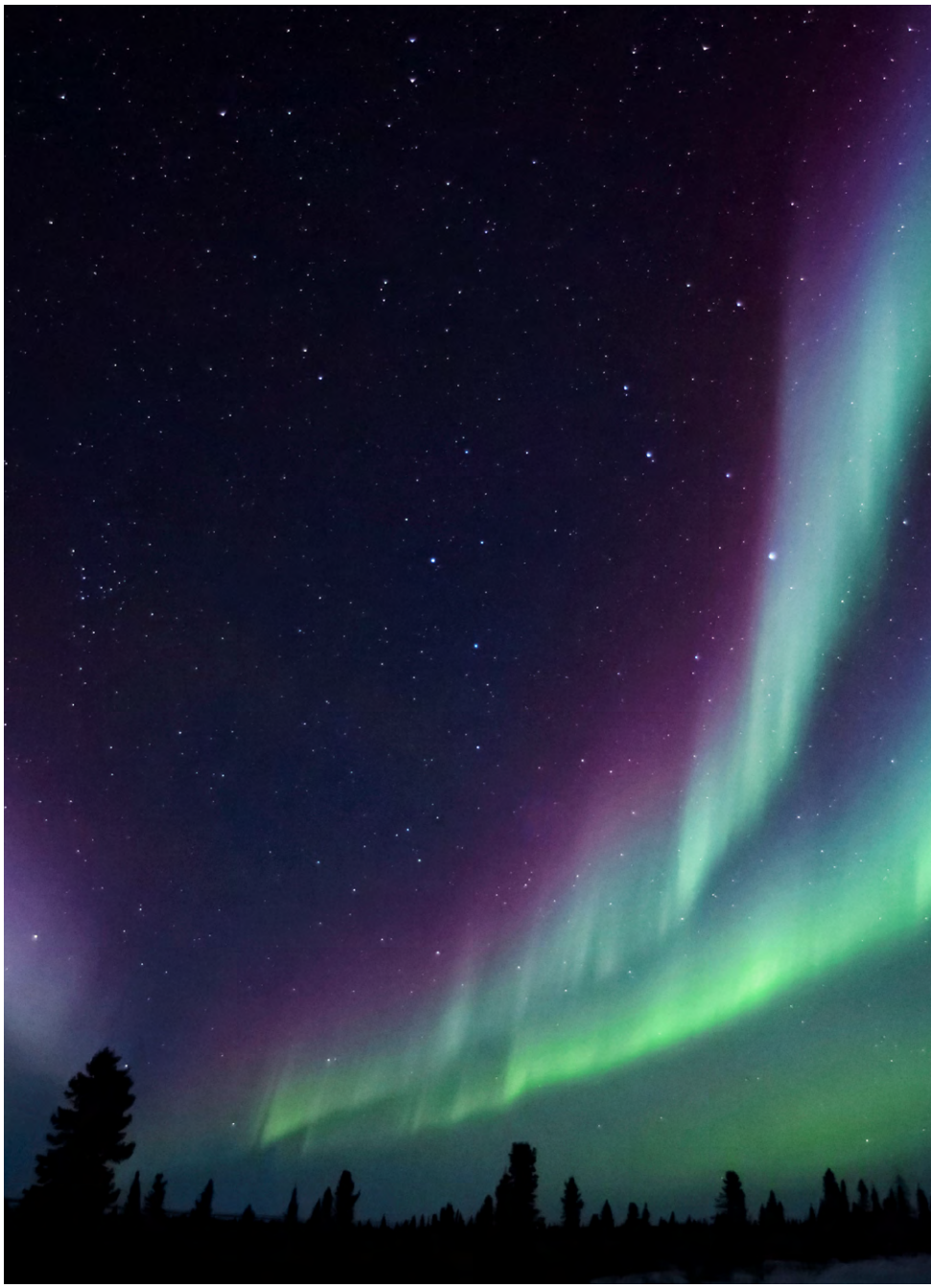
Across the world, B2B businesses are investing in the promise of marketing automation (MA). To help marketers in the Nordics (Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark and Iceland), we set out to identify how the region is performing and what the future could hold for this dynamic market.

The in-depth research in this report reveals that although the Nordic countries are playing catch up to marketing automation within more advanced markets, this has some advantages. In particular, it's allowing late adopters to learn from the mistakes of others.

We go on to look at whether marketing automation has lived up to expectations, the challenges faced in achieving positive results, and how to jump hurdles in the future.

We hope you find this useful in making the most of the opportunities offered by marketing automation for Nordic B2B organisations.

The Nordics marketing automation sophistication index 2018 surveyed over 200 B2B marketers – 88 in the Nordics in November 2017 and 129 in the UK in June 2016.



1. Nordics overview: Two years' trailing

This is a tipping point for MA in the Nordics. More B2B organisations are using it than not and investment is expected to rise significantly this year. But the region lags well behind the UK – one of the leading European nations for MA. In fact, our research shows the Nordics now find themselves in the position the UK was in two years ago – particularly worrying news for Nordic organisations wanting to compete for customers against other European businesses.

Both in terms of adoption rates and sophistication of use, the Nordics have a lot of catching up with the UK.

1. **Adoption:** Our research shows 58% of Nordic marketing teams have access to an MA system. This is slightly higher than the UK's 2016 figure of 56%, but it's estimated as many as nine in 10 UK organisations have now adopted automation. That differential is huge and puts the Nordic industry well behind the UK – indeed, at risk of losing customers to more marketing-advanced organisations and less able to make the most of MA opportunities.
2. **Sophistication:** Of those using MA in the Nordics, just 16% view themselves as experts – lower than UK confidence levels in 2016 (when 20% saw themselves as expert users). Most Nordic marketers admit they're not getting the most out of their platform, with only 12% saying they are using it at, or close to, its potential.

Yet, despite these significant teething problems, MA is still proving incredibly valuable. In nearly all (85%) Nordic marketing departments where MA has been introduced, revenue has since increased.

There's far more to be unlocked as this is still a relatively new industry – two-thirds (67%) of Nordic MA systems have been installed over just the past two years, and now they know it works, three-quarters (71%) of marketing teams are increasing their automation spend this year.

They may be behind today, but the Nordics are intent on stealing a march on the competition.



2. Getting started: Implementation issues

How successfully are the Nordics implementing MA?

What the Nordics have lost in first mover advantage to the UK, they have made up for with a watch-and-learn approach.

Although there are significant similarities between where the UK was two years ago in implementing MA and where the Nordic region is today, what stands out is the vast difference in satisfaction levels.

Eight in 10 Nordic marketers are content with the results of their MA, with an average satisfaction rating of 70%. When most of their programmes are only just getting started, this is quite remarkable, revealing most programmes have been successful from the very start. At the same stage of implementation, far fewer UK marketers (58%) were this positive about their MA programme.

It's apparent that adopting marketing automation later has meant those in the Nordics have benefited from an easier transition, learning from the mistakes of others and adapting accordingly.

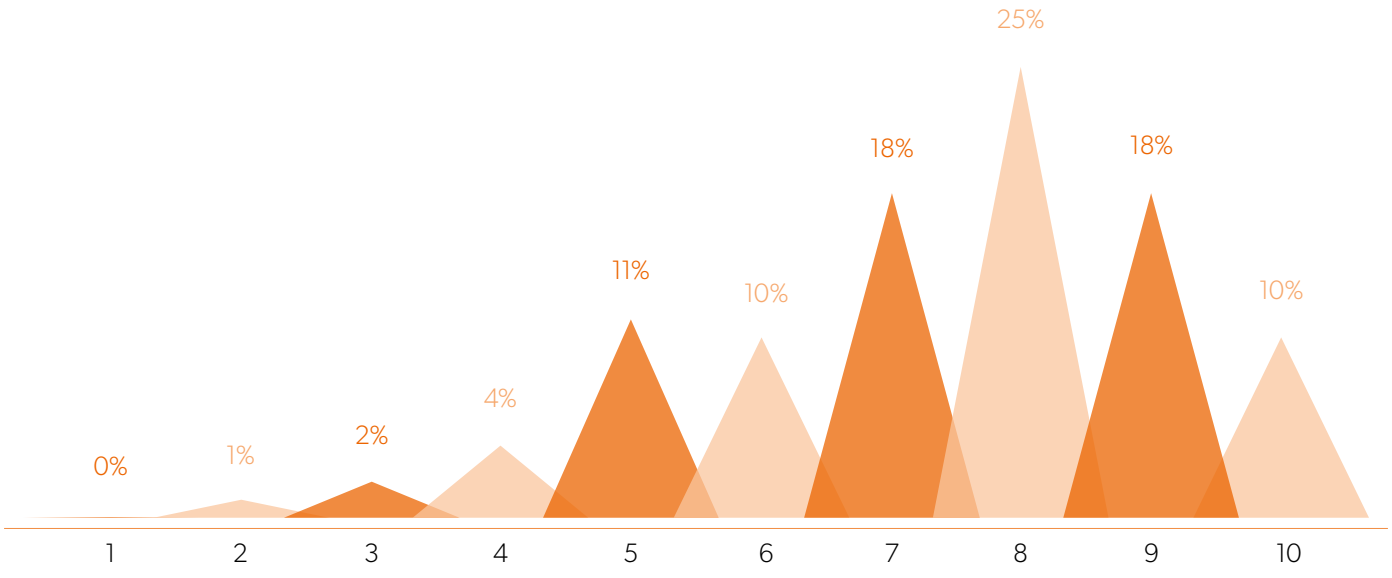
What challenges have the Nordics faced in MA implementation?

Both integration and talent issues threaten to derail MA programmes if they're not addressed quickly.

Integration

Despite Nordic marketers already seeing the benefits of MA, it has not been easy to get to this stage. Data integration is the biggest barrier to effective set up: it is the number one implementation challenge, affecting two-thirds (69%) of marketers.

How satisfied are you with your MA platforms?



When data is so essential to the process, struggling with data integration is a serious concern. How can you overcome these issues?

- Carefully plan what data you need to enable automation. What sources do you have? How can you pool these? What more do you need? How will you collect new data?
- Prepare online forms to reflect your plan that are easy and quick to fill in. Don't collect any information you won't use.
- Review the process regularly and openly. Remember, this is an ongoing process and requires time to get it right.

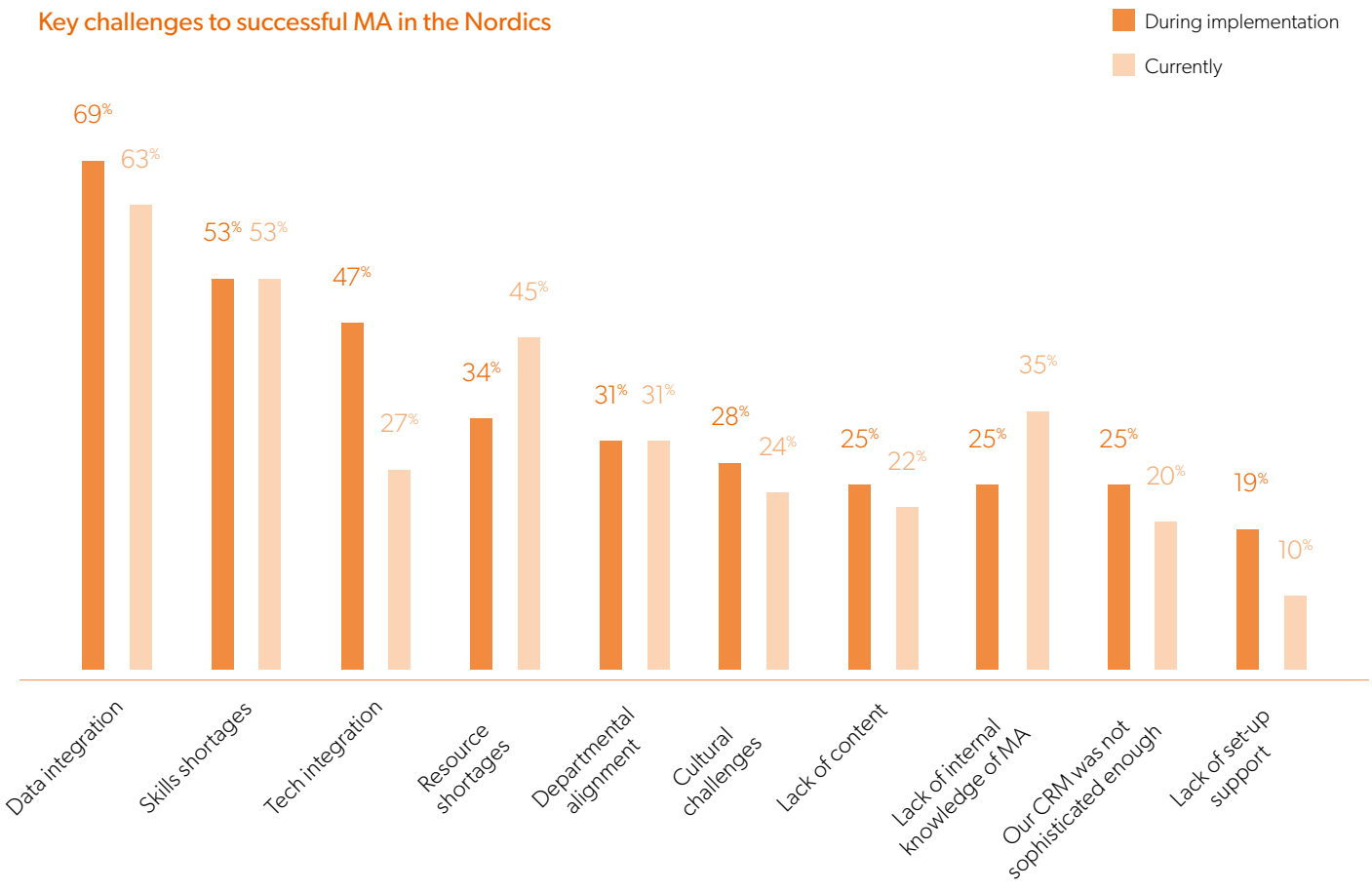


Another major issue at set-up is the often complicated process of technology integration – what should the team use and how will it all work together? Nearly half (47%) of companies struggle with tech integration at implementation, but, once they've grown their knowledge and made their choices, this figure nearly halves. Only a quarter (27%) of marketers see tech integration as an ongoing challenge.

Talent

Talent issues are another key challenge and one that can affect the success of an entire MA programme. The majority (53%) of marketers admitted facing a skills shortage challenge at implementation, and a third (34%) faced a shortfall in resources. When there's such complexity involved, guesswork is not good enough: the right people with the right skills need to be in place.

Key challenges to successful MA in the Nordics



3. Success so far:
Revenue and results

Is MA living up to marketers' hopes?

Marketing departments are seeing financial benefits and increasing influence.

As we've seen, the overwhelming majority of Nordic marketers are satisfied with their MA programmes, and it's no surprise when we look at their results. Even though they're still in their infancy and face ongoing challenges, Nordic MA programmes are already astonishingly successful.

Since adopting marketing automation, 85% of marketing departments have experienced an increase in marketing-generated revenue. A third (31%) have seen a very significant boost. While not all of this can yet be attributed directly to MA, it's not a coincidence, with most (88%) marketers seeing MA as good value for money.

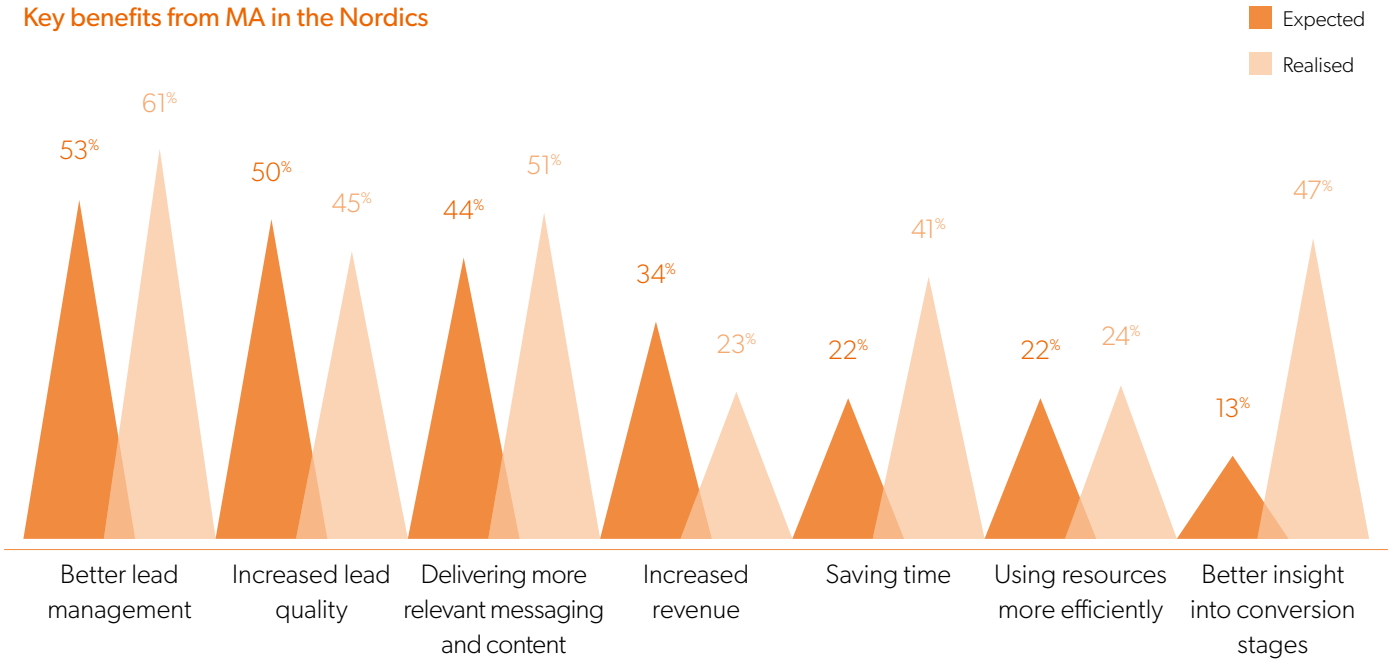
Not only is it financially beneficial, MA is ensuring the marketing department's place at the top table. Nearly all (98%) Nordic marketers believe marketing automation helps them achieve their organisation's marketing goals. An incredible 88% believe it's put them on the path to achieving their overarching strategic goals.

What benefits are marketing departments experiencing from MA implementation?

MA is going above and beyond in helping marketers achieve some of their aims – and falling below expectations in other areas.

Better lead management (53%), increased lead quality (50%), delivering more relevant messaging (44%) and increased revenue (34%) are the key reasons MA programmes are set up in the Nordics. And, more or less, marketers have found these have all been met – with only a few percentage points between expectations and achievement.

Key benefits from MA in the Nordics



In some areas, MA has significantly over delivered. Firstly, a fifth (22%) of marketers expected MA to result in time savings, while two-fifths (41%) experienced it. This is a welcome boost to resource scarce marketing departments. Once MA is set up and running, it is freeing up time to focus elsewhere.

Secondly, only 13% of marketers were expecting better insights into conversion, but 47% saw results. Constantly improving MA programmes is a necessity, making these insights invaluable in fueling future success.

Below expectations

The key area where expectations fell below expectation was revenue. Only a quarter (24%) of businesses have seen an increase in revenue clearly attributable to MA – that's a third (29%) fewer than had hoped. But concern may be premature.

Even though it may take time for revenue results to be revealed, marketers are confident they will be seen. Of those who are yet to see the benefits they had hoped for, the majority (54%) expect to deliver revenue rises that can be directly attributed to MA within the next 12 to 24 months.

Only a quarter of businesses have seen an increase in revenue clearly attributable to MA – that's a third fewer than had hoped.

How to link revenue to MA

1. Make sure measurement includes revenue metrics, such as customer lifetime value.
2. Ensure the marketing and sales team are aligned in how they use MA.
3. Check revenue goals regularly and have both short- and long-term goals to show realistic progress.

4. Looking ahead:
Adaptation and measurement

Nordics marketers are making sure their MA programmes improve and deliver the right impact by focusing on integration and talent – with many failing to focus enough attention on measurement.

Despite the success of Nordic MA programmes to date, just 6% of marketers think their organisation is using MA efficiently. So, what are their plans for improvement?

Integration attention

There is a push to improve integration. Data integration is the top ongoing MA issue for Nordic marketers, with nearly two-thirds (63%) of businesses continuing to grapple with data. Tech integration is also complex, with just a third (31%) of marketers believing their MA is integrated with their CRM. Two-thirds (69%) admit there's more to be done.

Time and talent

Half (53%) of marketers believe they have a shortage of skills within their team. They also suffer from a lack of internal knowledge of MA. Their concerns rose after implementation (from 25% to 35%) suggesting teams did not realise the skills they would need on an ongoing basis. Resourcing is also a continuing issue, affecting nearly half (45%) of marketing teams.

This lack of time and talent threatens to derail MA programmes in the long-term and is an issue marketers are keen to address in the Nordics.

In-depth: Measurement misstep

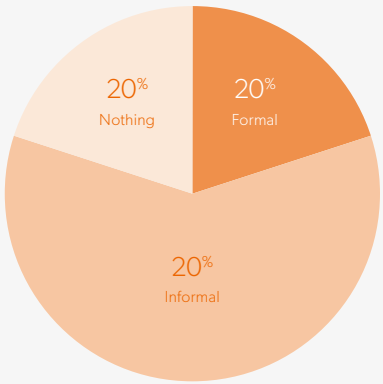
One of the key attractions of MA is that it can be set up to collect data that proves the success of marketing programmes. This is the holy grail of marketing – unquestionable proof of value.

At the moment, Nordic marketing teams are failing to make the most of this opportunity. Just one in 10 Nordic B2B marketing teams have attempted using sophisticated ways of reporting, such as predictive marketing analytics or other AI/machine learning methods.

But really surprising is that only one in five (20%) of these marketing teams have a formal MA evaluation process in place at all. Considering the time and financial investment that's needed to set up an automation programme, this is staggering. The same proportion (20%) do not evaluate MA at all, while two thirds (60%) only evaluate informally.

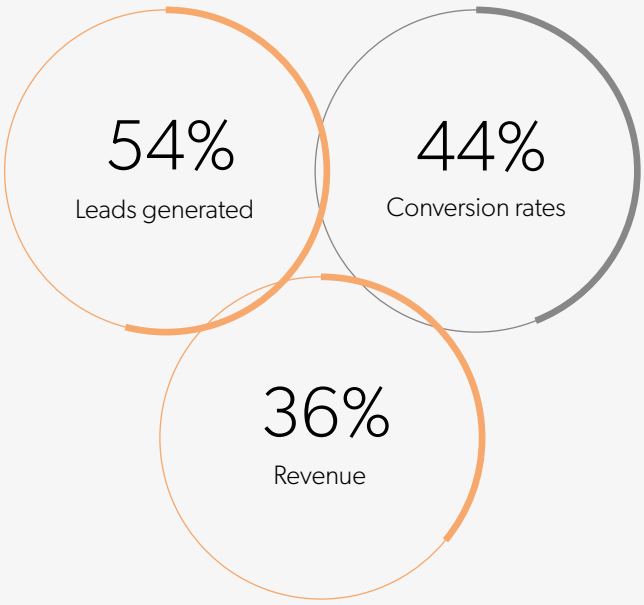
Even where they are measuring success, focus can be misplaced, with leads generated being the number one metric. Pure revenue is a top measure in only a third (36%) of Nordic MA programmes.

Types of MA evaluation in the Nordics





What MA programmes focus on evaluating (top three)



Measurement is the gateway to improving processes and plans and accelerating progress. It reveals not only MA value, but also insights into how to adapt and improve marketing programmes continually. Without improving measurement ability, Nordic teams will struggle to gain the momentum that MA thrives on.

How to measure MA effectively

1. Align measurement to organisational and marketing objectives
2. Set targets
3. Audit available data
4. Define metrics
5. Test and adapt.

Conclusion

The Nordics may be behind the UK in terms of adoption and sophistication of MA, but marketers in the region are much more satisfied with the carefully considered systems and processes they have set up.

They are seeing revenue rises and expect more, with their ongoing concerns centring instead around integration, capability and capacity.

With the right measurement in place enabling iteration and improvement, Nordic marketers will see their confidence levels increase and the impact of their MA programme become undeniable.

The foundations are set and now Nordic organisations are focused on working towards realising the full promise of marketing automation.



Comment:
4 key takeaways



Matti Airas
Business development manager,
ID BBN

It's time for marketing to drive revenue

A marketing automation platform is a strategic tool. It aligns marketing and sales processes so they can drive revenue and profitability together. With MA the link between marketing and sales becomes measurable: MA generates a lot of well-structured information. This customer data may well be one of your company's most valuable assets.

Predictive marketing tells the best next action

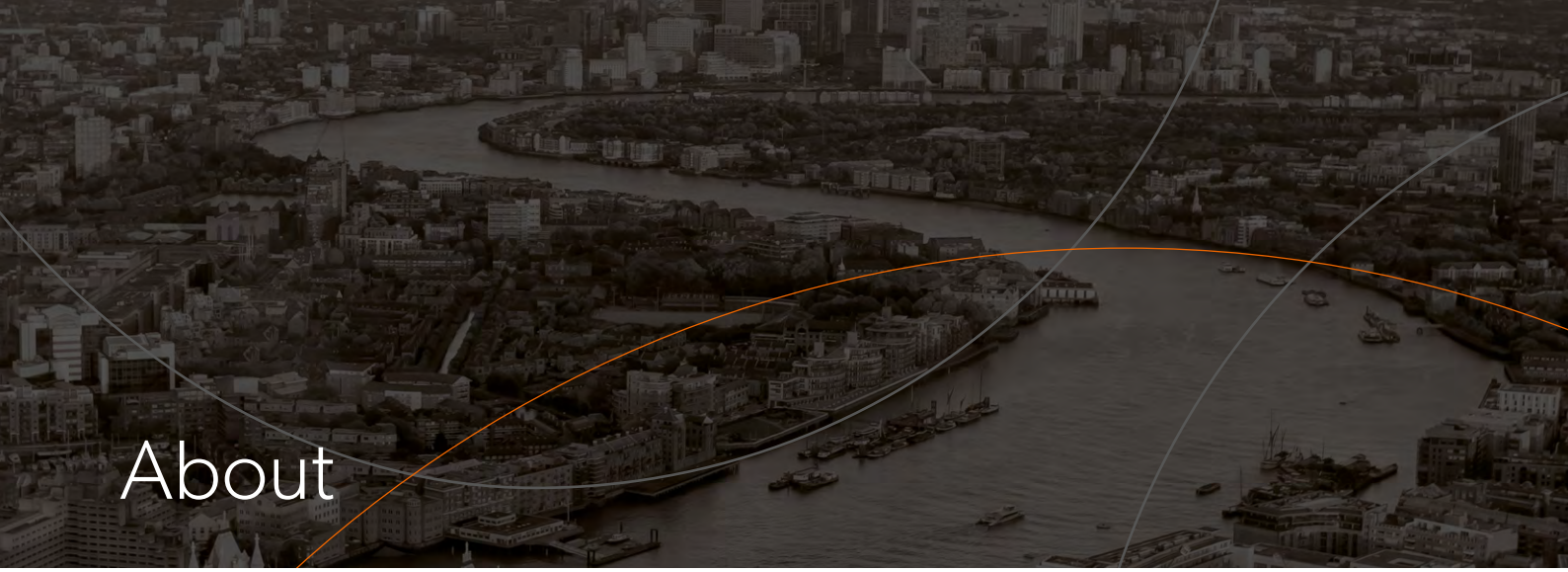
According to the survey, only 10% of respondents take advantage of customer data by using predictive marketing analytics. Predictive marketing scores your leads for sales focus and efficiency. Churn analysis enables you to take a predictive action to retain your customers. In more advanced MA markets, like the UK and US, predictive marketing is at the core of their analytics. Can Scandinavia afford to be left behind?

Marketing automation increases productivity

This survey demonstrates only half of MA features are systematically used. A marketing automation platform is the central point of customer engagement orchestration, internal collaboration, and data gathering. Systematic use of MA frees up time from operational tasks for higher-level strategic planning.

Data integration is still the biggest issue

It's a shame data integration is still a challenge, because most platforms have easy to implement connectors. But even with well-developed APIs, it's important to keep in mind platforms and applications must be connected based on process requirements. Data dumping doesn't work.



About

B2B Marketing

B2B Marketing is the comprehensive information resource for B2B marketers. Its mission is to provide practitioners with the information they need to perform better and achieve more, whatever sector of the B2B space they are operating in.

Launched in 2004 as *B2B Marketing* magazine, it has since evolved into a multi-faceted resource, delivering a broad range of content in a variety of different forms and formats.

Its key products are:

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- Awards
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- Training
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Marketing isn't just about smart messages, innovative ideas, and mind-blowing designs anymore. It's more and more about technology. You need an experienced partner to get the most out of your marketing technology.

ID BBN, an international award-winning digital marketing agency, is also Europe's leading marketing technology expert. For the past 15 years, we have been at the forefront of personalised digital marketing. Today we combine the best competencies of an IT organisation to a thorough understanding of B2B marketing processes. Our brilliant team combines strategic thinking, creativity, and technological know-how to create measurable business results.

You get the whole B2B marketing world with us. We are a part of BBN Group, more than 1000 B2B marketing specialists and revenues of more than €100m. Our locations are spread across five continents – accentuated in the Northern hemisphere.

ID BBN's mission is to help you bridge the gap between your company and the market leaders when it comes to running and integrating marketing technology, and leapfrog the competition with predictive marketing.

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