

NEW RESEARCH

The State of MarTech

Too Many Tools and Integrations. Too few results.

3 Growth Strategies to Centralize Customer
Data and Drive Measurable Results



Research Conducted in Partnership with Ascend2

Table of Contents

Executive Summary & Key Highlights	3
1.0 Introduction	4
2.0 The Problem	6
3.0 The Consequences	11
4.0 The Solution	12
5.0 Participants & Methodology	17
6.0 About the Research Partners	18

Executive Summary

Is your marketing technology working for you or against you?
Does it help you drive more leads and convert them to sales?
Does it allow you to optimize your entire funnel?

When it comes to technology, more is not always better. Technology overload is a major problem, as 44% of marketing teams are using 4 or more tools to execute their strategy. But for all the tools used, marketers still encounter great challenges with attribution, lead quality, lead volume, and more.

The State of MarTech research study reveals that marketing and sales teams no longer need to spend time cobbling together multiple tools and data. Instead of more tools, the research points to the benefits of consolidating tools. 83% of marketers agree that consolidating tools in their marketing and sales tech stacks would increase productivity and efficiency.

In the report that follows, we provide data on the problem, the consequences, and three strategies to having too many marketing and sales tools and integrations, but too few results.

Here are 4 key highlights from the research with additional segmented and more detailed data as you dive deeper into the report. Enjoy!

Rick Carlson
CEO at SharpSpring



Key Highlights

- 92% of the most successful marketers agree that **consolidating tools in their marketing and sales tech stacks would increase productivity and efficiency.**
- Marketing teams have trouble **utilizing firmographic, demographic, and behavioral data collectively to personalize the customer experience.** While 52% of marketers have acquired the skills needed to use demographic data to improve the customer experience, the use of firmographic and behavioral data is lacking.
- 59% of marketers feel that they **do not have the data they need to feel confident about which marketing campaigns are working.**
- Over three-quarters of marketers feel that they are **missing opportunities for revenue growth** as a result of challenges like lead quality and marketing attribution.

1.0 Introduction

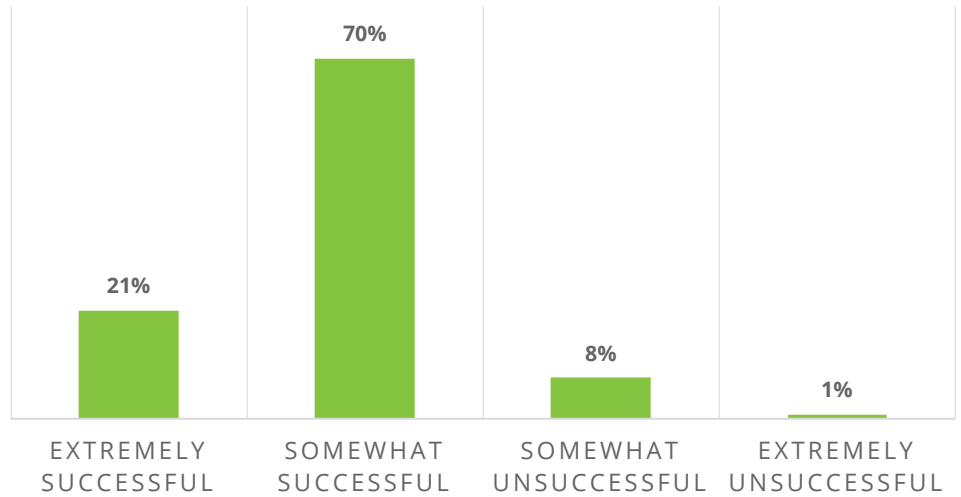
The State of MarTech

Today, marketers have access to endless streams of data and countless tools specifically created to enable business development. But this evolving landscape isn't always an easy one to navigate. Mountains of data can turn into their own islands, creating disjointed pictures of the customer, misaligned goals and a rocky path to revenue growth.

How can marketers take back control of their tools and data to pave the way to better results?

To help answer this question, SharpSpring partnered with Ascend2 to field The State of MarTech survey in July of 2021. The report that follows represents the opinions of 187 marketing professionals who responded to this survey.

Which best describes the **SUCCESS** of your overall marketing strategy at achieving your top priorities?



LEARN FROM THE BEST

About one-in-five marketers feel that their marketing strategies are "extremely successful" at achieving the priorities set for them. This group offers us particularly helpful insight when it comes to what is working strategically for marketers and you will see them referenced in certain sections throughout this report.

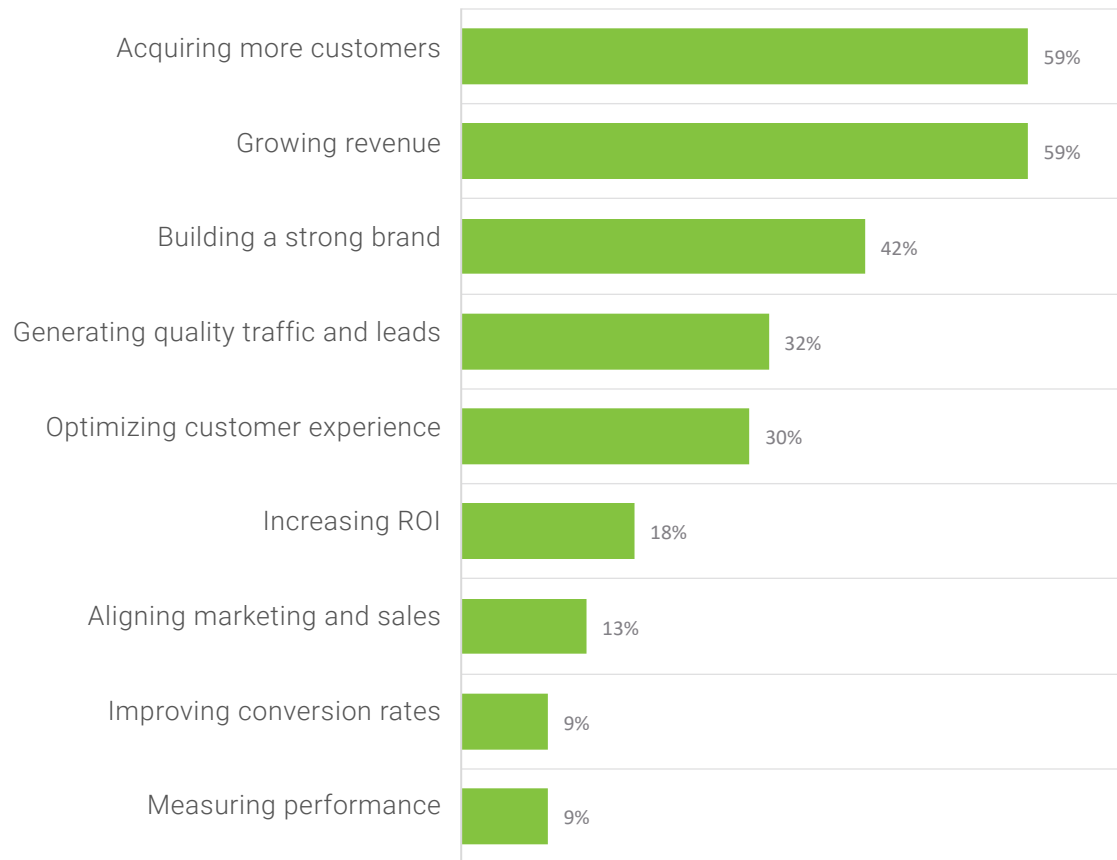
1.1 Introduction

What are marketers trying to achieve?

In order to evaluate what success actually looks like, we must first understand what marketers are trying to achieve with their marketing campaigns. Overall, marketers consider big-picture goals such as acquiring more customers and growing revenue the top priorities of their marketing efforts.

What are the TOP PRIORITIES for your marketing campaigns?

(All respondents)



THE EXECUTIVE PERSPECTIVE

While the executive team shares similar top priorities with those in non-executive roles, disparities exist between the C-Suite and marketers in non-executive roles when it comes to the weight placed on other goals.

The executive team is

40%

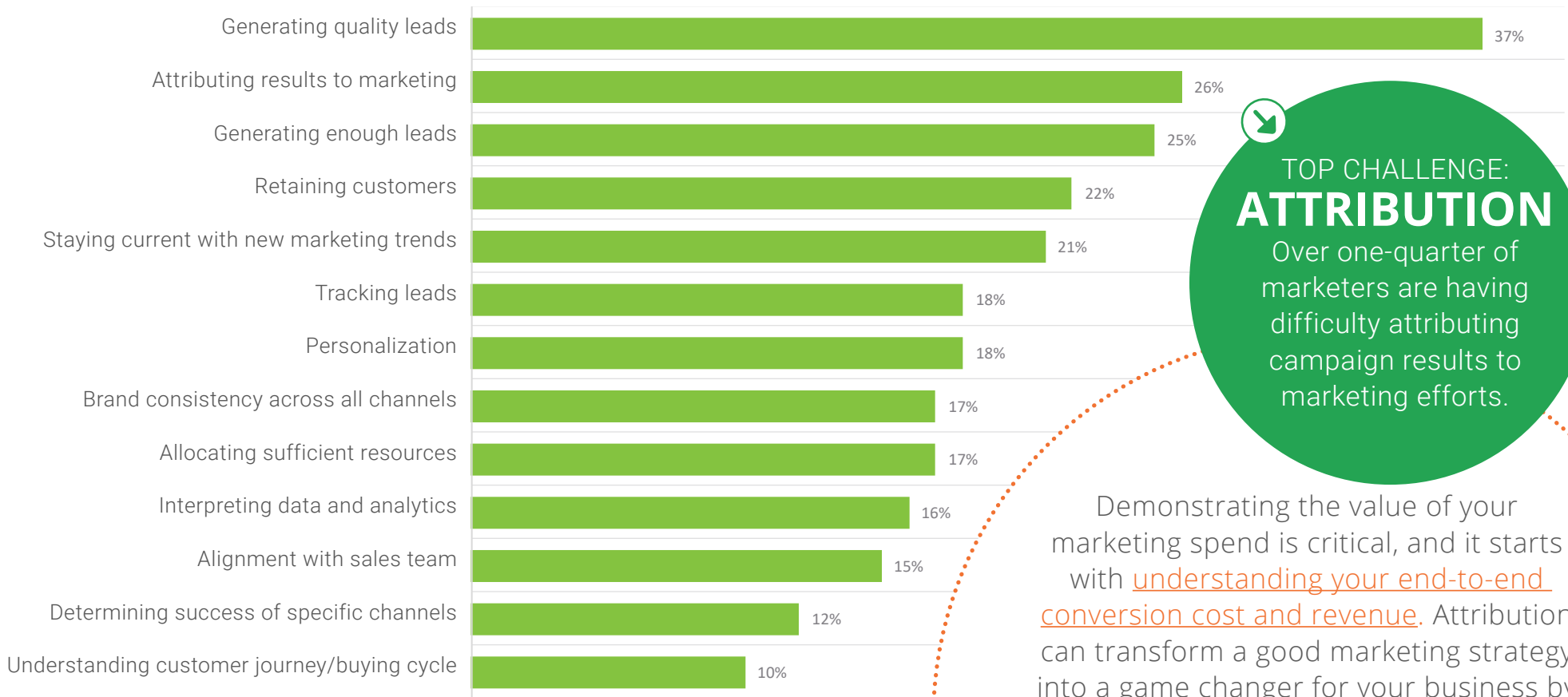
less likely than other marketers to consider goals such as **generating quality leads** and **aligning sales and marketing** to be top priorities.

2.0 The Problem

Generating truly relevant leads is the most commonly reported challenge faced by marketers when it comes to the success of their digital strategy.

Over one-third (37%) of marketers find that one of the top barriers to the success of their overall digital strategy is the quality of leads coming in. One-quarter of those surveyed report that not just quality, but quantity, is also an issue when it comes to lead generation.

What are the GREATEST CHALLENGES of your overall digital marketing strategy?



TOP CHALLENGE:
ATTRIBUTION
Over one-quarter of marketers are having difficulty attributing campaign results to marketing efforts.

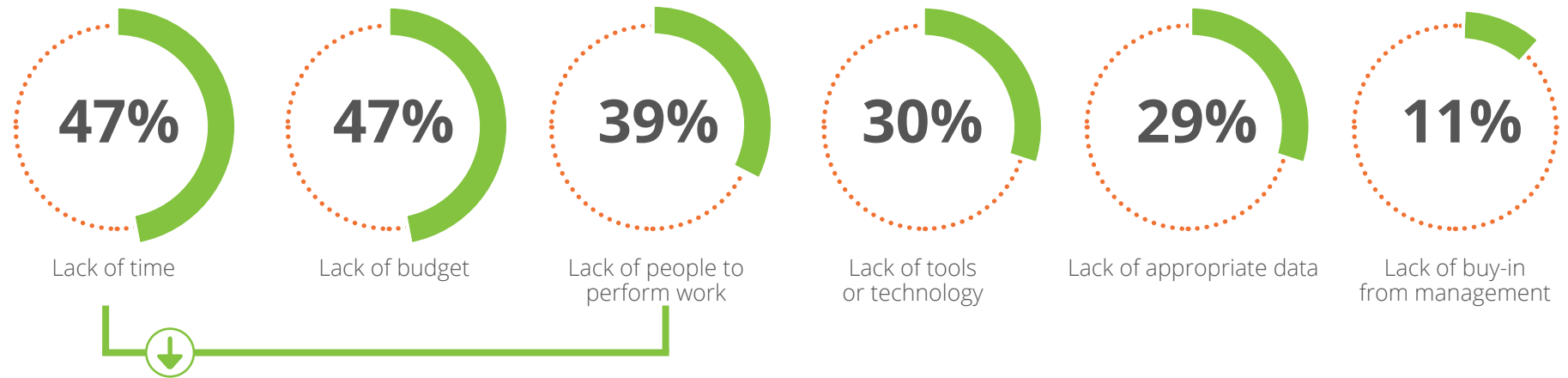
Demonstrating the value of your marketing spend is critical, and it starts with understanding your end-to-end conversion cost and revenue. Attribution can transform a good marketing strategy into a game changer for your business by letting you know which campaigns drive conversions, so you can invest in the efforts that work best.

2.1 The Problem

What is getting in the way of success?

Marketers are facing issues with limited resources available to execute their initiatives. Nearly half (47%) of marketers are plagued by a **lack of time and budget** and 39% say they **need more people** to perform the work.

What has prevented you from achieving success in the past?



LIMITED RESOURCES?

DON'T LET THE BIG THREE SLOW YOU DOWN.

If your path to revenue growth is blocked by lack of time, budget, or people (or any combination of the three) – you are not alone. But fear not, marketing automation will help combat all three issues and clear the way for revenue growth.

Automation helps you get more done with less. Use automation to:

- Create specific touchpoints based on each lead's profile and behavior.
- Perform tasks like lead capture, targeted email sends, lead scoring, and more.
- Track leads "after the click" to send the right message at the right time.
- Send your sales team into action with real-time notifications when leads engage.
- Create dynamic lists that automatically update as contacts meet the list's criteria.
- Target campaigns for each persona.

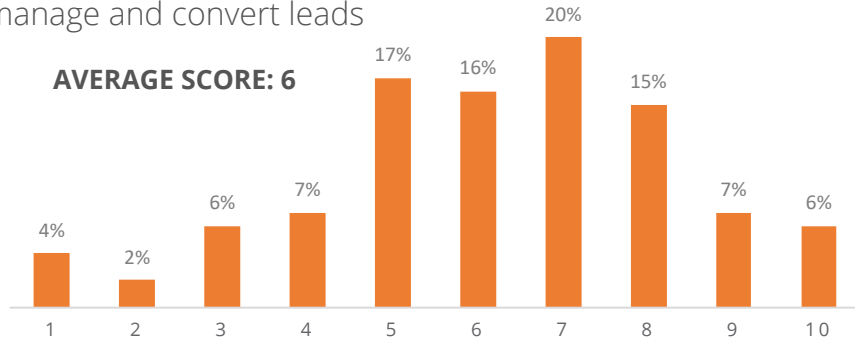
2.2 The Problem

Inadequate technology

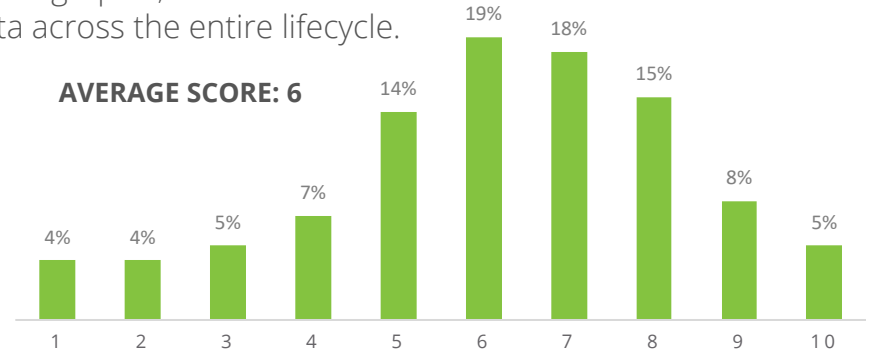
Marketers aren't thrilled with the way their tools and technology are working to support their strategy. Marketing tools received **an average ranking of a 6 out of 10** (that's almost a failing grade!). Here is a closer look:

Rate how well your current marketing tools enable you to do the following (10 = highest rating)

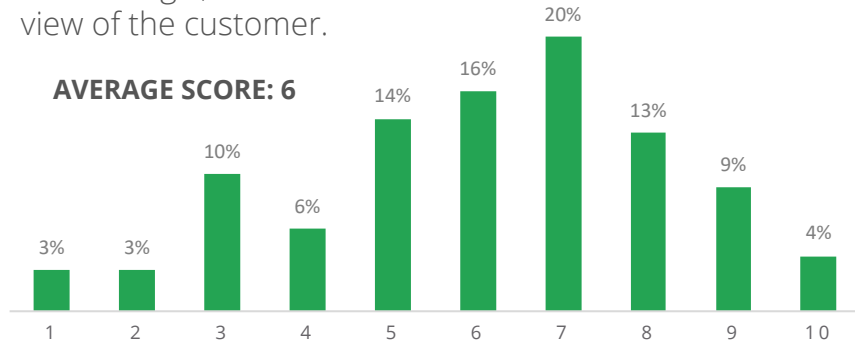
Use data between the sales and marketing teams to manage and convert leads



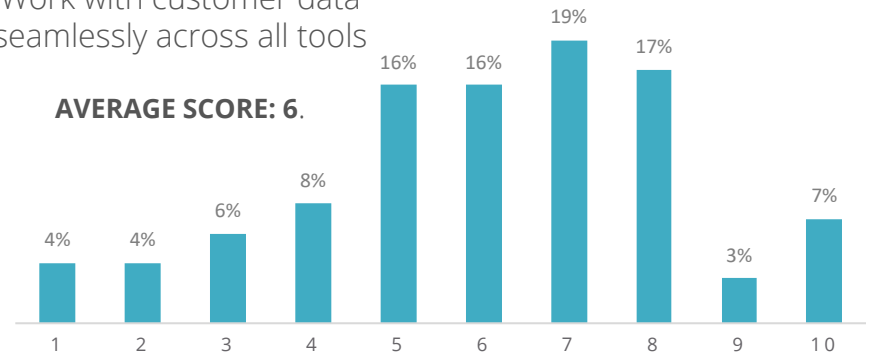
Track customer demographic, firmographic, and behavioral data across the entire lifecycle.



Achieve a single, centralized view of the customer.



Work with customer data seamlessly across all tools



2.3 The Problem

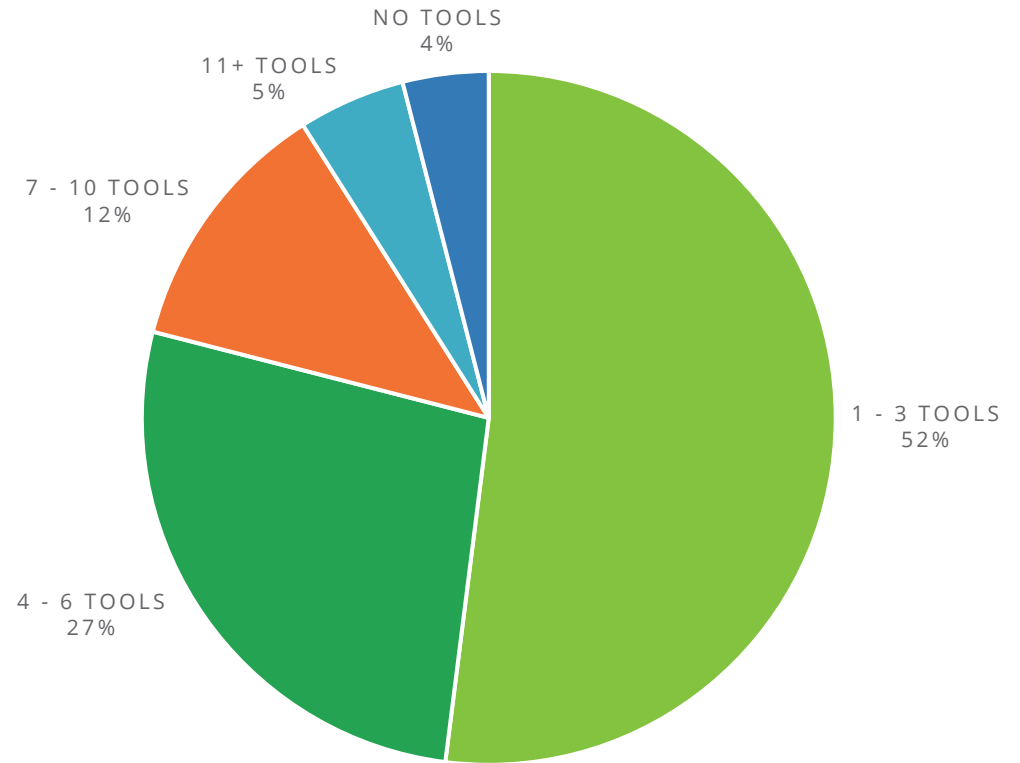
Overflowing technology stacks

Technology stacks can easily become crowded, full of disparate tools that don't speak the same language. This can cause major issues including wasted budget and time as well as missing or siloed data, all of which result in creating lackluster experiences for the customer.

44% of marketing teams are using 4 or more tools to execute their strategy.

Four different marketing tools may not seem like a big number at first glance, but when you add in tools used by sales and other adjacent teams all collecting their own data, this number quickly becomes overwhelming. The more technology being used, the more difficult it becomes to obtain a clear and accurate view of the customer.

How many different marketing tools does your team use to run and/or measure campaigns?



2.4 The Problem

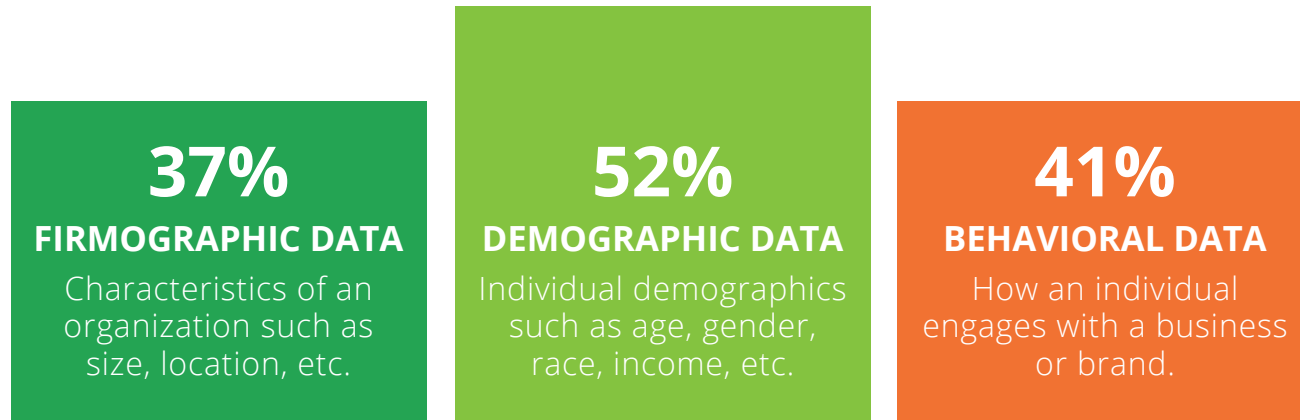
Insufficient data and utilization

Marketing teams have trouble utilizing various types of data collectively to deliver that 1:1 experience that customers crave.

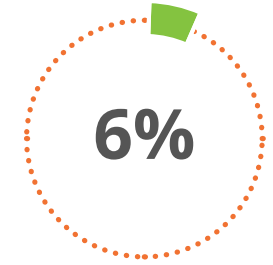
59% of marketers feel that they DO NOT have the data they need to feel confident about which marketing campaigns are working and which are not.

By leveraging behavioral, demographic, and firmographic data, you can give customers content that's suited to their interests and activities – without lifting a finger. And since every customer interaction provides additional insight, your brand experience becomes increasingly relevant across channels. Visitors feel understood, which ultimately incentivizes them to return.

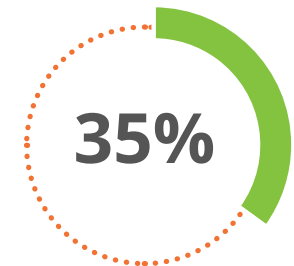
Percent of marketers who have the skills necessary to personalize the customer experience based on the following types of data:



How is customer data managed?



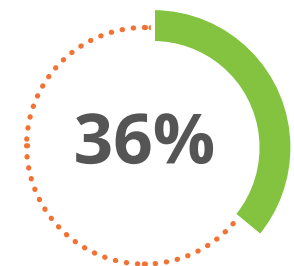
Customer Data Platform (CDP)



Customer Relationship Management (CRM)



Spreadsheets



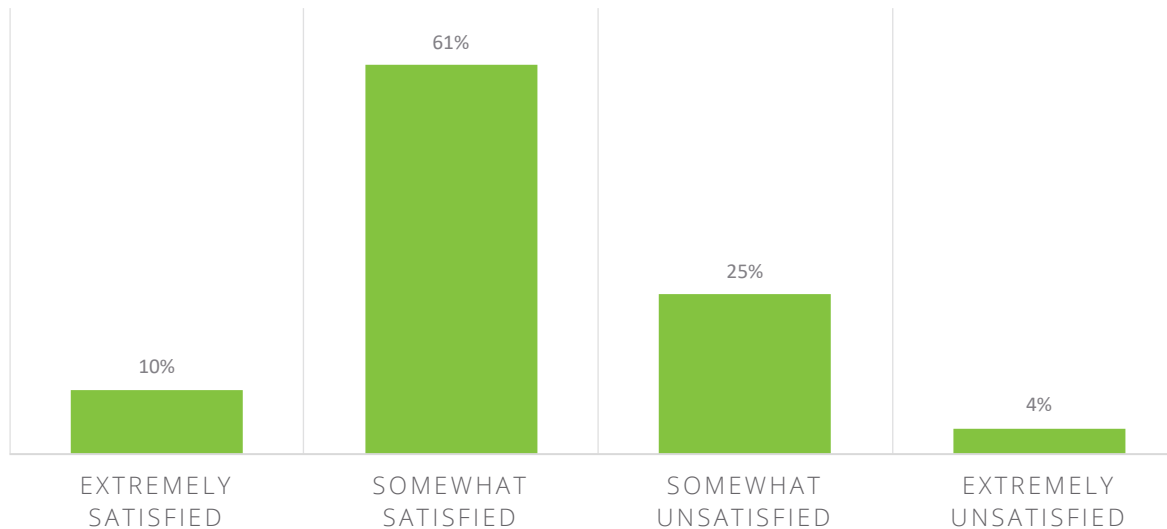
A combination of the above

3.0 The Consequences

Over three-quarters (76%) of marketers feel that they are missing opportunities for revenue growth as a result of the top challenges they face.

Organizations are missing revenue opportunities due to lack of people, technology challenges, and data quality and usability. Marketers are also reporting low confidence in achieving goals like linking KPIs between channels and funnel stages—which can result in better campaign attribution and optimization.

Overall satisfaction with ability to link Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) between channels and stages of the funnel.
(All respondents)



THE EXECUTIVE PERSPECTIVE

81% of executives report being only satisfied to some extent with the marketing team's ability to link KPIs between channels and stages of the funnel, while only 66% of non-executives hold the same sentiment.

4.0 The Solution

Strategy #1: Consolidate and integrate tools and technologies

Running with a lean technology stack can reduce operational silos and enable better end-to-end visibility of prospects and customers. Consolidating tools can also decrease the time it takes to solve issues, significantly reduce costs, simplify forecasting and tracking KPIs, and streamline the training of staff members.

83% of marketers agree that consolidating tools in their marketing and sales tech stacks would increase productivity and efficiency.

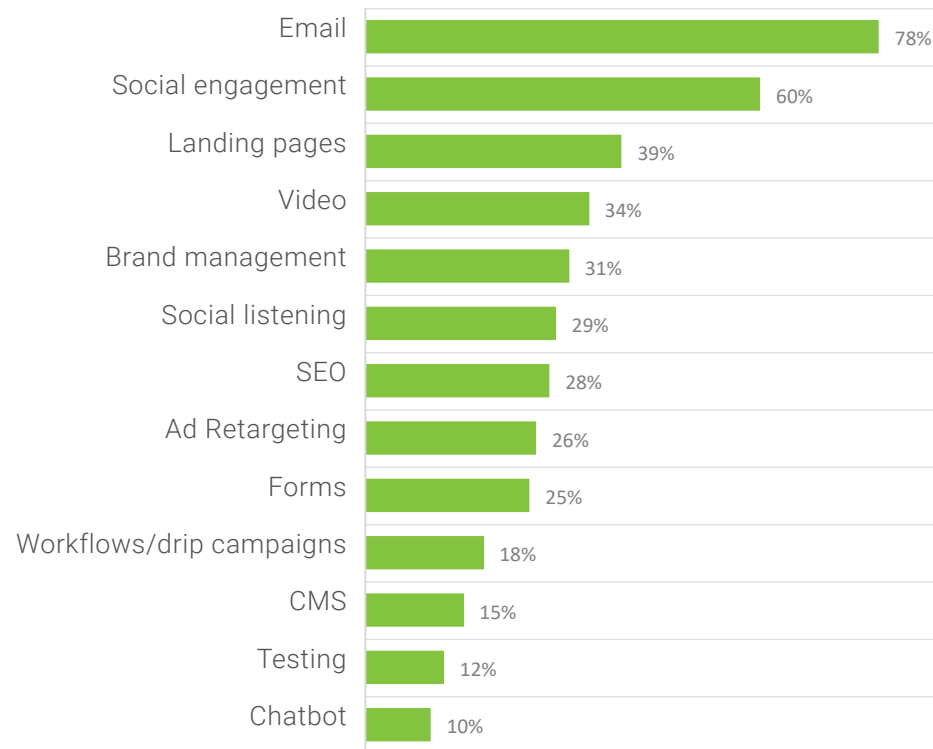
LEARN FROM THE BEST

The sales teams associated with the most successful marketers are 108% more likely to be using automation or sales enablement tools than their less successful counterparts.

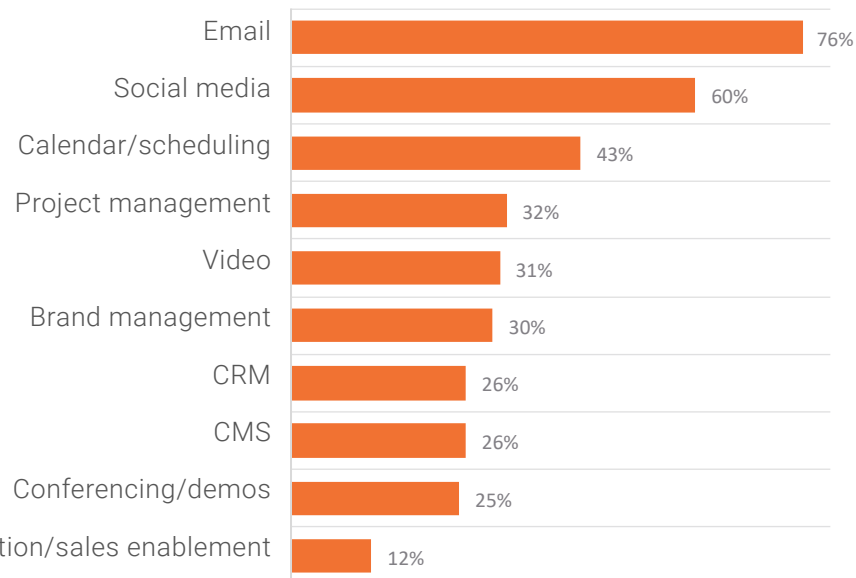


Tools used by the marketing team.

12



Tools used by the sales team.

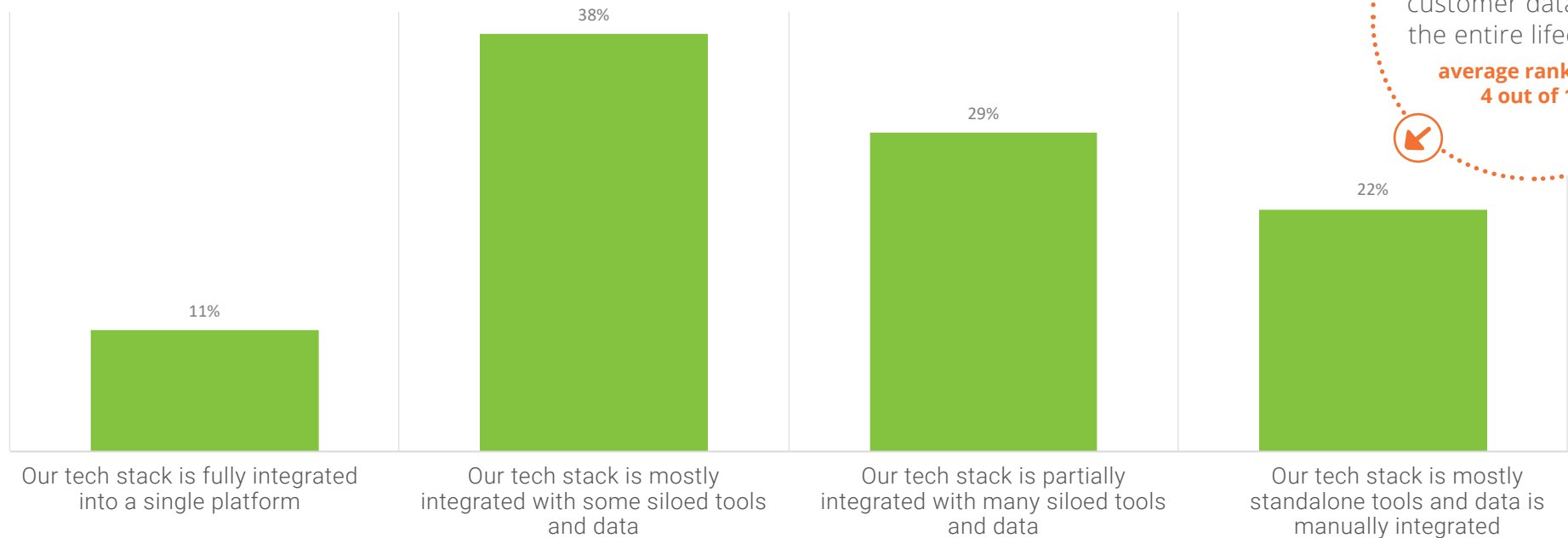


4.1 The Solution

Strategy #1: Consolidate and integrate tools and technologies (continued)

Consolidating tools alone might help with overall efficiency, but integrating technologies (ideally into a single platform) will centralize customer data and drive measurable results. 51% of marketers are only partially integrated or use manual processes between tools. A lack of integration creates an inability to take advantage of time-sensitive and cross-channel marketing opportunities.

Current status of the integration of marketing and sales technology.
(All respondents)



LEARN FROM THE BEST The most successful marketers are 118% more likely to be fully integrated.

4.2 The Solution

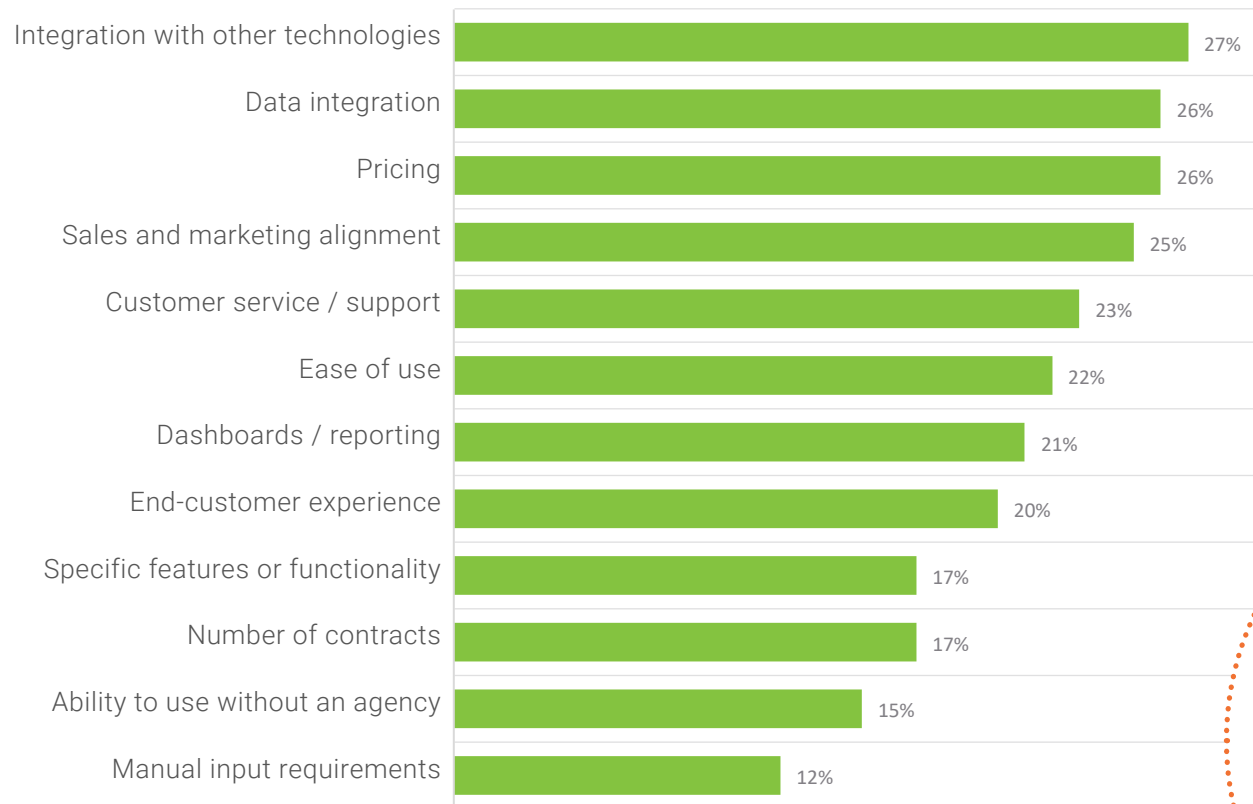
Strategy #2: Align marketing and sales

How can marketing tools improve to position organizations for growth?

According to 25% of marketers, their marketing tools need to better align sales and marketing efforts. Marketing and sales teams working together in harmony is critical to achieving sustainable revenue growth, and aligning their technology can be the driving factor behind enabling better use of data.

Areas where most improvement is needed for marketing tools.

(All respondents)



THE EXECUTIVE PERSPECTIVE

Executives have a less than stellar view of how well the marketing team can control the cadence of sales messages.

This misalignment of sales and marketing efforts can cause major struggles with unifying data and creating cohesive messaging throughout the customer journey.

only

9%

of executives would describe their marketing team's ability to control the messaging and cadence of sale outreach as "excellent."

4.3 The Solution

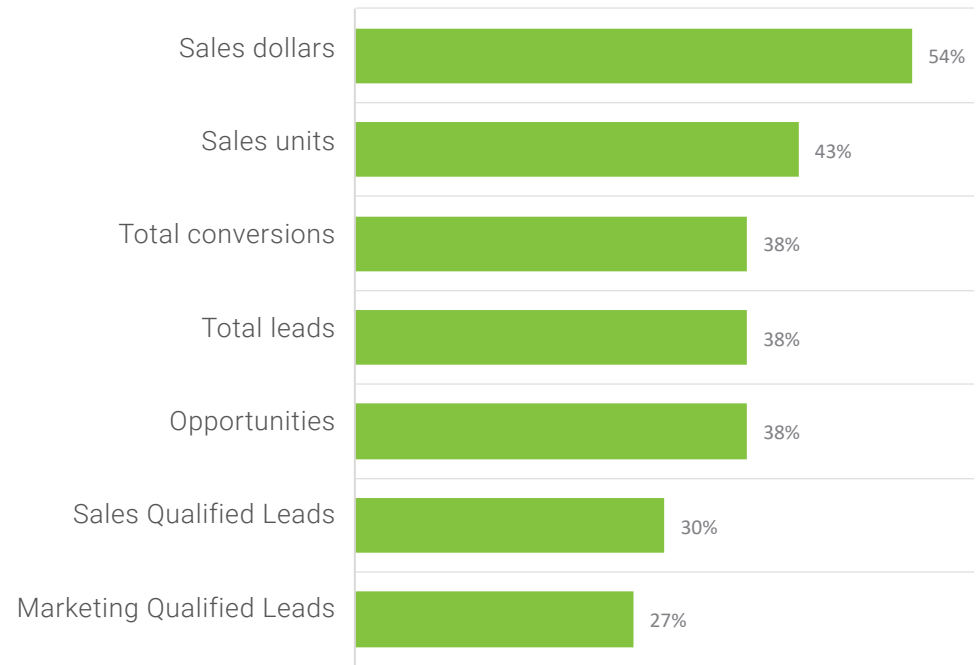
Strategy #3: Measure for success

The metrics that marketers use most often tells us a story about their goals and how they plan to optimize for success. Interestingly, the most successful marketers determine performance using sales-oriented metrics. This group is also more likely to be using Sales Qualified Leads (SQLs) to measure marketing performance.

Marketing teams that place a high value on these sales-focused metrics might indicate that the organization has more aligned sales and marketing efforts than those marketing teams that focus more closely on marketing-centric metrics when measuring performance.

Which metrics do you use to measure marketing performance?

(Success segment)



LEARN FROM THE BEST

The top reported metrics used by the most successful marketers are sales-focused: sales-units and sales dollars. The most successful marketers are also more likely to use opportunities and SQLs to measure marketing performance.

4.4 The Solution

The next phase of digital transformation

Adopting an all-in-one revenue growth platform is the next phase of digital transformation. A revenue growth platform aligns marketing and sales technology so you can optimize your entire funnel—with a holistic view of channels, campaigns, prospects, and customers.

McKinsey calls it “full-funnel marketing” and says that one key benefit is “Linking KPIs between channels and stages of the funnel to actual business results, such as conversions or leads, allows companies to better understand the real impact of their marketing and then create messages that will elicit the best responses.”

“Most businesses struggle to align their marketing and sales teams to achieve their revenue potential but cobbling together a bunch of marketing tools doesn’t solve the problem,” says Rick Carlson, CEO, SharpSpring. “As a comprehensive revenue growth platform, SharpSpring is deeply integrated and works together to drive conversions throughout the customer lifecycle so businesses can optimize marketing and sales activities and generate real revenue growth.”

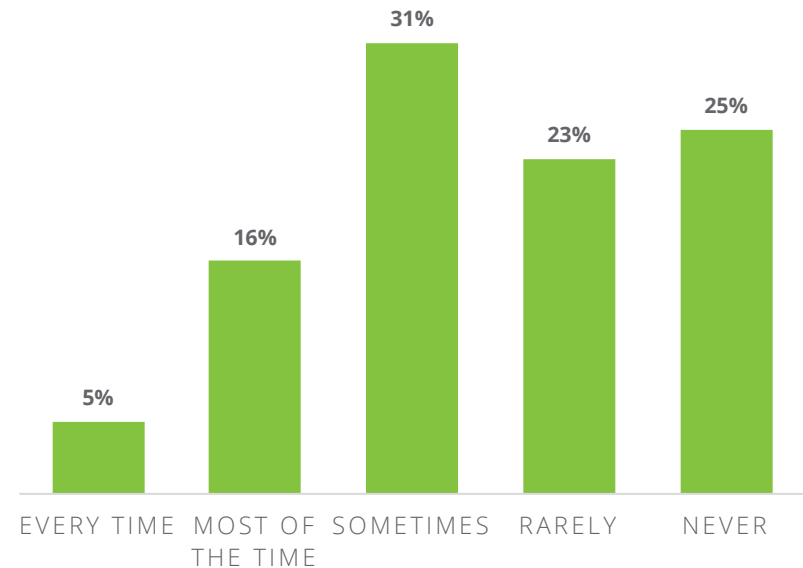
The SharpSpring revenue growth platform can transform your business.



The State of MarTech
Conducted by SharpSpring and Ascend2
Published August 2021

The most successful marketers are 182% more likely to be using drip campaigns to nurture all of their leads.

How often do you use drip campaigns to nurture leads?



just
5%
of marketers use drip campaigns every time they nurture leads.

5.0 Methodology & Participants

N = 187 Marketing Professionals

Number of Employees

Fewer than 50	48%
50 to 100	26%
101 to 250	16%
More than 250	10%

Primary role in company

Owner / Partner / C-Level	33%
Vice President / Director / Manager	50%
Non-Management Professional	17%

Organization Industry

Technology/SaaS	16%
Manufacturing	13%
Healthcare	16%

METHODOLOGY

Ascend2 benchmarks the performance of marketing strategies, tactics and the technology that drives them. With a custom online questionnaire, this survey was fielded to a panel of 187 marketing professionals during the month of July 2021.

6.0 About the Research Partners



SharpSpring, Inc. is a rapidly growing, highly-rated, global and affordable revenue growth platform delivered via a cloud-based Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) solution. More than 10,000 businesses around the world rely on SharpSpring platforms to generate leads, improve conversions to sales, and drive higher returns on marketing investments. Known for its innovation, open architecture and free customer support, SharpSpring offers flexible contracts at a fraction of the price of competitors making it an easy choice for growing businesses and digital marketing agencies.

Learn more at [SharpSpring](#).



Marketing technology companies and digital marketing agencies partner with Ascend2 to supplement their marketing content, generate leads, and engage prospects to drive demand through the middle of the funnel.

Learn more about [Ascend2](#).

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