



Benchmark Report

The #1 secret to marketing success or failure? Efficiency.

Key learnings from a survey
of 550 marketing leaders.



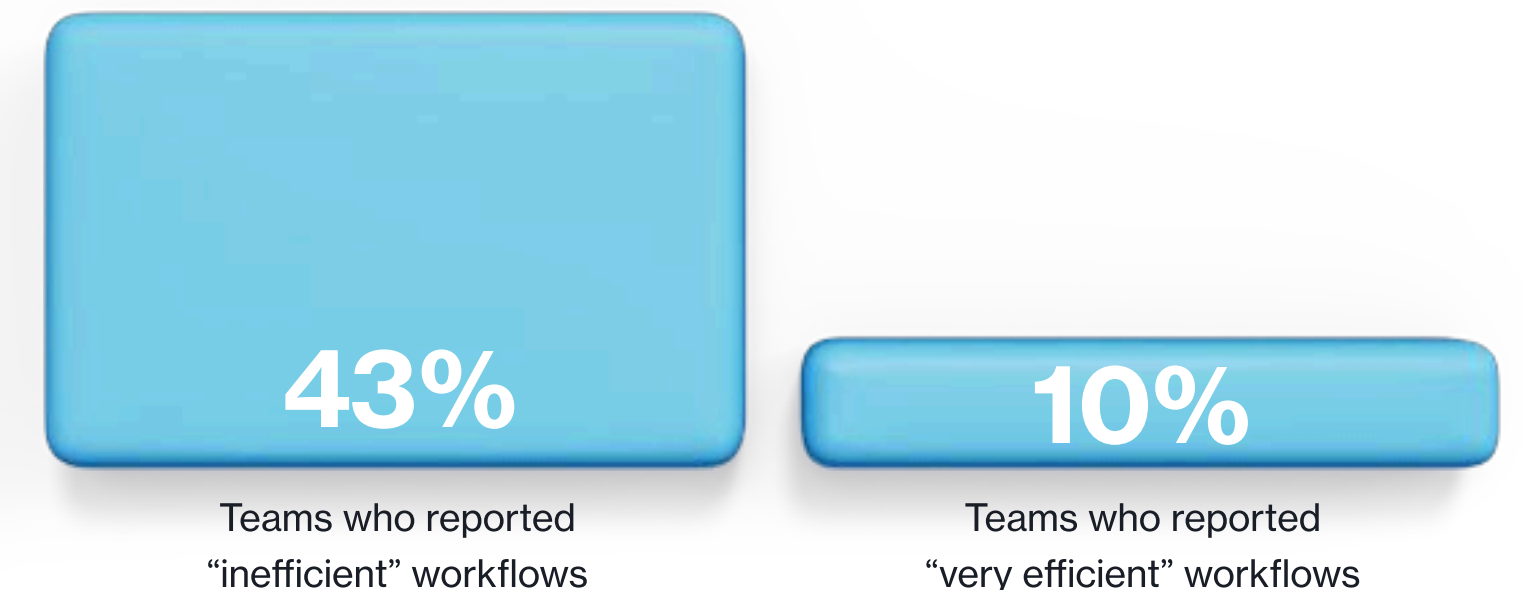
Efficiency: The marketing buzzword you can't ignore

Efficiency has become so overused in marketing circles that it's almost a word tossed around like confetti at a parade—something to largely ignore until you get around to sweeping it up and forgetting about it.

But for successful marketing teams, it's not a buzzword—it's a commitment to delivering business impact with real world constraints. **In fact, our latest research reveals that marketing teams investing in efficiency—via AI, streamlined workflows, and connected data—achieve outsized results when it comes to driving revenue and meeting deadlines.**

Just consider these findings of our survey of 550 marketing leaders: It turns out that teams with very efficient workflows are significantly more likely to be responsible for meeting a specific revenue goal than those with inefficient workflows (89% vs. 43%, respectively). Highly efficient marketing teams also exhibit a notable resilience against downsizing, with only 10% reporting such occurrences over the past year compared to 43% among inefficient teams. Translation: more efficient teams more than doubled their delivery against their goals AND only experienced layoffs 10% of the time. With marketing orgs being decimated by restructuring and layoffs over the last few years, a 90% track record of success is staggeringly high.

Marketing teams that downsized in the past year:



Ok, but what does marketing efficiency *really* entail? And, more importantly, how do you achieve it—and how will you know when you have?

We analyzed what the most efficient marketing teams are doing (and not doing) in their day-to-day operations to uncover actionable insights you can adopt. Among these insights, we found that highly efficient teams share one very specific characteristic.

All of these teams focused on connecting and streamlining the four most critical stages of marketing work—planning, production, distribution, and measurement—into something that we call the marketing supply chain.

And in this report, we'll equip you with their blueprint for success. Forget abstract concepts or unattainable goals. By reading this report, you'll get real-world, actionable strategies your team can implement at each stage of the marketing supply chain to improve efficiency—and, ultimately, achieve your goals.



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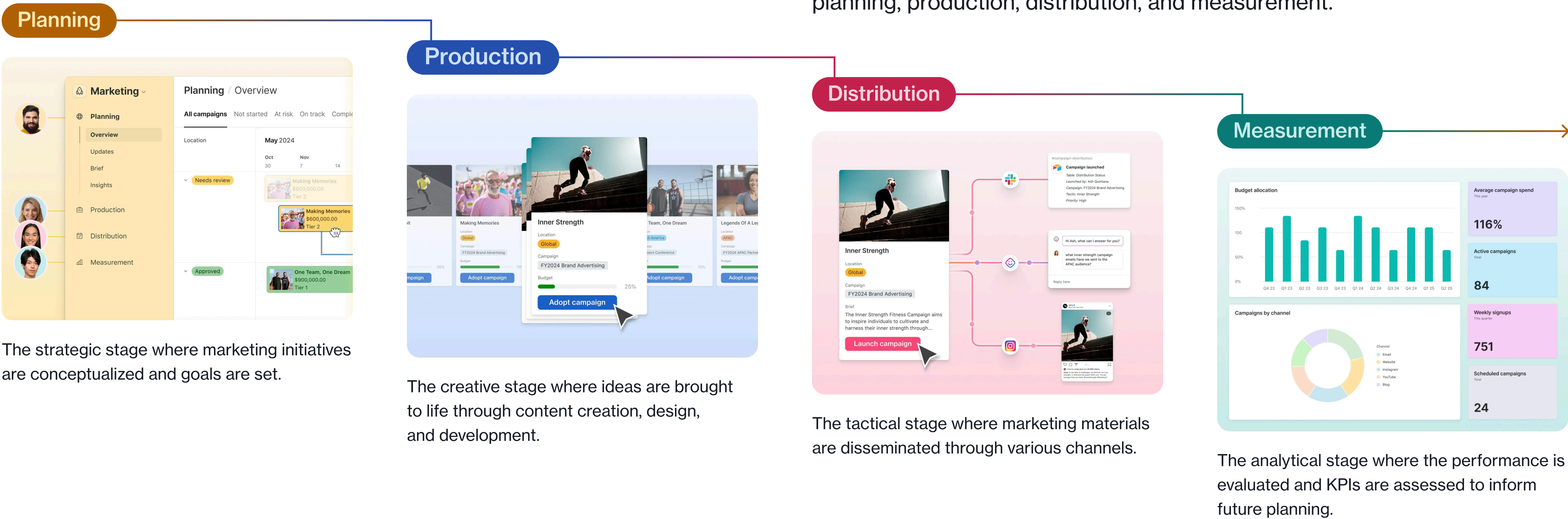
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What exactly is the marketing supply chain?

Just as physical supply chain optimization aims to maximize the value of goods and materials, marketing teams endeavor to maximize the impact of campaigns. In both domains, the objective remains the same: ensuring every step is as efficient as possible to augment ROI.

At its core, the marketing supply chain encompasses four key stages: planning, production, distribution, and measurement.



86% of marketing leaders say it's vital to integrate critical workflows into a single platform

Just as renowned companies like Apple and Nike have leveraged world-class supply chains to build enduring businesses, your marketing team can harness the power of a unified supply chain to make an outsized impact. It isn't a coincidence that Apple and Nike are famous for world-class physical product supply chain management, and they are also two of the most beloved brand marketers in the world. By managing both their operational and marketing supply chains with hyper efficiency they have succeeded on both fronts.

Connection is the X Factor.

The four stages of your marketing supply chain—planning, production, distribution, and measurement—are part of a sophisticated, complex system. To maximize efficiency you need to connect each stage to unlock maximum impact.

Without seamless connection across the entire marketing supply chain—from planning to measurement—marketing teams can never achieve true efficiency.

Marketing leaders overwhelmingly agree: 86% say it's vital to integrate these critical workflows into a single platform. This clearly signals a growing recognition of the benefits of a unified marketing supply chain.

The proof is in the (data) pudding.

At Airtable, we're witnessing firsthand how marketing teams use our platform to streamline their supply chains, minimizing friction and maximizing impact. In the following sections, we delve into each stage of the marketing supply chain, offering best practices to increase efficiency and performance.



Planning

(Because the best laid plans of mice and men...)

Just as every building begins with a blueprint, every marketing initiative starts with a strategic plan. By rallying around a foundation of shared goals, teams can prioritize impact, strategically allocate resources, and avoid silos and redundancy. Unfortunately—as every marketer knows—having a plan isn’t the same as following one without wasting time or money. From aligning stakeholders to navigating changing plans, let’s look at how the most efficient teams streamline the planning cycle.

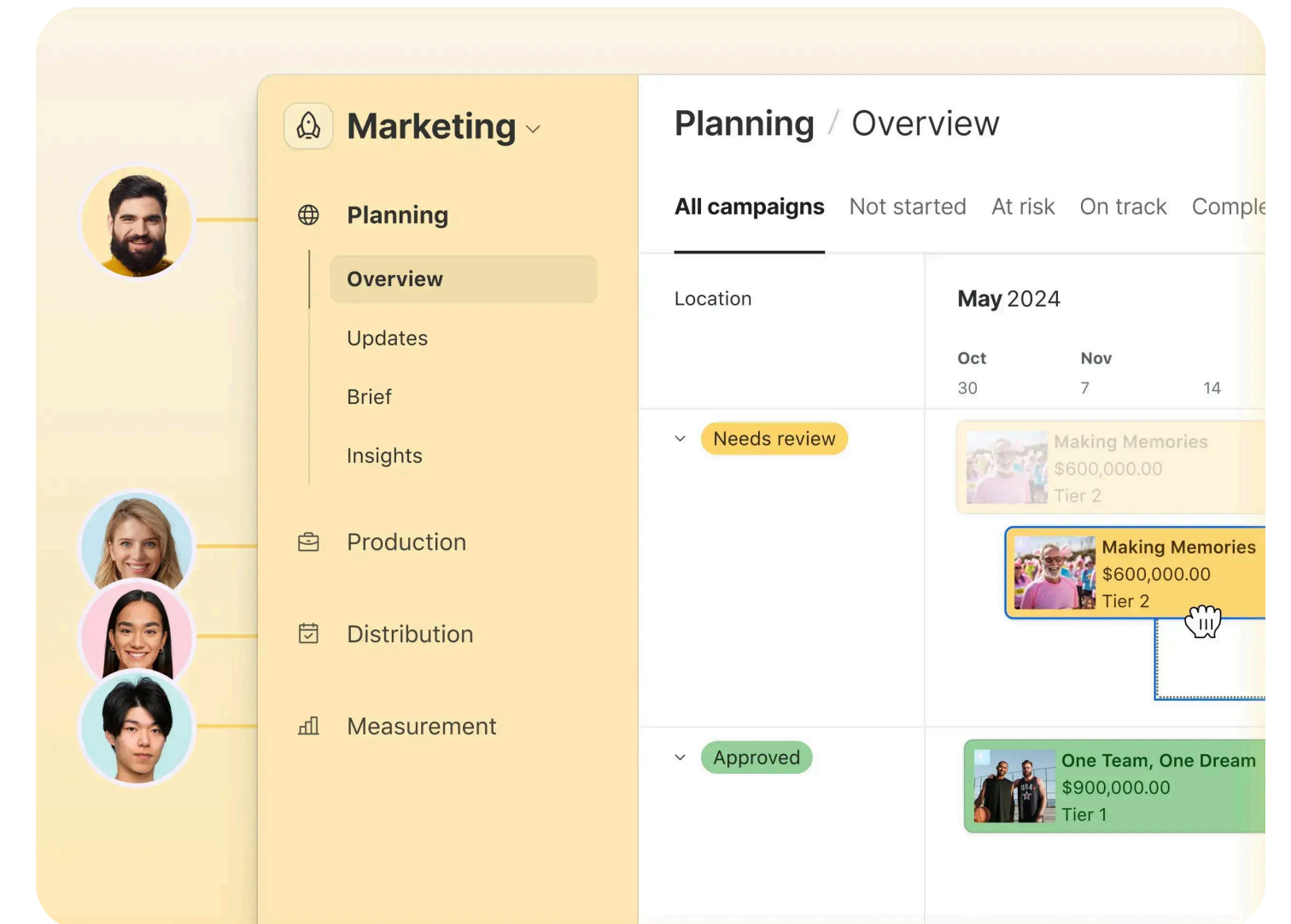
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The top three hacks in the most efficient marketing teams

Efficiency in the planning stage lays the groundwork for an optimized marketing supply chain. Drawing insights from our research, here are three planning practices distinguishing the most efficient marketing teams:

- 1 They embrace no-code solutions for flexibility:**
Efficient marketing teams use no-code solutions throughout the planning process to increase flexibility and alignment. Teams who integrate no-code tools into everyday workflows find it “very easy” to align with cross-functional partners compared to those who use them less frequently.
- 2 They use performance data to inform planning:**
Top-performing teams rely heavily on performance data to guide their planning. Those with completely automated processes for syncing data between tools report that it’s “very easy” to use past performance data for new planning cycles, while those using AI moderately or daily find it easier to leverage performance data compared to teams merely exploring AI.
- 3 They secure swift executive buy-in:**
Efficient teams are significantly more likely to say it’s easy to secure executive buy-in—a critical driver of marketing success—compared to inefficient teams. Interestingly, there’s a strong correlation between achieving executive buy-in and meeting revenue goals—and teams struggling to get executive buy-in tend to “rarely” or “never” meet their revenue targets.



Airtable gives you a holistic view of all marketing activities alongside goals, resourcing, and timelines.

What is a no-code solution?

No-code and low-code tools help non-technical users with little or no development experience build or customize workflows and applications themselves. For example, marketing teams can use no-code/low-code tools to build apps, design and create content, analyze data, manage projects, build websites, create workflows, and manage a CMS.



The four biggest efficiency blockers to avoid:

Now that we know what the most efficient teams are doing, why aren't we getting the same results? What's getting in our way—anyway? Here are the four biggest challenges marketing teams encounter in integrating efficiency into their planning stage:

73%

of marketing leaders report juggling between 5-15 sources for up-to-date information

4%

of teams stick to plans 100% of the time

1 Their existing work is underutilized:

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of respondents said that between 60% and 100% of their marketing plan involves creating net new assets instead of maximizing the potential of existing ones. This indicates a significant missed opportunity for efficiency and resource optimization through repurposing or refreshing existing assets.

2 There isn't a single source of truth:

Planning is tedious for the majority of marketing leaders (73%) who must juggle between 5 and 15 sources for up-to-date information on marketing activities. Teams struggle to align their efforts and make informed strategic decisions without a central repository for accurate and timely data.

3 Their alignment is tricky:

Achieving alignment with cross-functional partners is a challenge, with only a tiny percentage (15%) finding it “very easy.” The majority of teams (51%) rate alignment as only “slightly easy” or “moderately easy,” highlighting the challenge of synchronizing efforts and objectives across teams.

4 Their plans don't stick:

Despite all of the efforts poured into creating marketing plans, just 4% of teams stick to them 100% of the time. Instead, 66% of teams occasionally change plans due to extenuating circumstances, while 30% frequently pivot plans. And while great marketing is a balance between consistency and agility, the data reveals a fascinating finding: ***changing plans is more likely to be due to inefficient processes—mainly manual data syncing between tools—than intentional, data-driven pivoting.***





Take action: How to make planning more efficient

The steps below offer a practical roadmap to making the planning stage more efficient. Use this checklist as a guide to streamline your planning process, foster collaboration, and optimize resource allocation.

- ☐ **Unify your sources of truth:** Centralize context such as goals, products, audiences, and campaigns to enable insight-driven planning.
- ☐ **Establish clear communication channels:** Ensure clear, transparent communication channels are in place to facilitate collaboration and alignment across teams.
- ☐ **Make data accessible:** Give all teams access to the same performance data to ensure data informs plans—and teams can pivot quickly in response to changing conditions.
- ☐ **Standardize core planning processes:** Align on and document your team's brief and intake process—and define roles and responsibilities to streamline reviews.
- ☐ **Prioritize and validate impact:** Incorporate inputs like budgets and targets into planning—and validate ideas with historical context to ensure proposed campaigns deliver impact.
- ☐ **Enable holistic visualization:** View and analyze plans by different parameters such as channel, audience, and campaign to improve audience outcomes.
- ☐ **Develop a repurposing strategy:** Create a systematic approach or plan for repurposing existing assets, outlining guidelines, best practices, and criteria for selecting assets suitable for repurposing across different channels or campaigns.
- ☐ **Use AI to mine insights:** Leverage AI to ingest data from multiple sources, monitor relevant topics, surface trends, and provide timely suggestions to meet your specific campaign objectives.
- ☐ **Invest in automation tools:** Explore and invest in no-code solutions that automate repetitive tasks, data collection, and reporting processes.



Production

(Lights, camera, action!)

The production stage of the marketing supply chain is where your creative visions become reality, transforming strategic plans into compelling content, designs, and campaigns. It's a critical stage that demands efficiency and precision, as delays or inconsistencies can slow time to market, ultimately impacting your team's ability to meet revenue or audience goals.

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Three key trends in highly efficient teams

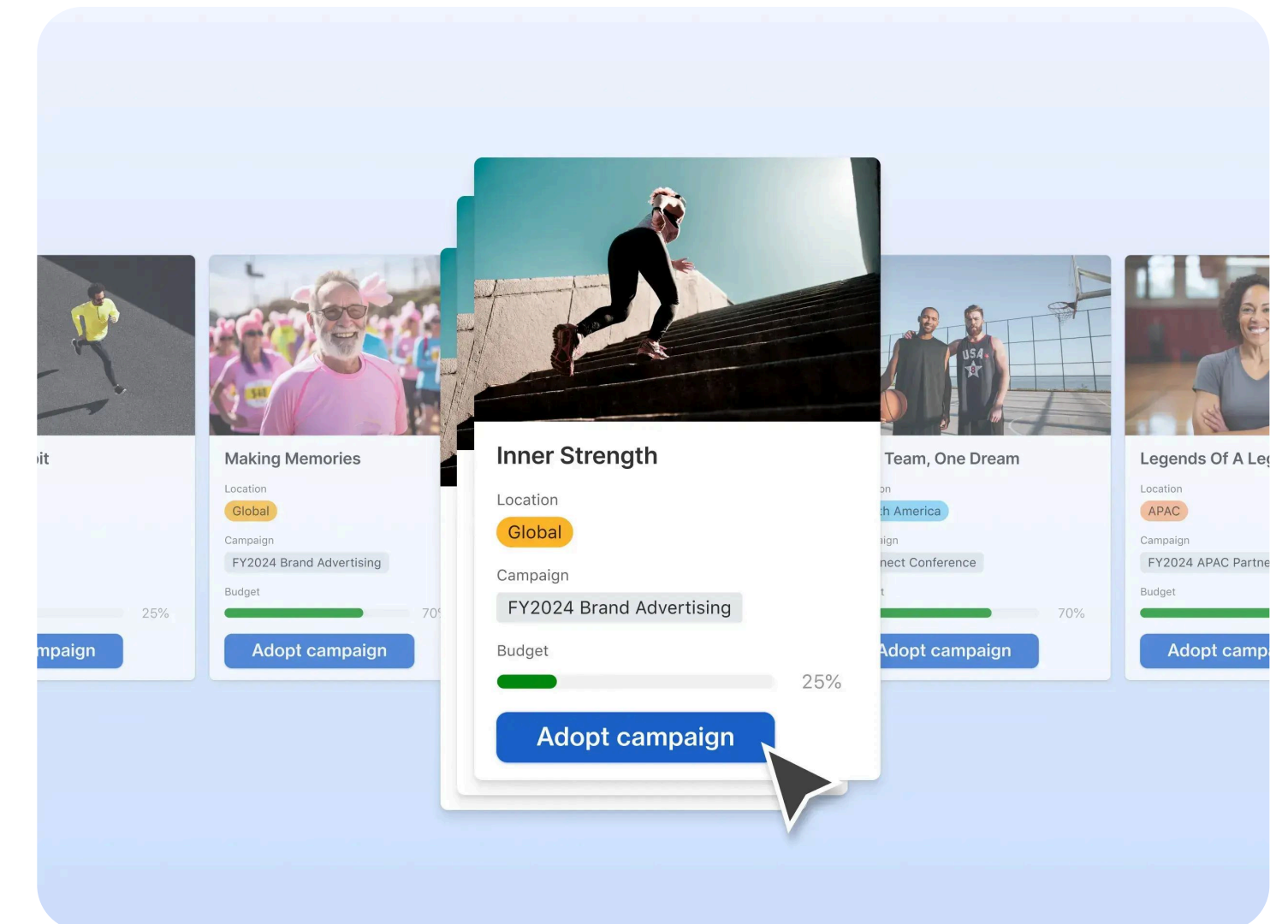
Most marketing leaders (56%) are frustrated by how long it takes to ship content and campaigns, and only 24% say their team is “very efficient” in executing content and campaigns. So, what are efficient teams doing differently? Our research reveals three key practices:

- 1 They view AI as a trusty sidekick:**

Marketing teams that incorporate AI into production workflows see significant efficiency improvements. In fact, among marketing leaders whose teams are just beginning to explore AI, 56% cite inefficient production workflows as a major pain point. This number drops to 36% for those using AI moderately and 29% for those using AI daily.
- 2 They automate data syncing between tools:**

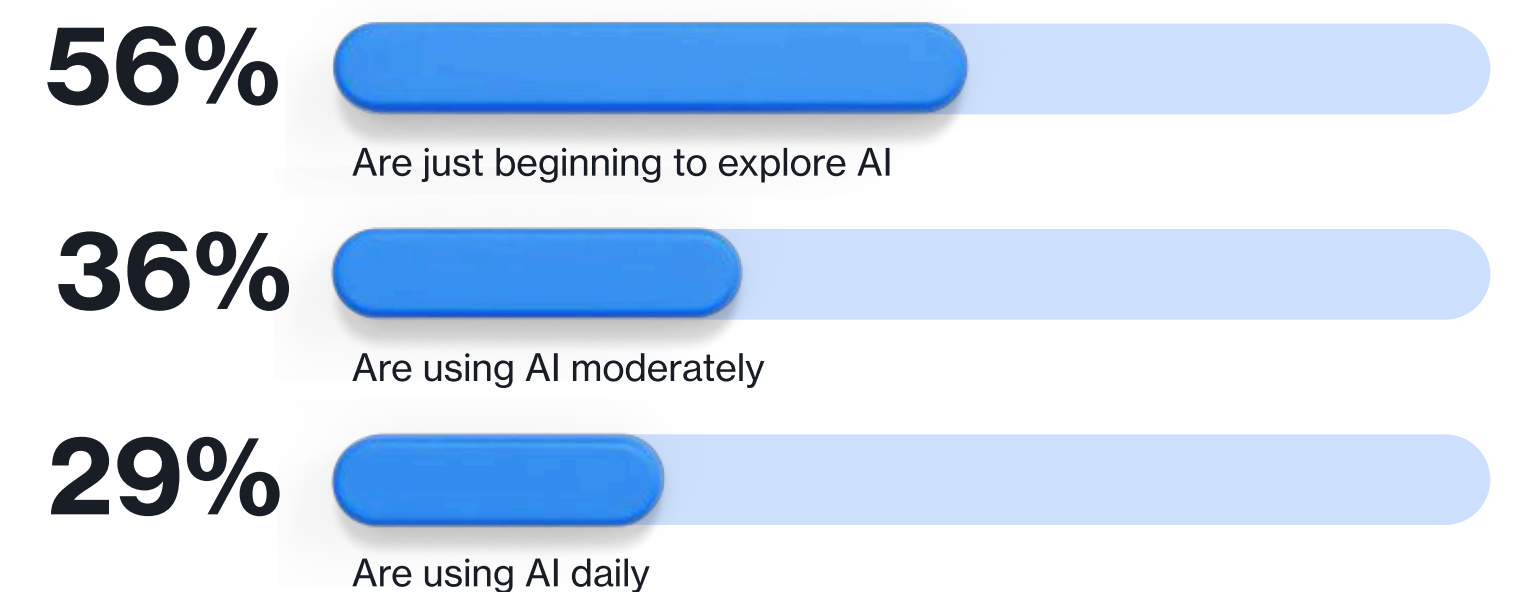
Efficiency is greatly enhanced when data syncing is automated. Teams with “very efficient” workflows are significantly more likely to have fully automated data syncing processes. In contrast, those with manual syncing processes often report siloed, disconnected workflows. Our research also shows that automation helps teams scale workflows to increase the output of marketing deliverables.
- 3 They implement no-code tools for daily tasks:**

Teams that use no-code tools in their daily workflows are significantly more likely to report “very efficient” production processes. These tools simplify and expedite various tasks, contributing to a more streamlined and effective production phase.



Airtable fuels production by making critical information accessible and reusable for everyone.

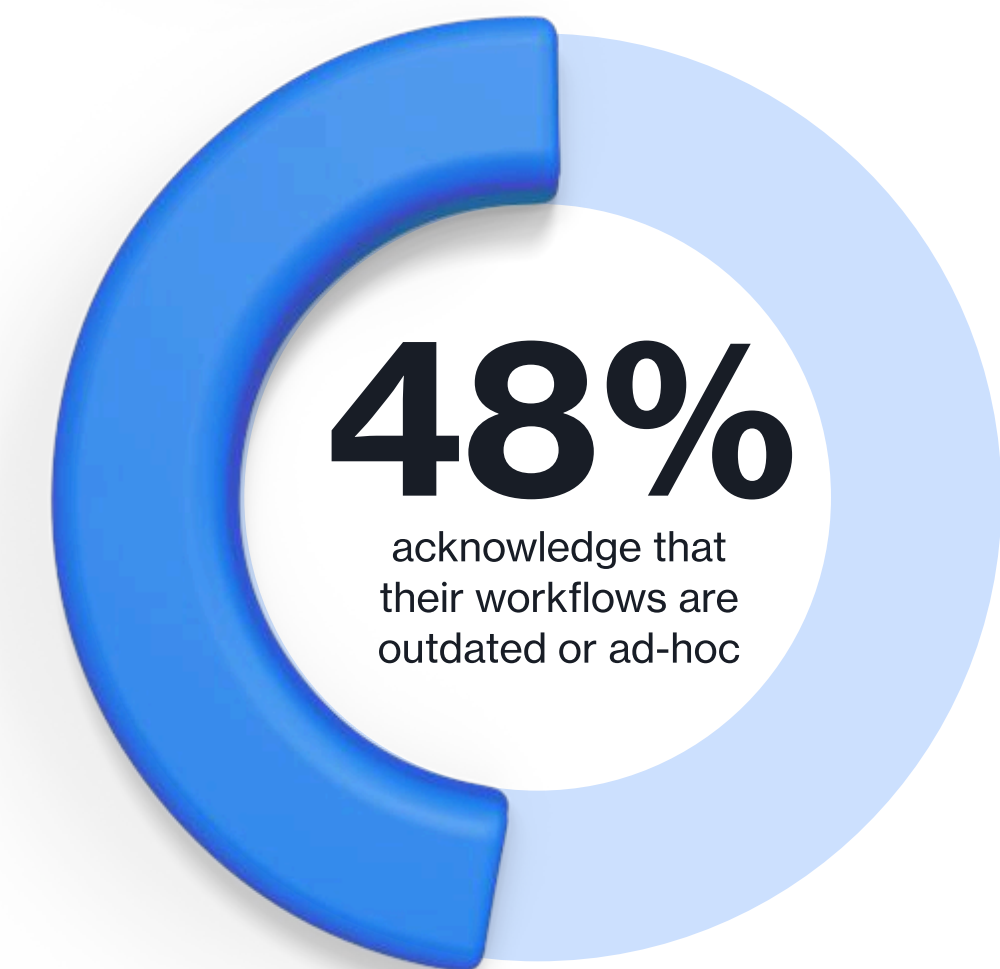
Teams who report inefficient production workflows



The three main efficiency blockers:

There are several common roadblocks that can throw a wrench in production efficiency. Understanding these challenges can help you address and overcome them and ensure that your marketing engine runs smoothly:

- 1 They find collaboration complicated:**
Just over half (53%) of marketing leaders find it easy to collaborate with colleagues within their organization, and just 44% report the same ease in collaborating with external partners like agencies and vendors. But there is a bright spot: teams using AI in everyday workflows are significantly more likely to find collaboration easy with outside vendors.
- 2 They have painfully clunky workflows:**
69% of marketing leaders describe their workflows as only somewhat efficient, and just 24% consider them very efficient. What's more, 48% acknowledge that their workflows are outdated or ad-hoc. These inefficient processes lead to delays, increased workloads, and reduced productivity.
- 3 They find silos are the norm:**
Operational silos are a common issue, with roughly half (47%) of marketing leaders reporting their workflows for shipping content and campaigns are disconnected. This lack of integration hampers the flow of information and resources, making it difficult to maintain consistency and coordination across different teams and stages of production.



Take action: How to make production more efficient

Increase efficiency in the production stage of your marketing supply chain by applying these strategies to overcome common hurdles and streamline your workflows.

- ☐ **Automate repetitive processes:**
Implement standardized processes in the planning phase—briefing, for example—to automate repeating steps and notifications.
- ☐ **Reduce costs and rework:**
Integrate project management and digital asset management to improve content usage and accelerate time-to-market.
- ☐ **Increase reuse and reach:**
Facilitate regional adoption of global campaigns to ensure brand consistency while catering to local or team-specific nuances.
- ☐ **Use “atomic content”:**
Accelerate production by breaking your assets (or campaigns) into modular pieces that can be repurposed for different audiences and regions.
- ☐ **Establish a single source of truth:**
By preventing multiple sources of truth, teams can align with accurate information at every handoff, approval, and stage of production—proofing, brand consistency checks, and more.
- ☐ **Integrate every piece of the workflow:**
Simplify handoffs and highlight dependencies with integrated tools that sync data and workflows between cross-functional teams.
- ☐ **Empower non-technical staff:**
Enable team members without technical skills to handle complex tasks using no-code tools.
- ☐ **Use AI as your production intern:**
Use generative AI tools like ChatGPT to help brainstorm ideas and make improvements to initial drafts.



Distribution

(Show them what you made them!)

In the distribution stage, your focus is on getting your message out to your audience through various channels. The goal is to make sure your content reaches the right people at the right time, boosting brand visibility and customer engagement. Efficiency during this stage is crucial because it determines how quickly and accurately marketing content is delivered, impacting audience engagement, brand perception, and conversion rates.

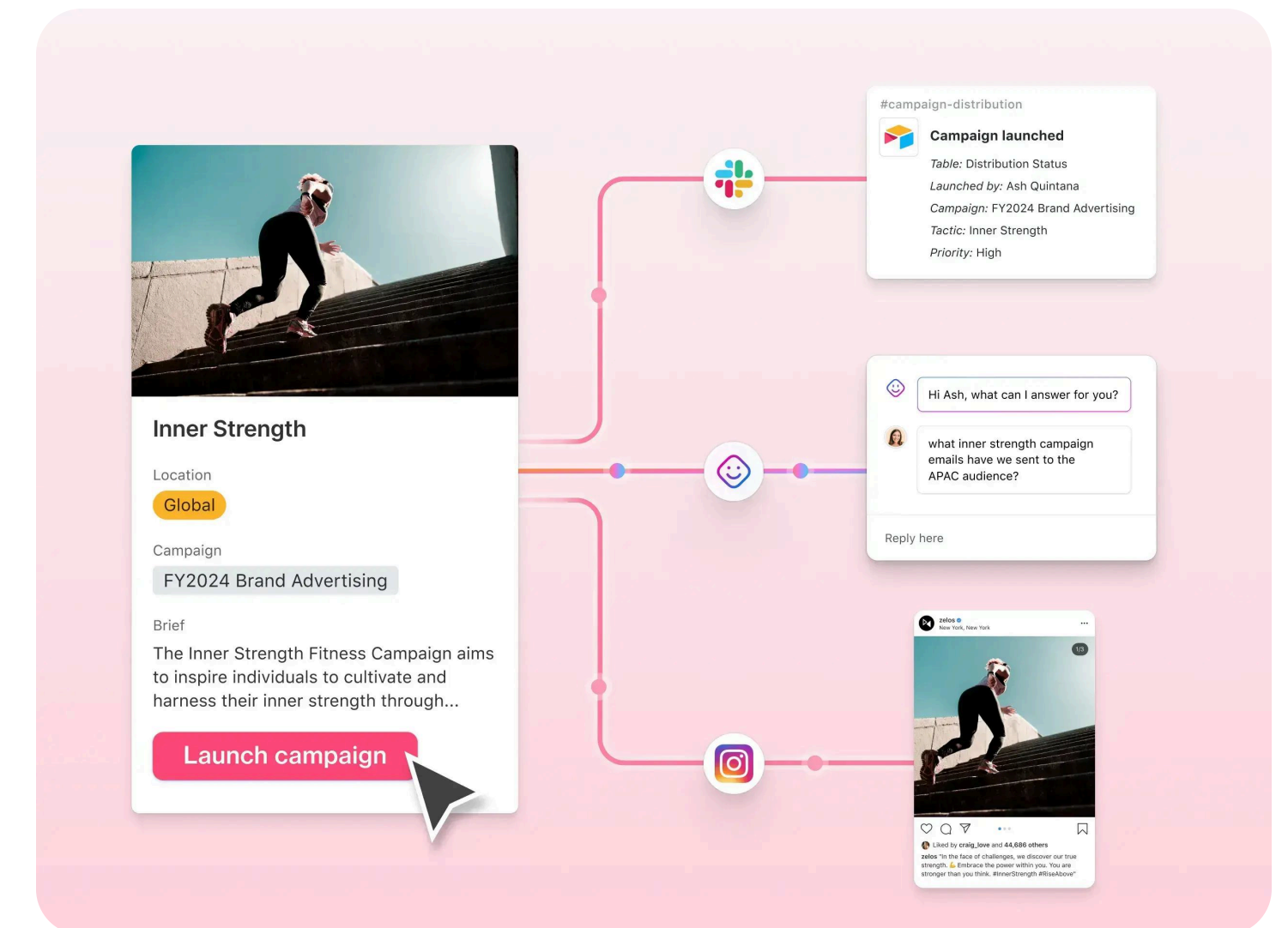
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Four key trends in highly efficient teams

Effective distribution isn't just casting a wide net—it's about precise targeting. That's why top-performing teams are doubling down on these tactics to drive efficiency in distribution:

- 1 They ensure accuracy of DAM systems:**
Our research shows that teams with high confidence in their DAM systems are significantly more likely to meet their revenue goals consistently. Ensuring the accuracy of content and assets is crucial for effective marketing strategies.
- 2 They simplify asset sharing:**
Teams that find it easy to share marketing assets with Sales and Go-to-Market (GTM) teams are more likely to meet deadlines consistently. Automated processes for asset sharing help maintain timely and coordinated campaign execution.
- 3 They strengthen enablement and messaging:**
Marketing teams that strongly agree their DAM includes enablement and messaging tools for Sales are more likely to meet revenue goals and deadlines. Providing Sales with relevant, ready-to-use content enhances field operations and boosts ROI.
- 4 They leverage AI for operational rigor:**
Teams using AI in daily workflows are significantly more likely to say it's “very easy” to share published assets with Sales and GTM teams. For example, using AI to automate communications and generate summaries of published assets for enablement purposes can improve efficiency and asset utilization.



Use Airtable's automations and AI to deliver personalized experiences at scale.



The five biggest blockers to distribution efficiency

Efficiency in distribution sounds simple enough, but it's often trickier than people realize. Here are five common obstacles that can hamper your team's efficiency in this stage of your marketing supply chain:

1 They have limited DAM usability:

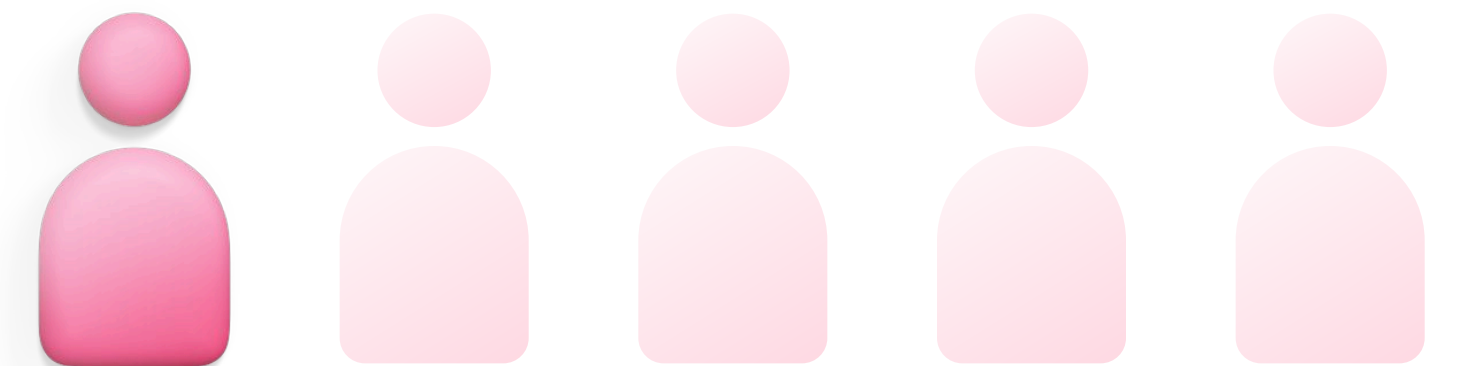
While 85% of respondents say their team uses a digital asset management (DAM) platform, only 59% agree that their DAM is built on a tagging system the entire organization uses. This inconsistency leads to inefficiencies in finding and using assets across the organization.

2 They have questionable DAM accuracy:

One in three marketing leaders (33%) don't trust the accuracy of their current DAM system. This lack of confidence in the DAM's data undermines its effectiveness, causing teams to spend extra time verifying information and potentially duplicating efforts.

3 Their assets are hard to find:

Only 7% of marketing leaders report that it's very easy for cross-functional partners to locate and use existing marketing assets. Additionally, just 16% of teams find it "very easy" to share published assets with Sales and other GTM teams. This leads to an inefficient use of resources and ineffective campaign execution.



Only 1 in 5 say it's "very easy" to publish content to their CMS system

4 They lack repurposing guidelines:

Just 59% of respondents say their DAM includes guidelines for repurposing assets. Without clear guidelines, teams struggle to efficiently reuse existing content, leading to wasted resources and duplicated efforts.

5 They face challenges in publishing content:

Only 21% of respondents say it's "very easy" to publish content to their CMS system. And, teams with low adoption of no-code tools find this particularly challenging, resulting in bottlenecks and delays in getting content live. With no-code technology, for example, teams can build processes to bypass clunky CMS or web backlogs, allowing them to move with greater autonomy.





Take action: How to make distribution more efficient

Ready to make the distribution stage more efficient? Check out these practical steps for marketing teams to optimize workflows and streamline their content delivery:

- ☐ **Upgrade your DAM:** Leverage an automated, always-on DAM system to store and organize assets at scale, preventing distribution from slowing after initial promotion.
- ☐ **Audit your content:** Perform regular audits to verify the accuracy and integrity of assets within the DAM system. This builds trust and ensures reliable data for marketing efforts.
- ☐ **Keep all DAM users up to speed:** Schedule regular training sessions to ensure all DAM users are proficient in using the system.
- ☐ **Tag assets at scale:** Capture assets and metadata using a shared, organization-wide taxonomy. Scaled data tagging ensures assets can be repurposed and reported on.
- ☐ **Document reuse processes:** Create and document clear guidelines for repurposing assets within the DAM system to help teams efficiently reuse existing content.
- ☐ **Invest in a unified production and promotion calendar:** Give teams complete visibility into what's coming to maximize the impact in-market of what's being produced.
- ☐ **Automate distribution:** Utilize APIs to automate content distribution across channels (CMS, social, etc.), improving reach while reducing manual work.
- ☐ **Implement AI automation:** Use AI to automate communications and create published content summaries, making sharing assets with Sales and GTM teams easier.
- ☐ **Adopt no-code tools:** Implement no-code tools to simplify and expedite the process of publishing content to your CMS.



Measurement

(Check out your report card.)

In the measurement stage, marketing teams analyze campaign performance, diving into the data to see what's working (and what's not). Their goal? To determine where to focus efforts and resources to get the best bang for their buck. Efficiency here means getting those insights quickly and accurately, so you can steer the ship in the right direction—without wasting time or money.

4



Three common trends in extra efficient teams

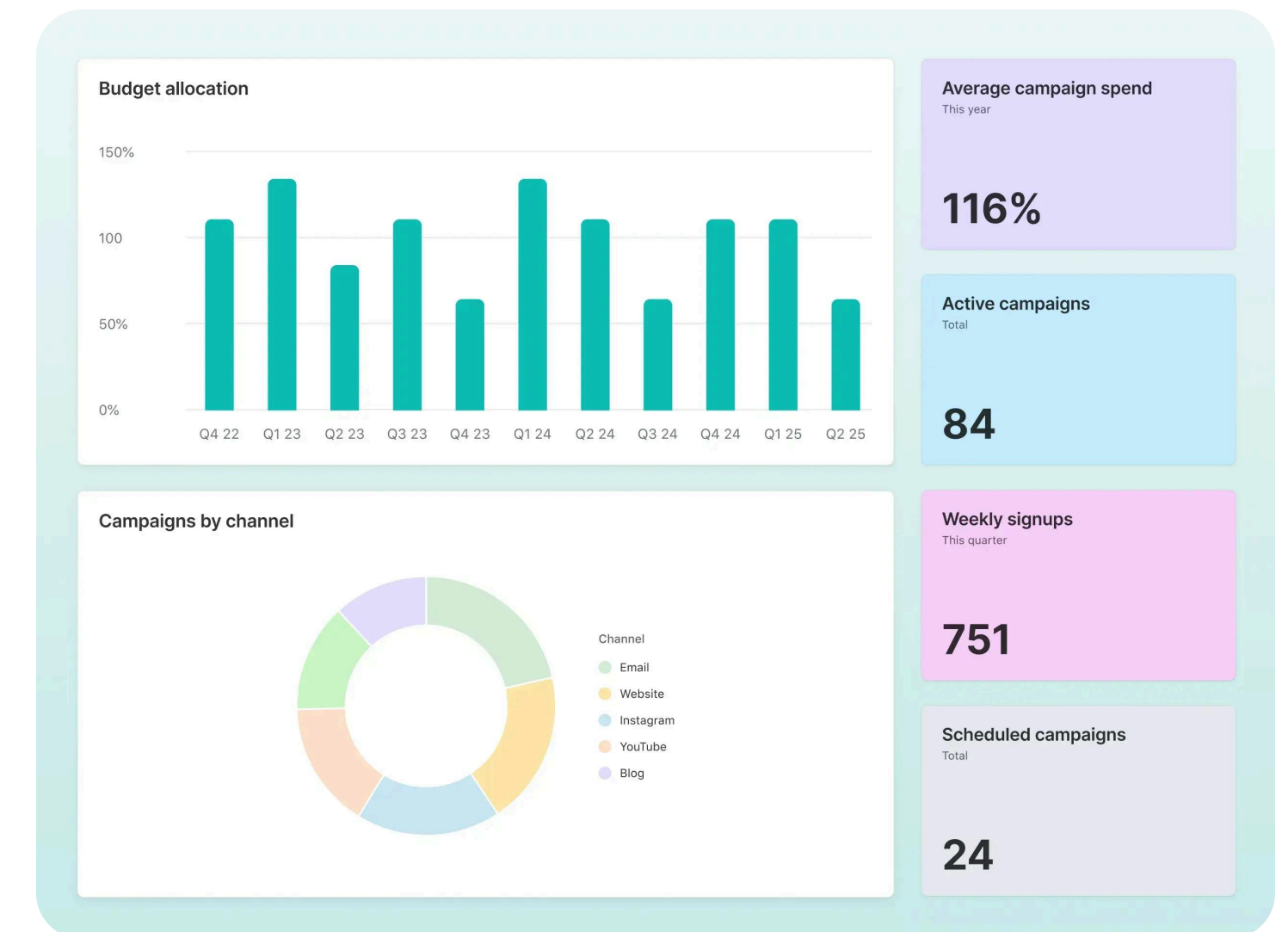
Efficient marketing teams can rapidly make sense of their performance data to determine where to prioritize their efforts. Here are three best practices that help them achieve that:

- 1 They connect their data between tools:**

The most efficient marketing teams are much more likely to use automations to sync data between tools, creating a comprehensive view of performance. This reduces errors, saves time, and ensures stakeholders have up-to-date information. Our research shows that the likelihood of hitting revenue goals also increases as teams invest in automation to sync data between tools.
- 2 They ensure real-time access to performance data:**

Very efficient teams are significantly more likely to report that it's "very easy" for the executive team to access real-time performance data. This transparency supports swift, data-driven decisions and keeps executives informed, fostering accountability and responsiveness.
- 3 They achieve high visibility into ROI:**

Our research shows that very efficient teams are significantly more likely to report having "very high visibility into ROI" compared to "somewhat efficient" and "somewhat inefficient" teams (46% vs. 19% and 16%, respectively). With clear ROI insights, efficient teams can allocate resources more effectively, prioritize high-performing campaigns, and adjust strategies in real time.



Analyze operational insights and performance data side-by-side in Airtable.



Three main blockers to measurement efficiency

So, what's standing in your way of efficiency in the measurement stage?

These are the three most common hurdles that trip up marketing teams in their quest for insightful analytics:

1 Their information is siloed:

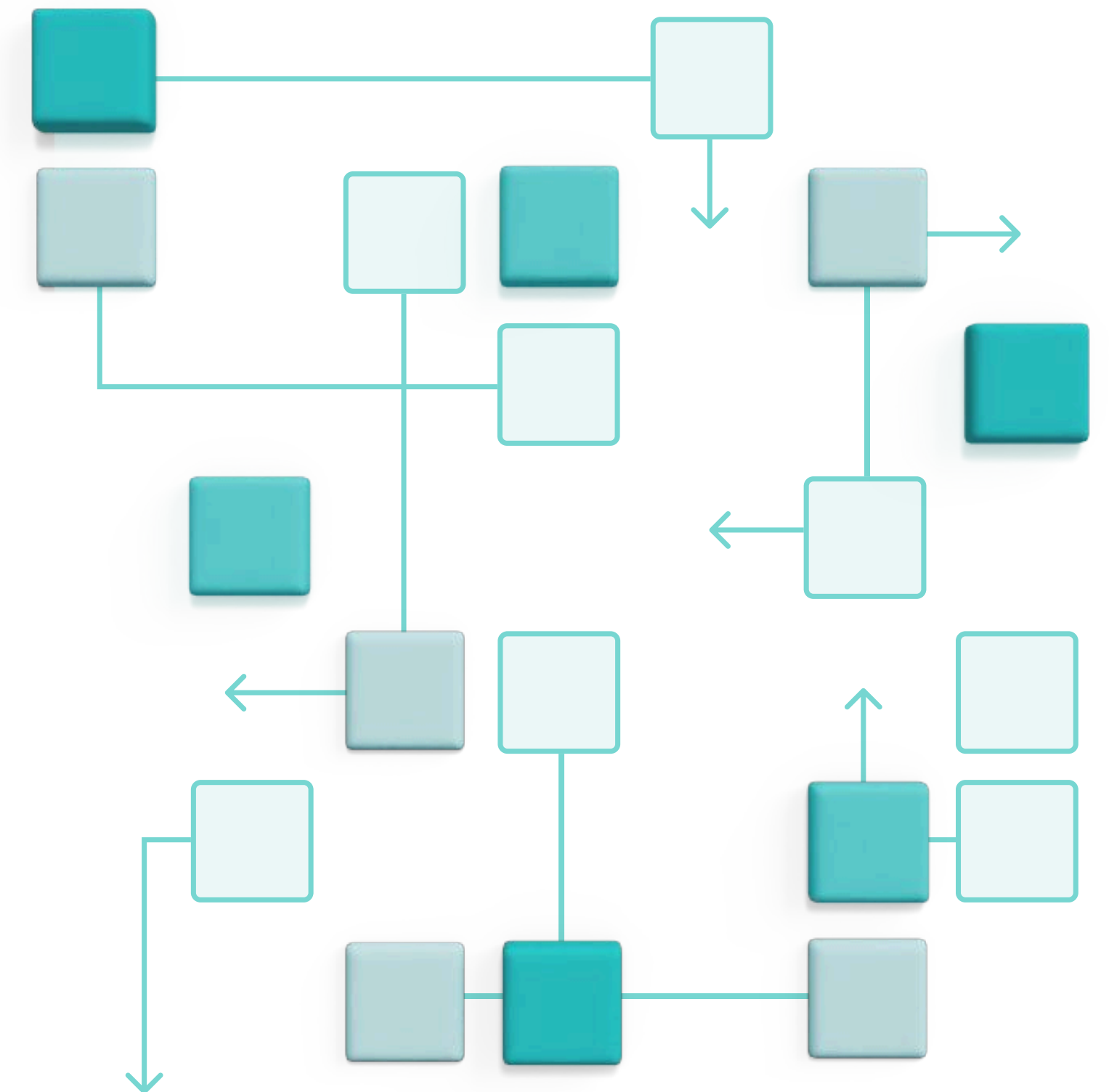
Despite adopting martech tools to improve measurement, critical information often gets siloed, limiting visibility. On average, marketing teams use 19 separate tools regularly. This fragmentation makes it challenging to get a cohesive view of data, hindering effective decision-making and slowing down processes.

2 Their duplicated data complicates reporting:

Most marketing leaders (60%) report that 30% to 60% of their data is duplicated across various platforms like spreadsheets, documents, and apps. This redundancy makes reporting messy and unreliable, leading to inconsistent insights and inefficient resource use, ultimately affecting the accuracy of performance measurement.

3 They are doing manual work:

41% of marketing leaders indicate that most of their work involves manual tasks, relying on email, spreadsheets, documents, chat messages, and meetings. This non-automated approach is time-consuming and prone to errors, reducing overall efficiency. It also directly impacts the team's ability to effectively measure and respond to performance data.



On average, marketing teams use 19 separate tools regularly



Take action: How to make measurement more efficient

Follow these steps to boost efficiency in the measurement stage. Using these strategies, marketing teams can quickly and accurately assess campaign performance, allowing for informed decision-making and continuous improvement.

- ☐ **Establish performance benchmarks:** Define clear KPIs for each campaign or initiative to track progress over time and identify areas for improvement.
- ☐ **Surface easy-to-understand metrics:** Implement accessible tools that enable marketers to understand performance impact immediately.
- ☐ **Build retrospectives into your campaign plans:** Retros aren't just for reporting on numbers—they're a place to bubble up insights that will feed your next planning cycle.
- ☐ **Embrace automation in reporting:** Implement automated reporting systems to reduce manual effort and errors, allowing marketing teams to spend their team extracting insights rather than compiling data.
- ☐ **Prevent reliance on vanity metrics:** Aggregate performance data from multiple sources to provide real-time insights that inform strategy.
- ☐ **Tell the whole ROI story:** Unify the marketing supply chain to access historically hard-to-measure KPIs like cost per piece of content, resourcing, budgeting, content utilization, and revenue impact.
- ☐ **Inform strategic bets:** Utilize data-driven insights such as historical campaign performance or real-time brand sentiment to guide future-looking investments.
- ☐ **Centralize context across data sources:** Blend measurement and analytics tools with other systems and platforms for a more holistic view into questions such as efficiency and performance by region, execution type, and more.



Conclusion

(AKA, the Call to Action!)

For marketers, it's clear that efficiency is more than just a catchphrase—it's mission critical to your team's success. And the key to efficiency lies in a unified marketing supply chain.

“With Airtable, we’re looking at 85 hours of cost savings per week.”

— Gary Webb, Senior Studio Manager at West Elm

A unified supply chain is the secret to transforming ambitious plans into tangible results. Connecting every stage of the supply chain—from planning to measurement—significantly enhances a team's ability to achieve revenue goals, meet deadlines, and maintain resilience in the face of market challenges.

And the single most efficient way to get a unified marketing supply chain is with AirTable. Now, you can easily connect information at every stage of your marketing supply chain to drive outsized impact.

AirTable's flexible, no-code platform empowers marketing teams with the exact tools they need to optimize their supply chain, helping them break free from the choppy swirl of inefficiency and ready to unlock all new opportunities.

Are you ready to see what's possible with a truly efficient supply chain? Schedule an AirTable demo today!

[See how it works](#)

[Contact Sales](#)



Methodology

This report is based on a 550-person survey fielded in Q1, 2024 by Airtable in partnership with third-party research firm, Qualtrics.

The study included respondents who met the following criteria:

- A full-time, U.S.-based employee at a company with more than 1,000 employees
- Director level or above in the marketing department
- Not working for an organization that is a current Airtable customer

Company size	
1,000-4,999	39%
5,000-9,999	45%
10,000-24,999	11%
25,000+	5%
Job level	
Director	59%
VP or General Manager	26%
Executive or C-Level	15%
Primary marketing responsibility	
Brand	11%
Content	9%
Marketings Ops	28%
Campaigns	4%
Product Marketing	48%

Industry			
Retail and eCommerce	34%	Agriculture	2%
Consumer Goods and Services	13%	Automotive	2%
Manufacturing	10%	Travel and Hospitality	2%
Financial Services and Insurance	9%	Healthcare and Life Sciences	1%
Professional and Technical Services	5%	Technology	1%
Media, Entertainment, and Publishing	4%	Chemical	1%
Transportation	3%	Education	1%
Construction	3%	Mining and Extraction	1%
Telecommunications	3%	Nonprofit	0%
Wholesale	3%	Government and Public Sector	0%
Utilities and Energy	3%	Other	0%



About Airtable

Airtable enables any team, regardless of technical skill, to create apps on top of shared data and power their most critical and unique workflows.

Using Airtable, marketers like you have been able to:

Eliminate 90% of manual data entry

A multinational entertainment and media leader uses Airtable to standardize their production processes. Since implementation, they've increased transparency and eliminated 90% of manual data entry.

Save \$2.6M in operational costs

A global media provider tripled the velocity of their campaign launches (3.4x) and saved nearly \$2.6 million in operational overhead. How? By pulling critical information out of siloed spreadsheets and into Airtable.

Free hundreds of hours across global campaigns

A streaming provider built an asset repository and custom social sharing app in Airtable. This app streamlines the global content planning process, saving the team 10 hours every campaign launch.



Ready to get started?

Your own success is right around the corner.

[Learn More](#)

[Contact Sales](#)

