B2B MODERN MARKETING REPORT:

HOW THE BEST ACHIEVE SUCCESS

(AND WHAT YOU CAN LEARN FROM THE REST!)

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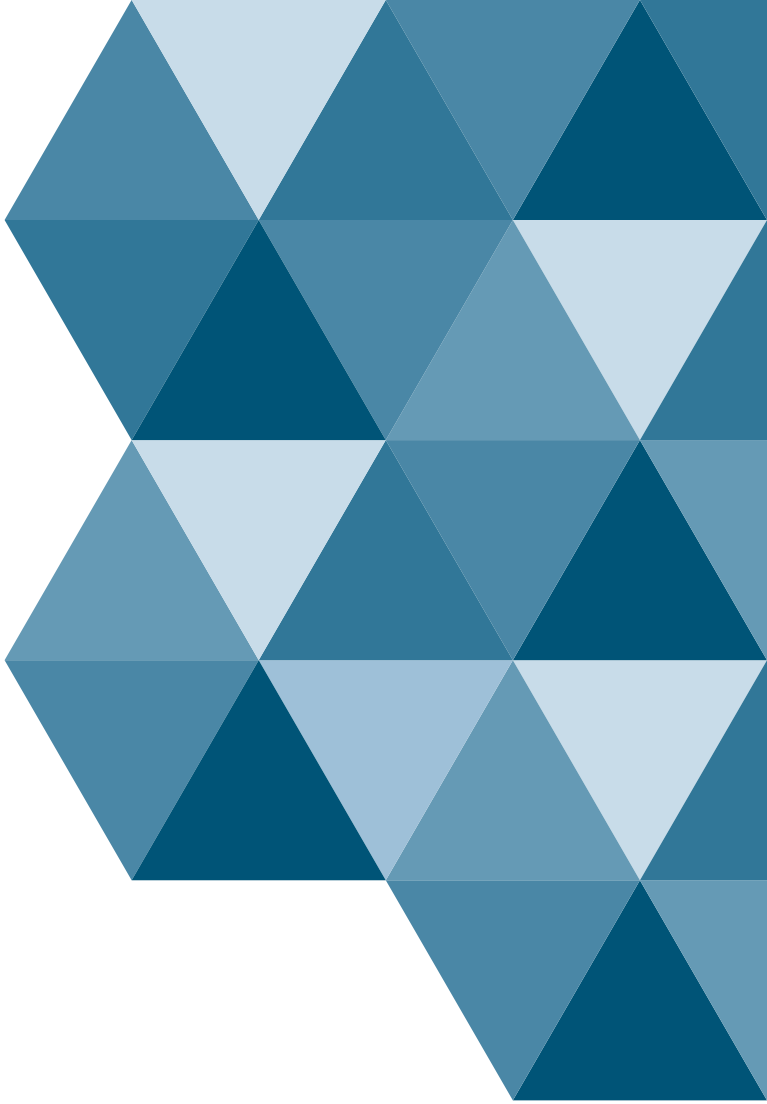
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SECTION 1 //

INTRODUCTION

B2B marketing is a competitive landscape. Not only because of savvy competition, but also because of increasingly complex technology platforms and capabilities to adapt to. It's easy to lose your way on the path to greater success.

So what gives the most successful modern marketers their edge? We set out to understand how today's top B2B marketers invest their time, where they find success, and — most importantly — what they do differently.



ABOUT THE REPORT

We surveyed B2B marketers across a range of industries and levels of responsibility, from CEO and CMO downward. We canvassed marketers across the globe, gaining an equal mix of participants from the U.S. and U.K.

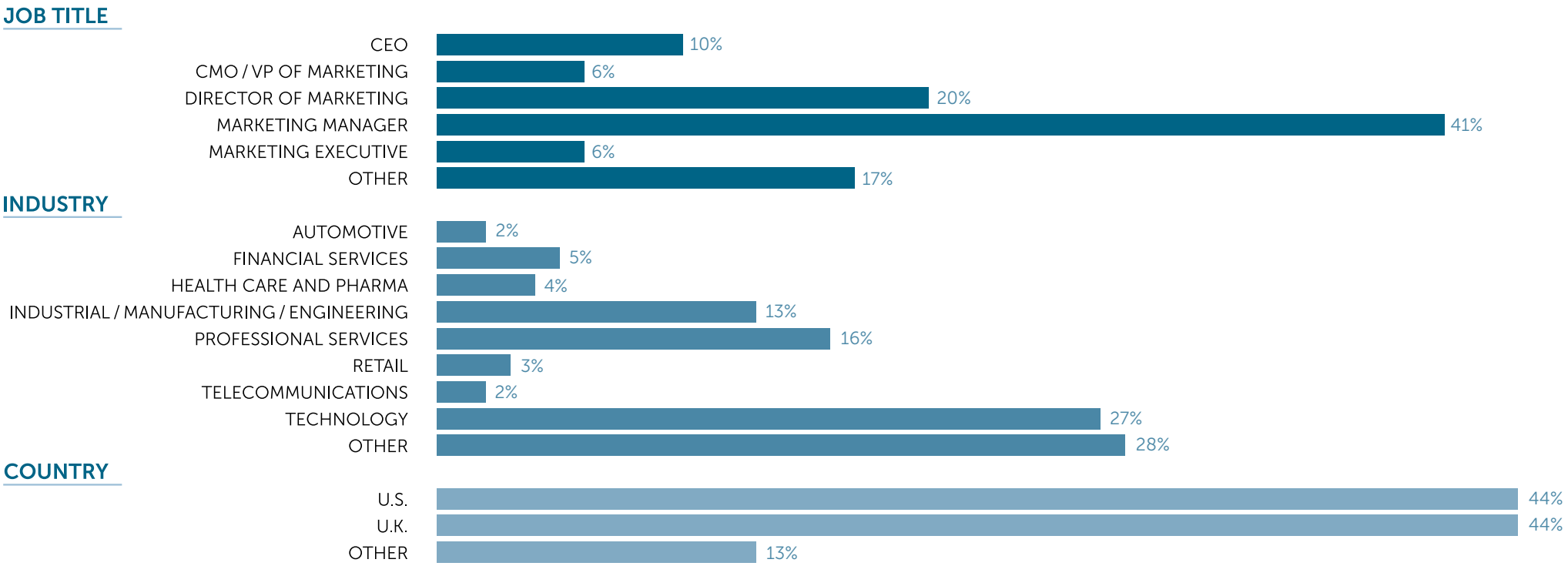
We quizzed these B2B experts on a range of topics affecting modern B2B marketing, including data management and integration, the use and efficacy of martech, C-suite buy-in, access to talent, and agency utilization.

WHAT IS MODERN MARKETING?

Modern marketing is about developing a function more closely aligned with the business and its objectives. It's about using today's technology to more efficiently and effectively connect with and understand today's customers. Modern marketing is a holistic, adaptive methodology that leverages data and analytics for better decision-making.

In order to determine what success with modern marketing looks like, B2B Marketing carried out the following research in partnership with The Mx Group, a digital and demand generation agency.

SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS DATA



SECTION 2 //

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Many of today's marketers are confident they've mastered the traditional aspects of what it takes to be good at their job. They stride through their content programs and fearlessly sell themselves to the C-suite.

But challenges still hold them back. Modern technology, for example, is both a problem and a solution. Most marketers are struggling to fully deploy their technology, let alone integrate their various systems. As a result, their data is patchy and siloed.

And while most marketers think they're pretty good at collaborating with Sales, many fail to use modern sales tools, instead using antiquated techniques such as brochures or list acquisition — and they aren't on the same page as Sales about objectives.

Some marketers, on the other hand, have mastered technology deployment and the use of modern sales tools. These advantages over their would-be rivals drive their greater overall performance across all the areas we measured.

Want to join the top-performing modern marketers? Our research suggests you focus on integration across three key areas: technology, data and the relationship between Sales and Marketing.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

We've identified three key themes that provide an overview of what success looks like for modern marketers — and what struggling marketers should focus on to make real progress.

1 Full deployment of CRM and MA systems leads to success.

Full use of your CRM and marketing automation (MA) systems will put you at the front of the pack. Two-thirds of those who have mastered these systems also ranked as the most successful overall, measuring themselves higher on all the key aspects of modern marketing.

2 Without integrated systems, data is fragmented.

Many of the marketers with fully deployed — and integrated — CRM and MA systems also have centralized, accurate data. Many other marketers struggle with this: Almost half of respondents still have fragmented data across multiple databases. This fragmentation, and the inaccuracy that often accompanies it, can hinder just about every tactic available to modern marketers.

3 You may not be as good at Sales and Marketing alignment as you think.

Most respondents considered themselves good at aligning Marketing with Sales, yet still only use basic sales tools and unsophisticated techniques to do so. The marketers achieving real success in this area use modern sales tools, such as automated scoring of inbound leads, and share objectives with the sales team.

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SEPARATING TOP-PERFORMING AND POORLY PERFORMING MODERN MARKETERS

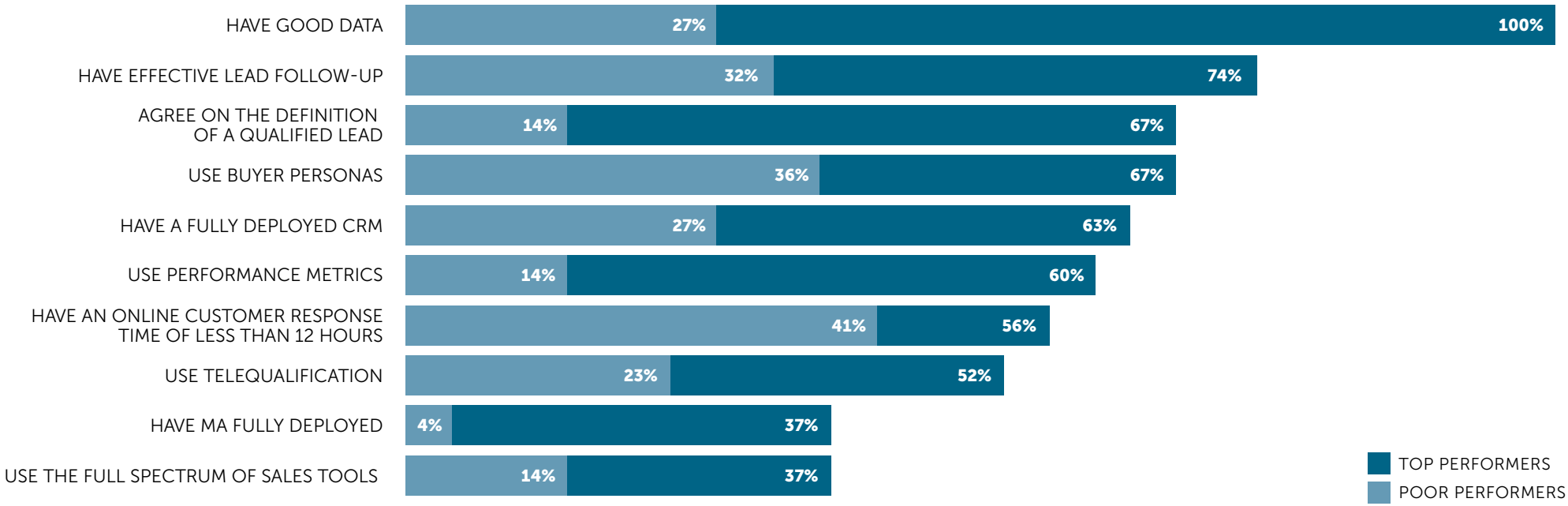
To find out what distinguishes the top-performing modern marketers from the rest, we ranked their performance on 10 important factors affecting modern marketing today. We then compared the top performers with the poor performers to assess what they're doing differently.

What defines a Top or Poorly Performing Marketer?

Top: 17% of survey participants who measure themselves as "successful" or "very successful" across all survey questions.

Poor: 14% of survey participants who measure themselves as "unsuccessful" across all survey questions.

TOP VS. POOR MODERN MARKETING PERFORMERS



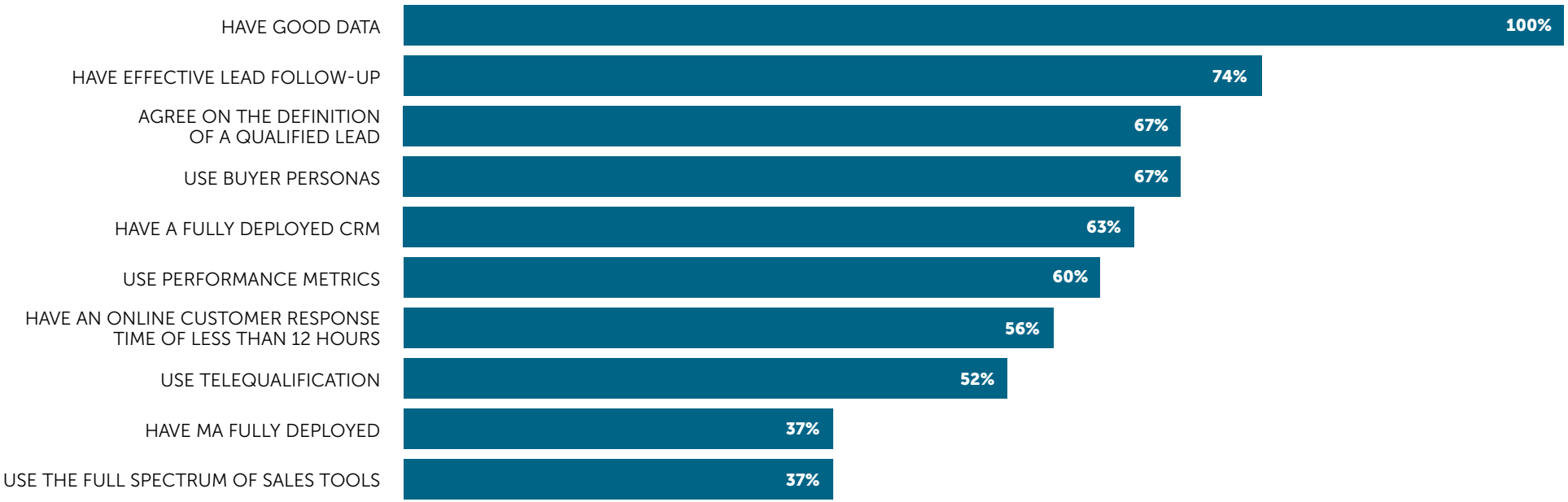
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WHAT'S IN THE TOOLBOX OF TOP-PERFORMING MODERN MARKETERS?

Let's drill deeper into what the best marketers are doing right.

The top performers obviously feel they're nailing it on data and CRM deployment. They also agree with the sales team on what constitutes a qualified lead. They work with Sales to approach those leads in an effective manner, and they use buyer personas.

HOW THE TOP PERFORMERS DELIVER



CENTRALIZED DATA AND FULLY DEPLOYED CRM SYSTEMS

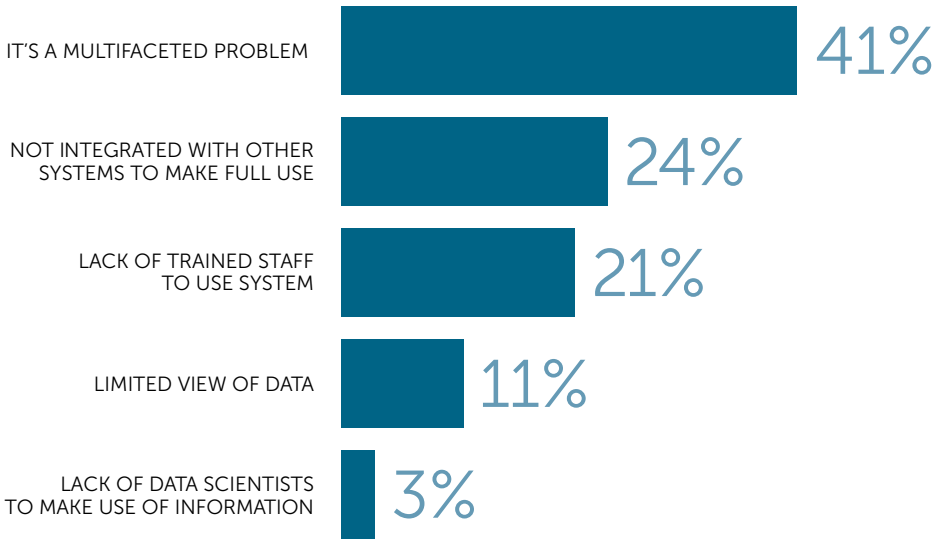
Across all the marketers we surveyed, 60% claim more than half of their data is complete and accurate, and they've cleaned it in the past year. However, almost half (44%) still struggle with fragmented data across multiple databases.

So what's stopping marketers from centralizing their data and fully deploying their CRM systems? No surprises: The majority say it's a complex, multifaceted problem. An insightful response from nearly a quarter of respondents was a lack of trained staff. This skills gap explains why many fail to take full advantage of modern platforms — even if you have the scope to purchase a new system, you still need someone who has the technical abilities to run and understand it.

60% CLAIM MORE THAN HALF THEIR DATA IS COMPLETE AND ACCURATE

44% STILL STRUGGLE WITH FRAGMENTED DATA ACROSS MULTIPLE DATABASES

WHAT IS THE MAIN REASON YOUR CRM TECH IS NOT FULLY DEPLOYED?

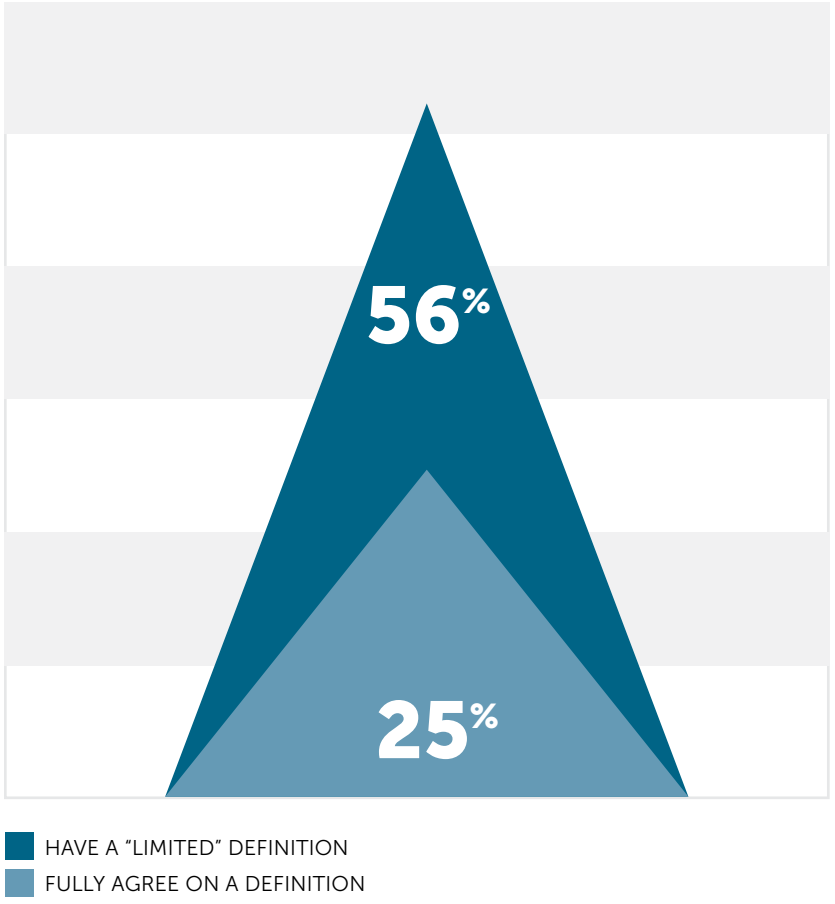


A SINGLE DEFINITION OF A LEAD

Marketing and Sales can only attain true alignment if they first agree on the definition of a qualified lead. Despite most claiming success at aligning with Sales, only 25% of all the marketers we surveyed fully agree on a definition; 56% have a "limited" definition, but no formal documentation of it in place.

While many marketers believe they're succeeding at Sales and Marketing alignment, a large number of them clearly overestimate their efforts. An agreed-upon definition of a qualified lead seems to more accurately indicate success in this area: Of those who agree on a definition, 85% have effective lead follow-up and management, compared with 76% of respondents who don't have full agreement.

AGREE ON THE DEFINITION OF A QUALIFIED LEAD



BUYER PERSONAS THAT SUPPORT STRONG CONTENT

"Defining the personas and lifecycles of our various audiences and tying them to content and KPIs for optimization has been key to our success in developing content."

— Director of Marketing, Education, U.S.

While marketers largely reported successful content development, many still have gaps and few, in reality, have a strong content library. Those who use buyer personas reported stronger content assets and a more effective library than those who don't, showing that buyer personas support a successful content marketing strategy.

Only 55% of respondents use buyer personas. But 60% of those marketers have seen personas make a significant impact on the success of their marketing.



SIX STEPS TOWARD BECOMING A TOP-PERFORMING MODERN MARKETER

1	Give your team the time and training to use your CRM systems to full effect; fully deploying your systems will take time and effort, but it will improve your performance.
2	Get senior-level buy-in to hire and train additional staff as needed.
3	Ensure you have up-to-date, clean and unified data, available in a centralized system.
4	Work with Sales to agree on a thorough understanding of what constitutes a qualified lead, and set your marketing team's KPIs to ensure you land them.
5	Once you've agreed on a definition of a qualified lead, work with Sales to determine the best way to communicate with, segment and rank your leads and prospects.
6	Create and use buyer personas to hone your marketing efforts, paying particular attention to providing targeted content.

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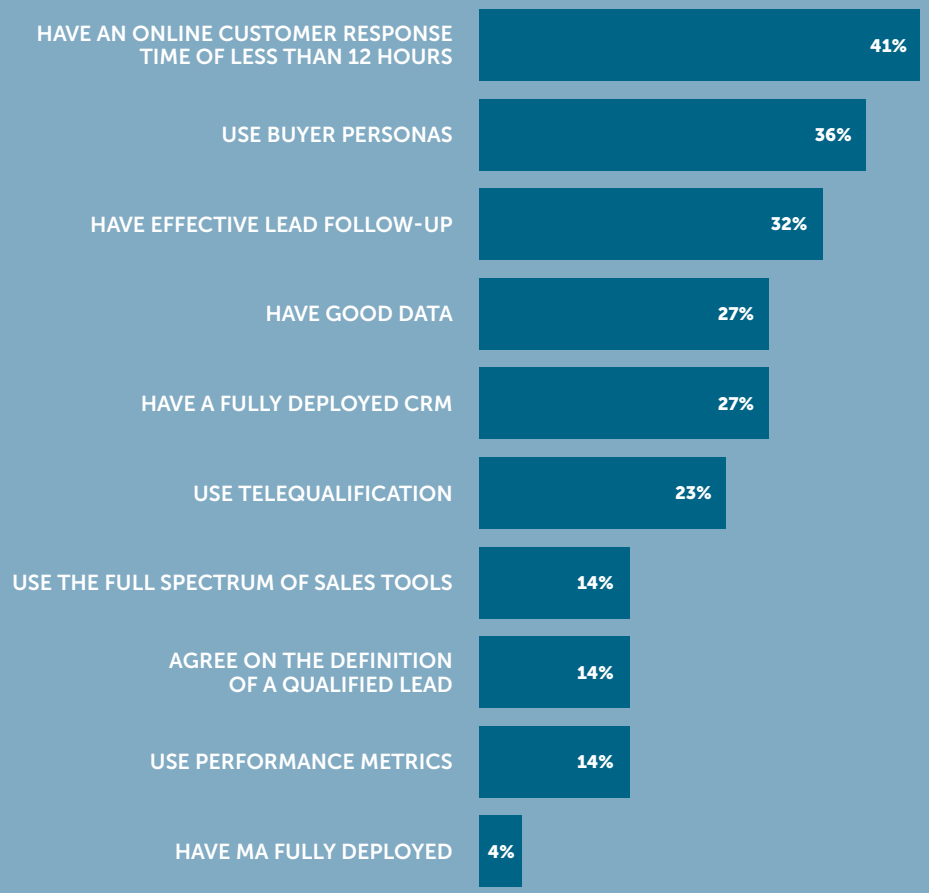
WHERE POORLY PERFORMING MARKETERS STRUGGLE MOST

Whereas top-performing modern marketers use their tech systems, centralized data and true alignment with Sales to drive overall success, their poorly performing counterparts are experiencing the opposite effect. Because they aren't fully leveraging their tech systems or their data — and they haven't agreed upon and documented the definition of a qualified lead — they lack the foundation modern marketers need to succeed.

Other key things also set them apart. Poorly performing marketers often use very limited or old-fashioned sales tools, such as brochures and list acquisition, and they underutilize more sophisticated tools.

In addition, they don't track or measure their efforts very well. Perhaps these marketers understandably fear what they'll learn if they measure their own poor performance. But if they want to succeed, these marketers need to improve their measurement game so they can iterate on their efforts and see which specific changes deliver results and which don't.

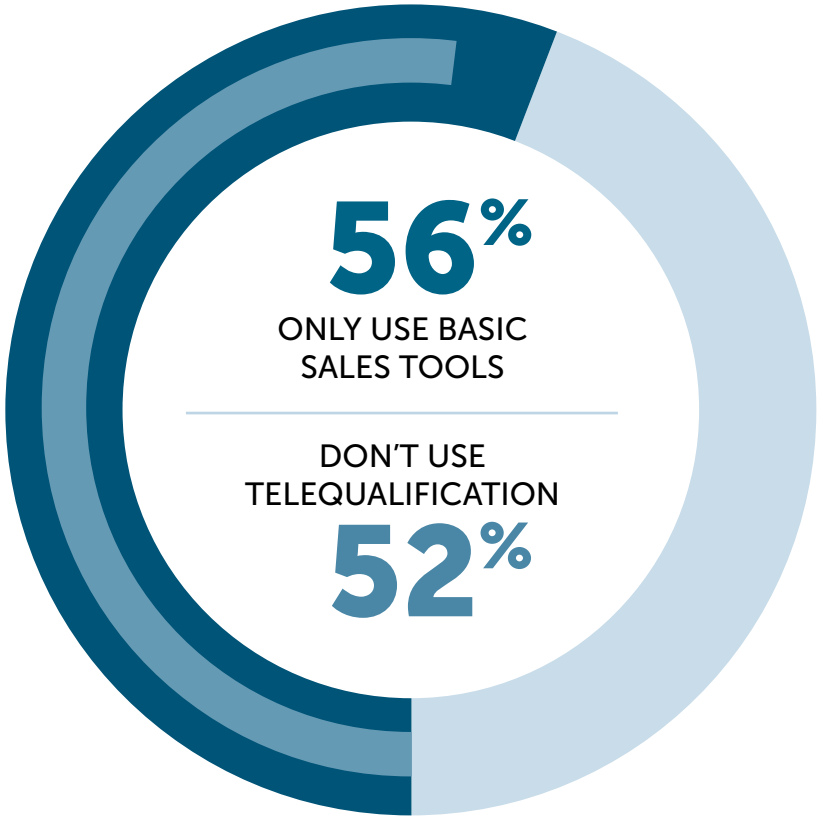
HOW THE POOR PERFORMERS ARE DELIVERING



POOR USE OF SALES TOOLS

Although 84% of all those surveyed see a positive impact from sales enablement tools on the success of their marketing, around half (56%) only use basic sales tools. That gives them a distinct disadvantage compared to their counterparts who use the full spectrum of modern sales tools.

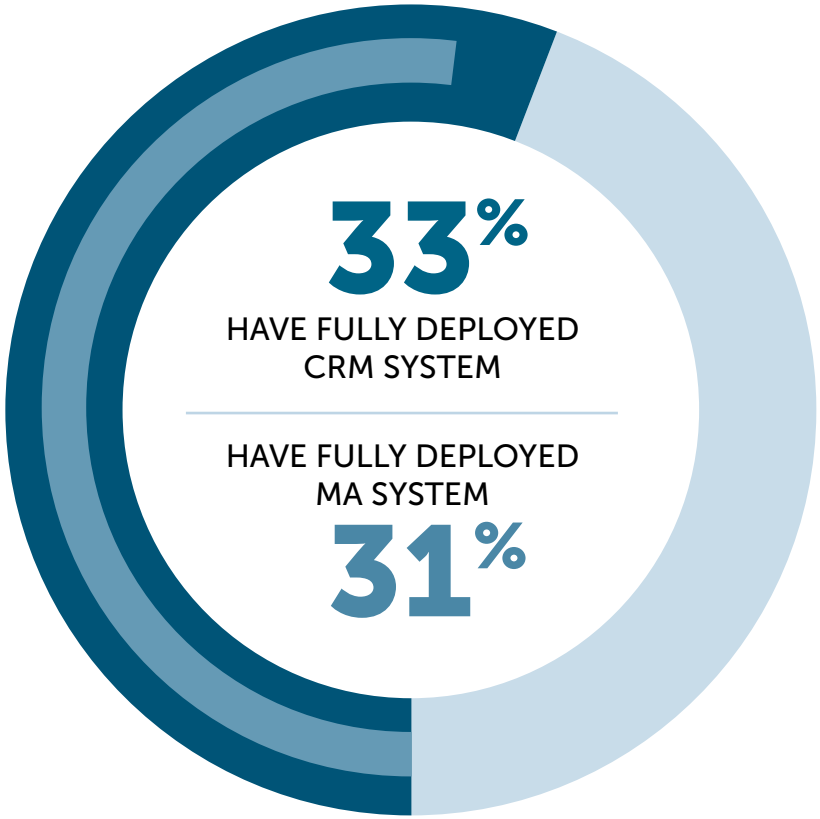
Over a third of marketers say they do not score inbound inquiries, and 52% don't use telequalification. Of those who do use these modern techniques, only 16% say they haven't nailed Sales and Marketing alignment.



POORLY DEPLOYED CRM AND MA SYSTEMS

Many respondents struggle to fully implement their tech. Only 33% of respondents have fully deployed their CRM system, and 31% their MA system. If we look only at poorly performing marketers, things look worse in both areas—particularly for their MA system, which only 4% have fully deployed. This failure helps explain why so many marketers face fragmented data, content gaps and process inefficiencies.

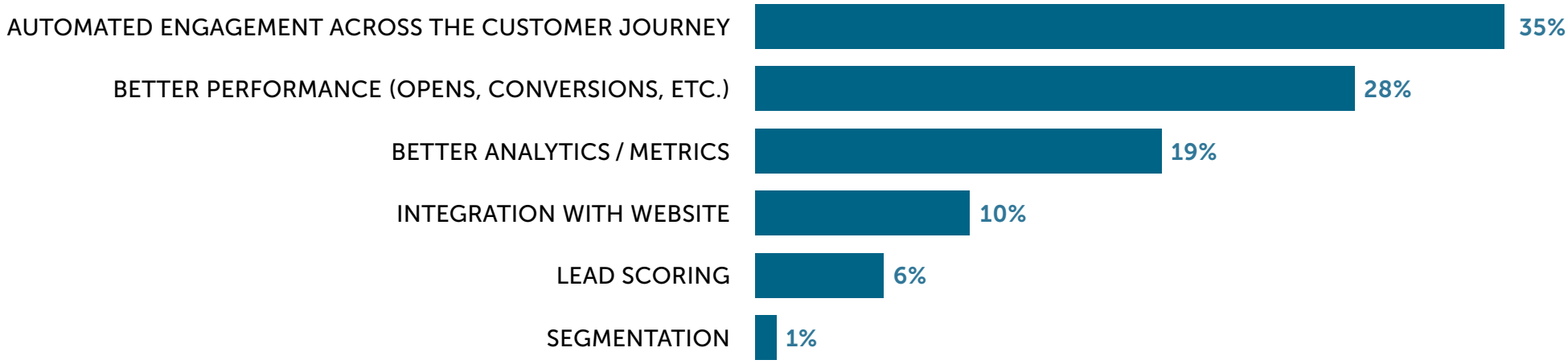
Among top-performing marketers, on the other hand, 37% have fully deployed their MA system. The gulf between those numbers may help explain what keeps poorly performing marketers from finding success—and serves as a reminder for modern marketers to ensure they're getting what they need from their tech.



WHAT MARKETERS HOPE TO ACHIEVE WITH THEIR TECHNOLOGY

We asked marketers struggling to see benefits from their CRM and MA systems what they most hope to achieve from the technology. Top responses included automated engagement across the customer journey, better analytics and metrics, and better performance.

But marketers' failures to achieve these goals don't necessarily suggest an issue with the technology itself. Various complex issues can prevent marketers from fully leveraging their tech, such as poor data, inadequate engagement and a lack of skills.



STRUGGLING WITH MODERN MARKETING CHALLENGES? HERE'S WHAT TO DO ...

1. Invest time and training for your team to fully understand and deploy your martech systems. Don't be fooled into thinking that buying additional tech will be an effective fix!
2. Audit the sales tools you use regularly and work with Sales to measure their effectiveness. Now look at the alternatives, including what the competition is using. Are your methods old or limiting?
3. Agree with Sales on key objectives, including what you mean when you say "qualified lead" — it doesn't matter how hard you work; if you aren't clear on this you won't deliver results!
4. Most crucially, you must measure your efforts regularly and honestly against clear targets. Poor performance metrics inevitably lead to poor results.

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THE BEST VERSUS THE WORST

One difference between top-performing and poorly performing marketers stands above the rest: the quality of their data. All of the top performers (100%) had good data, versus a comparatively small percentage of poor performers (27%).

Of course, without great data, marketers can't make informed decisions or satisfy their customers or internal stakeholders. The quality of one's data impacts all aspects of a modern marketer's efforts.

We also found that a fully deployed CRM system gave the top-performing marketers the edge. This comes as no surprise, as quality data and the successful use of technology go hand in hand.

Lastly, top-performing marketers found a way to measure their performance effectively, which gives them the insight they need to change and improve their operations.

TOP VS. POOR PERFORMERS

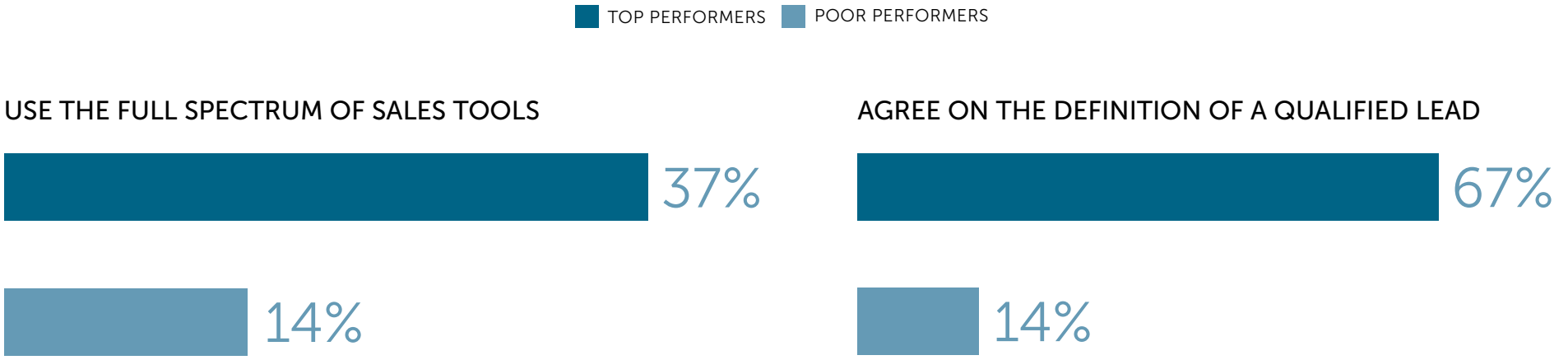
	TOP PERFORMERS	POOR PERFORMERS
HAVE GOOD DATA	100%	27%
HAVE EFFECTIVE LEAD FOLLOW-UP	74%	32%
AGREE ON THE DEFINITION OF A QUALIFIED LEAD	67%	14%
USE BUYER PERSONAS	67%	36%
HAVE A FULLY DEPLOYED CRM	63%	27%
USE PERFORMANCE METRICS	60%	14%
HAVE AN ONLINE CUSTOMER RESPONSE TIME OF LESS THAN 12 HRS	56%	41%
USE TELEQUALIFICATION	52%	23%
HAVE MA FULLY DEPLOYED	37%	4%
USE THE FULL SPECTRUM OF SALES TOOLS	37%	14%

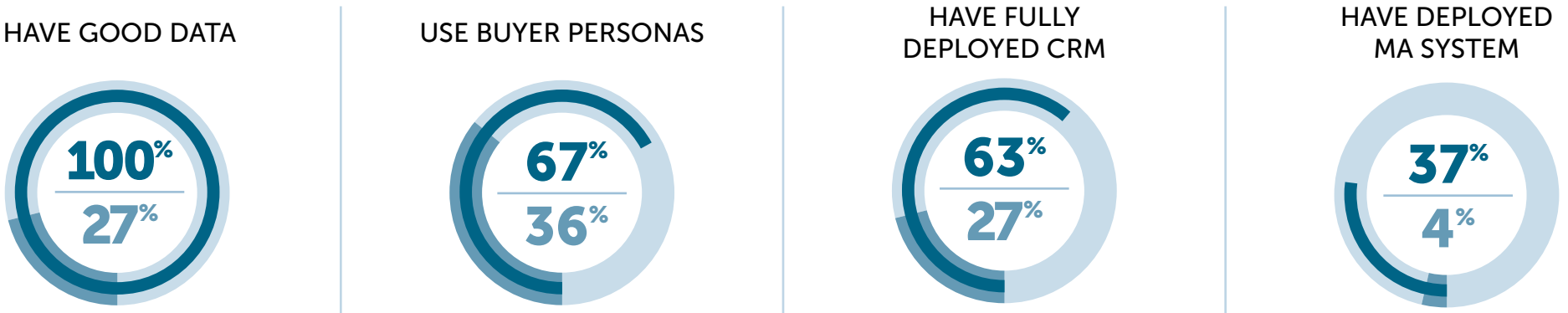
WHAT DEFINES A TOP-PERFORMING MODERN MARKETER?

Those who measured themselves as "successful" or "very successful" across all aspects of modern marketing in our survey. This comprises 17% of our survey participants.

WHAT DEFINES A POORLY PERFORMING MODERN MARKETER?

Those who ranked themselves as "unsuccessful" across all aspects surveyed. These marketers are significantly lagging behind their peers. This makes up 14% of our survey participants.





SECTION 7 //

WHERE AGENCIES ADD VALUE

As part of our examination of the efficacy of B2B marketers, we asked how many work with an agency and to what effect.

We found that most marketers use an agency in some respect, and that coupling with an agency improves performance in two unexpected key areas—Sales and Marketing alignment and the efficiency of their processes.

Of course, agencies offer more resources, so the positive effect likely results from reducing strain on internal teams. Less strain leads to stronger accord across departmental divisions and allows more time to perfect one's output and operations.

Gaining access to the right talent and people was also easier for those who use a marketing agency, with respondents who use an agency stating they have tackled this challenge more successfully than those who don't have external help.

We asked both U.S. and U.K. marketers how many used an agency, and we found a marked difference between the two. Results show that 18% more U.S. marketers use external help compared to their U.K. counterparts, giving American marketers a boost over the Brits in Sales and Marketing alignment efforts and process efficiency.

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS USING AN AGENCY



PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WITH EFFICIENT PROCESSES



PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS SUCCESSFUL AT SALES AND MARKETING ALIGNMENT



SECTION 8 //

HOW TO BE A BETTER MARKETER

So now we know what sets the most successful—and the least successful—modern B2B marketers apart from the rest. But how should this impact the way you do marketing today?

We looked at the top-contributing factors for success and provide three simple steps toward each.

"Accessing better quality of data was a large challenge for us. After hiring a temp telemarketing assistant to make outbound calls to obtain 1,500 records, we are in the process of purchasing access to an ongoing database that continues to update and syncs with our CRM system. This will enable us to create smarter personalized campaigns and improve our lead generation."

— Senior Marketing Executive, Technology, U.K.

YOU'RE ONLY AS GOOD AS YOUR DATA

Nowadays, you're only as good as your data, and you certainly won't deliver the personalized, targeted efforts your customers expect without it. Of course, GDPR and other data privacy rules are driving marketers to put a greater emphasis on keeping data clean and using it responsibly. If you haven't done so already, consider a full data cleanse and audit.

3 STEPS TO SUCCESS:

- Audit and clean your data so that it is correct and fully GDPR-compliant.
- Unite data across the whole business, starting with Sales.
- Collate and measure your data through centralized systems so all relevant stakeholders can access and update it (often this does not mean more tech, but using what you have more efficiently).

TECH: THE PROBLEM AND THE SOLUTION

"Adopting a marketing automation program helped centralize our database while allowing us to meaningfully segregate the data without it being a manual process every time we planned a campaign. It made cleaning it much easier too."

— B2B Marketing Executive, Singapore

Practically no sales team — and therefore marketer — can do without a CRM system. According to our survey, a tiny 7% have no plans to use one. This widespread use of CRM systems makes it all the more detrimental that so many marketers fail to fully deploy them.

Our survey shows that, ultimately, the problem comes down to a lack of skilled staff and resources to take full advantage of their system. Too often, marketers invest in technology believing that it alone will solve all their problems. In reality, that investment kicks off a long and complicated journey toward top performance. But those who invest in their training, not just their tech, get much farther than their counterparts in that journey — and are seeing real results.

3 STEPS TO SUCCESS:

- Instead of buying the latest tech solution or add-on, focus on what you've already bought. You can't purchase your way to perfection.
- Invest time and resources to train your staff on using your CRM and MA systems to full effect. This may mean adjusting expectations or budgets in other areas for some time.
- Shout about the value of understanding and using the tech at your team's disposal; share stories about the benefits it can deliver internally and to the customer.

SUCCESS DEPENDS ON ALIGNMENT WITH SALES

"Alignment with other departments has been key to moving our repositioning efforts forward. Being able to explain the 'why' behind our priorities and how it will positively affect individual departments has helped us gain the buy-in necessary to move forward with excitement and positivity, even though change is never easy."

— Director of Marketing, Manufacturing, U.S.

Modern marketers think of the sales team as an extension of their own. But for many of those marketers, the reality trends closer to a war than a partnership. They and the sales team have different goals and KPIs, plus different ideas and philosophies about how to approach them. Such a relationship is untenable, yet across sales and marketing teams, it's the norm.

Cross-team alignment and collaboration may feel like the holy grail, but you don't have to reach perfection to see results. The efforts you put into building a united vision and culture will play off in the details of how each team operates.

3 STEPS TO SUCCESS:

- Understand Sales. Know their objectives, targets, timelines and challenges. From there, all else follows.
- Use Marketing's storytelling techniques to engage Sales in the efforts of your team and others in your organization. Let them see what you are doing and why. Sell them on the united goals and efforts.
- Finally, gain alignment on targets and KPIs — including qualified leads and how to approach them, market segmentation, and buyer personas.

SECTION 9 //

CONCLUSION

The three success factors this report uncovers — integrated data, teams and technology — manifest not as isolated issues but as intertwining links in one chain. The success you achieve in one will positively impact another.

But it doesn't stop there. Improvements in any one of these three areas will boost your marketing operations and delivery at a company-wide level. That's why those who successfully integrate their data, teams and tech perform well across the board.

But where do you start? It all comes down to readjusting your priorities, reallocating your efforts to focus on the big issues rather than their minute effects.

A staggering 81% of our surveys respondents point to a lack of time and resources as the biggest obstacle preventing them from improving their marketing data. Similarly, the majority of respondents who still struggle to realize the benefits of their CRM and MA systems cite a lack of time and trained staff as the main impediment.

Marketing leaders must carve out time to focus on their team's energy on these key issues — otherwise, they will continuously throw resources toward addressing the effects and not the cause. Of course, attempts to overhaul your marketing approach may collide with business as usual. But change can only happen if you're willing to break the mold.



ABOUT THE MX GROUP

The Mx Group is a digital and demand generation agency that empowers companies with the competitive edge of modern B2B marketing. To do this, we integrate a broad range of services: Strategy. Design and content. Web and app development. Demand gen and lead management. We make it all work together to help companies attract, engage and convert more customers.

For 30 years, clients have trusted us to turn their marketing investments into measurable revenue. The Mx Group is ranked among the top 10 B2B agencies in the country by B2B Marketing and has been recognized as a top B2B agency by AdAge every year since 2008.

The company is privately owned and located 20 minutes west of Chicago in Burr Ridge, Illinois.

For more information, visit TheMxGroup.com or call 800-827-0170.

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:

- Online community
- Magazine
- Awards
- Research and reports
- Training
- Events
- Membership

For more information on any of these products or services go to b2bmarketing.net or call +44 (0)20 7014 4920