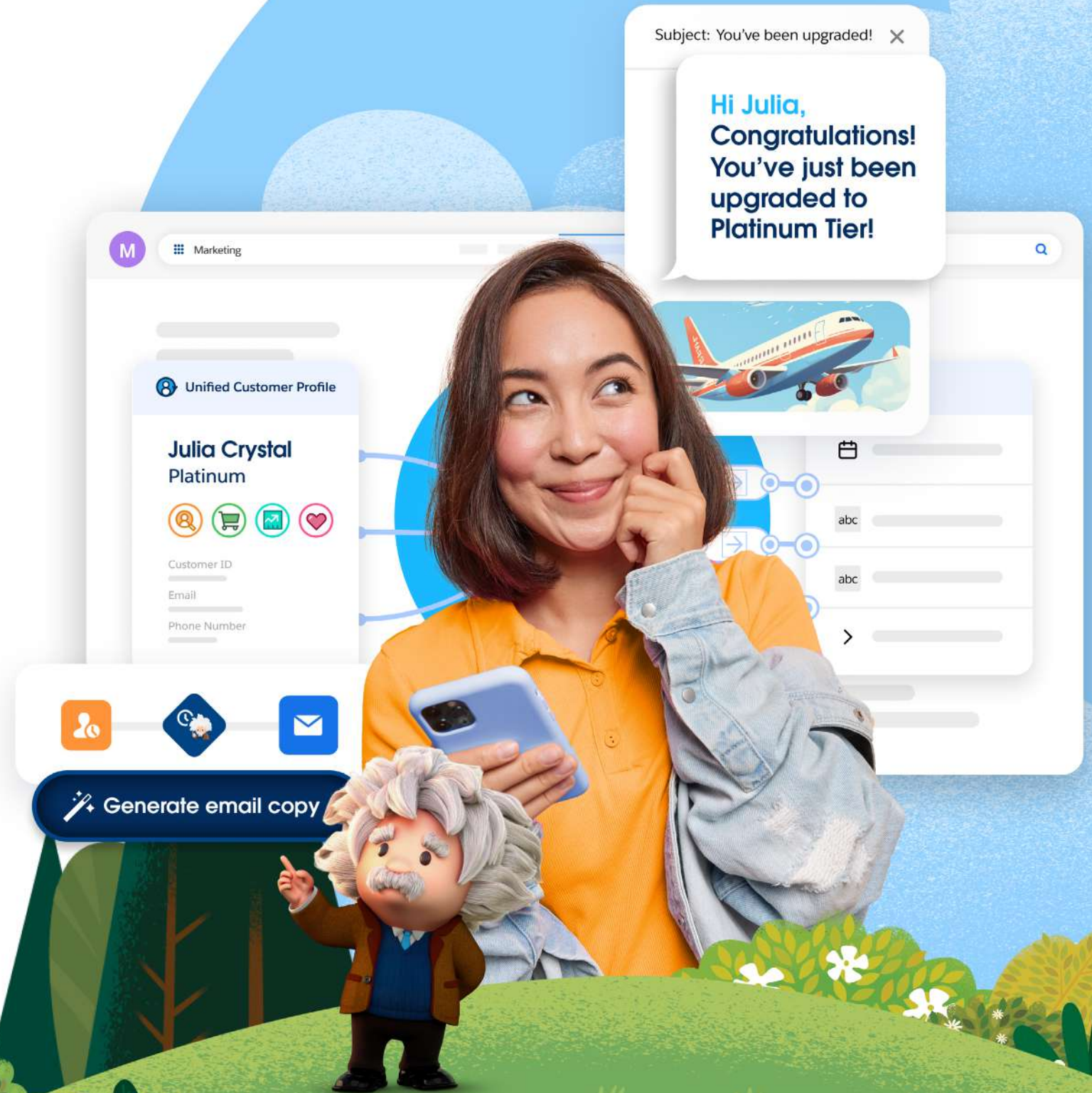


salesforce

NINTH EDITION

State of Marketing

The latest trends on AI, data, and personalization with insights from nearly 5,000 marketers worldwide.



Foreword

A note to marketers
from Salesforce's CMO



We're in a new wave of the artificial intelligence revolution – catalyzed by the generative AI gold rush – and marketers are leading the charge by embracing rapid advancements in the technology to better connect with customers and prospects. But AI isn't just marketers' biggest priority. It's also their biggest challenge.

A strong data foundation is critical to AI success for marketers as they work to bring together customer data for real-time activation.

That's what we found in our ninth State of Marketing report, which surveyed marketing leaders worldwide to understand the biggest trends, priorities, and challenges affecting marketers today.

To help navigate a rapidly evolving landscape, the report also uncovers:

- How marketing budgets address technological needs
- Where marketers pull data to deepen customer understanding and power AI engines
- The most common ways marketers incorporate predictive and generative AI into their work streams – and some of the biggest concerns they have about getting it right.

I hope you find this report a helpful guide to navigating this new era of marketing.

Ariel Kelman

Ariel Kelman

President & Chief Marketing Officer
Salesforce



What You'll Find in This Report

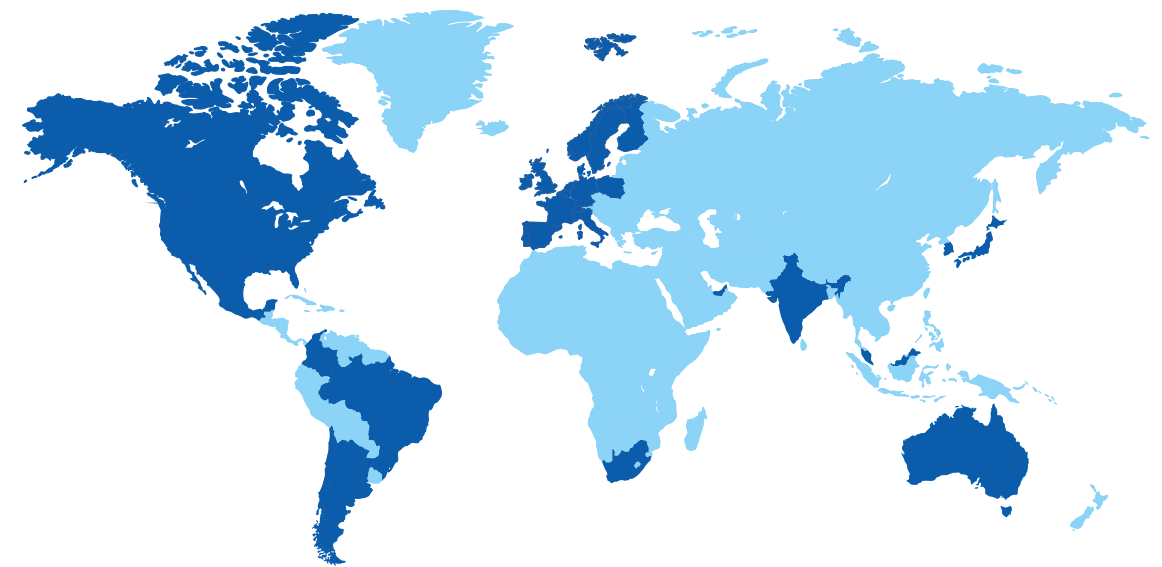
For the ninth edition of our "State of Marketing" report, Salesforce surveyed nearly **5,000 marketers worldwide** to discover how marketers:

- Evaluate the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and implementing it in their operations
- Approach their data acquisition, maintenance, and application strategies
- Ensure customer trust and security as vulnerabilities increase

Unless cited otherwise, data in this report is from a double-anonymous survey conducted from February 5th to March 12th, 2024.

The survey generated 4,850 responses from marketing decision makers across **North America, Latin America, Asia-Pacific, and Europe**. See page 33 for further survey demographics.

Due to rounding, not all percentage totals in this report equal 100%. Comparison calculations are made from total (not rounded) numbers.



4,850 marketers surveyed worldwide



Salesforce Research provides data-driven insights to help businesses transform how they drive customer success. Browse all reports at salesforce.com/research.



What You'll Find in This Report

Breakdown of Marketing Performance Levels

Throughout this report, we classify survey respondents across the following tiers of marketing performance.

22%

Underperformers

Moderately or less satisfied with overall outcomes of marketing investments

46%

Moderate performers

Highly satisfied with overall outcomes of marketing investments



32%

High performers

Completely satisfied with overall outcomes of marketing investments

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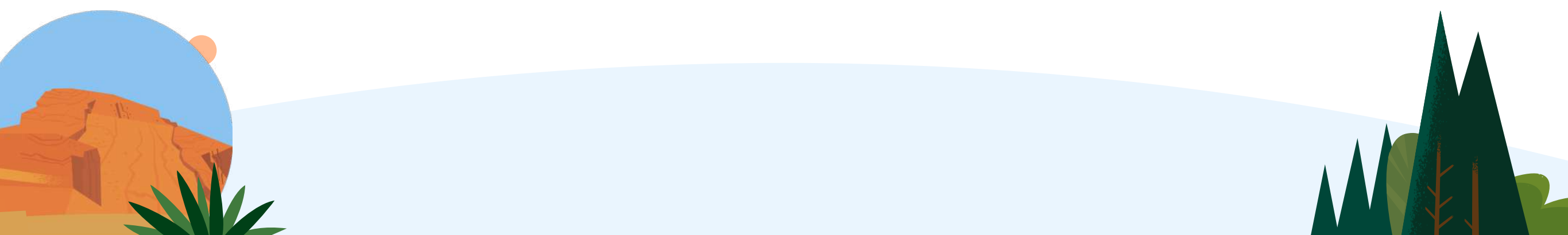
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Executive Summary

Introduction: Priorities and Challenges for a New Marketing Era

Marketers are evolving their practices in a highly competitive landscape. They're looking to AI – both generative and predictive – to help personalize at scale and boost efficiency. **Marketers rank AI adoption as both their number one priority and challenge.**

- 01 Marketers Shore Up Their Data Foundations**
Businesses have long struggled to connect disparate data points to create consistent, personalized experiences across customer journeys. Yet as third-party cookies are depreciated and AI proliferates, that quest is only becoming more critical – and challenging. **Only 31% of marketers are fully satisfied with their ability to unify customer data sources.**
- 02 Marketers Embrace AI With an Eye on Trust**
Marketers are intent on successfully applying AI in their operations with the right data, but are concerned about security and customer trust as adoption ramps up. **Thirty-two percent of marketing organizations have fully implemented AI in their workflows, and an additional 43% are experimenting with it.**
- 03 Full Personalization Remains a Work in Progress**
What constitutes a “personalized experience” continues to mature, and there’s a stark difference between how the highest- and lowest-performing marketing teams adapt. **On average, high performers fully personalize across six channels, compared with underperformers who fully personalize across three.**
- 04 Marketers Seek Unified Analytics**
There is no shortage of data sources, but putting that data to work is a challenge. **Only 48% of marketers track customer lifetime value (CLV).**
- 05 Deeper Relationships Emerge With ABM and Loyalty Programs**
Companies are increasingly turning to strategies like account-based marketing (ABM) and loyalty programs for better customer acquisition and retention. Yet many of these program's information sources remain disjointed, and so is the resulting customer experience. **Thirty-nine percent of marketers say loyalty program functionalities are accessible across all touchpoints.**



Introduction

Priorities and Challenges for a New Marketing Era



AI Tops Marketing's Agenda

Marketers are at the start of a renaissance. The spark? Advancements in data and AI technologies prompting them to rethink, reconfigure, and revolutionize how companies connect with customers.

Taking advantage of AI is marketers' biggest priority – and biggest challenge. Maintaining trust, another key area of focus, is a core part of successful AI deployment. In fact, 68% of customers say advances in AI make it more important for companies to be trustworthy.*

In addition to ramping up new or maturing technologies like AI, marketers are focusing on better use of their existing toolsets. CMOs, often pressed to maintain or exceed performance with fewer resources, may see optimizing their current tech stack as a promising solution.

*Salesforce State of the Connected Customer, August 2023.

AI Is Marketers' Main Focus – and Biggest Headache

Marketers' Top Priorities

- 1 Implementing or leveraging AI
- 2 Improving our use of tools and technologies
- 3 Improving marketing ROI/attribution
- 4 Engaging with customers in real time
- 5 Building/retaining trust with customers

Marketers' Top Challenges

- 1 Difficulties implementing or leveraging AI
- 2 Engaging with customers in real time
- 3 Building/retaining trust with customers
- 4 Measuring marketing ROI/attribution
- 5 Creating a cohesive customer journey



Marketers Wield a Variety of Tools To Spur Growth

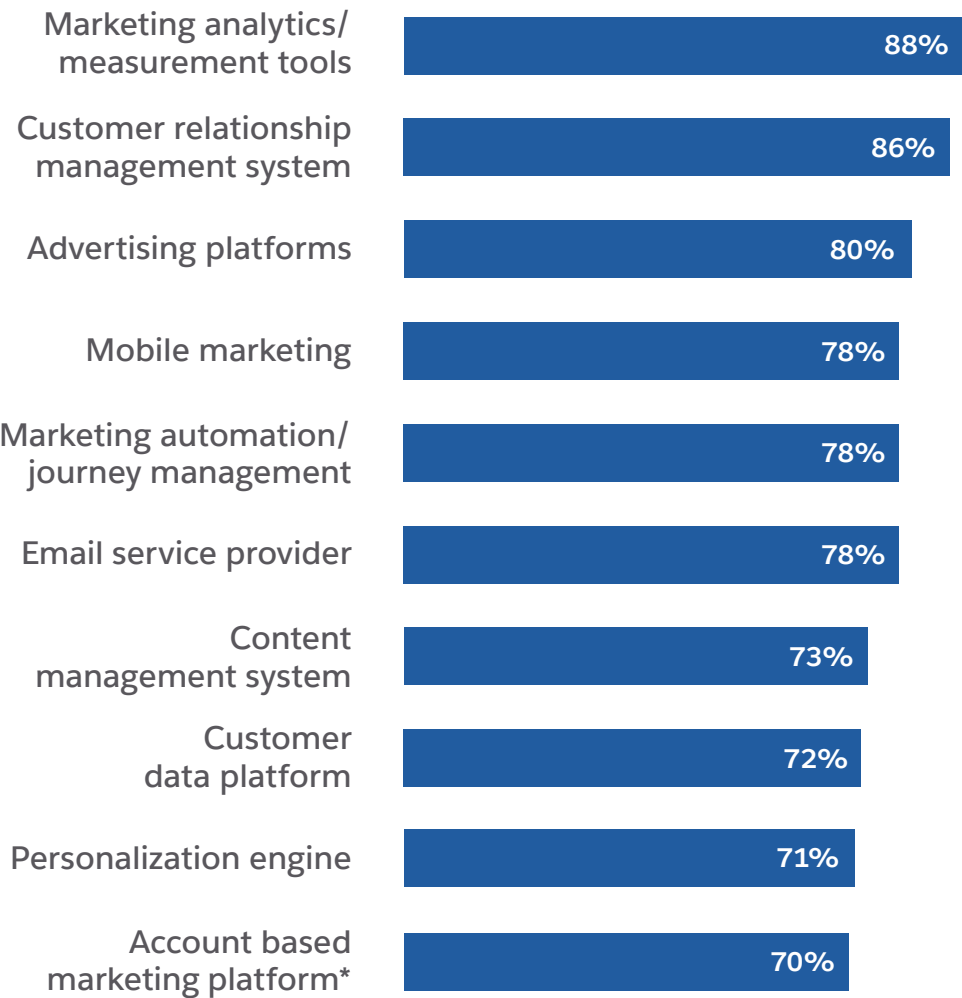
Marketing organizations have a broad remit spanning brand-building to revenue generation. In turn, they rely on a wide set of tools to keep up.

Marketers use an average of 8 different marketing tools and technologies.

The popularity of analytics/ measurement tools and customer relationship management systems shows an emphasis on data-driven approaches and fostering better customer engagement. However, many marketers use additional tools to capture, unify, and activate data from across the customer journey in more refined ways.

Marketers Use Diverse Tools To Fine-Tune Outreach and Measure Success

Marketing Tools and Technologies Used



*Base: B2B and B2B2C marketers

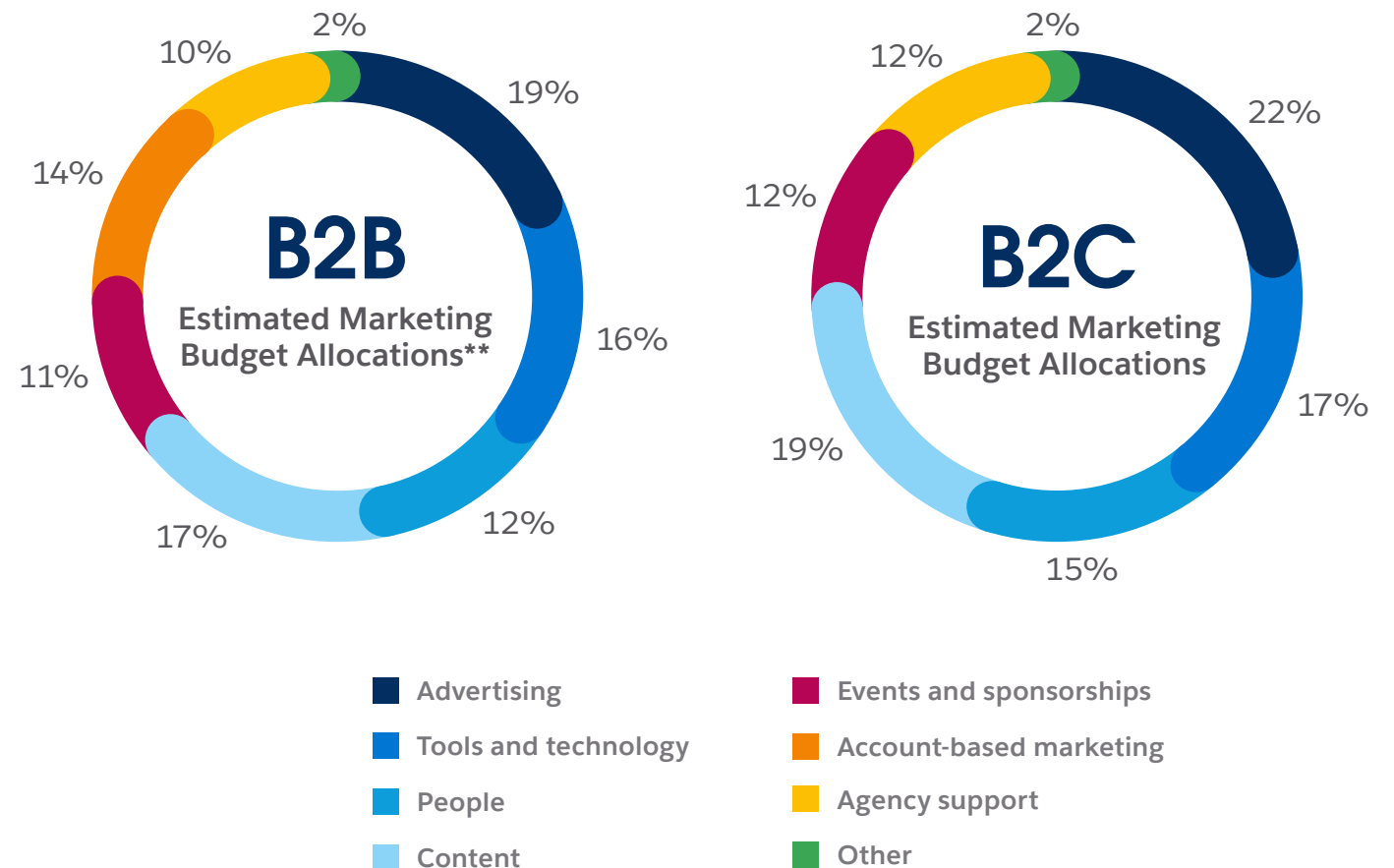


Advertising Priorities Grow Across B2B and B2C

Marketing teams are tasked with making the most of limited budgets. The largest portion of marketing funds is spent on winning mindshare via advertising. In fact, advertising spend jumped three percentage points for B2B marketers and four percentage points for B2C marketers since 2022* – reflecting the fierce competition for brand awareness. In contrast, B2B and B2C marketers saw a three percentage point decrease in event and sponsorship budget allocations, suggesting teams are looking to improve visibility without the overhead of in-person activities.

While at least one-tenth of budgets is dedicated to agency support, both B2B and B2C marketers have pulled back on the use of external partners since 2022, signaling marketers have less support and more work to take on themselves.

Ad Spend Remains Marketers' Biggest Line Item



Base: CMOs and VPs of marketing

**Includes: B2B and B2B2C marketers



Few Marketers Are Fully Satisfied With Performance

Data and AI can help marketers reach customers in new ways and be more efficient, but they are far from reaching their potential. Even most high performers see room for improvement: Fewer than half are fully satisfied with their attempts at unifying customer data to create relevant experiences. Even fewer are satisfied with efforts to maximize AI’s value.

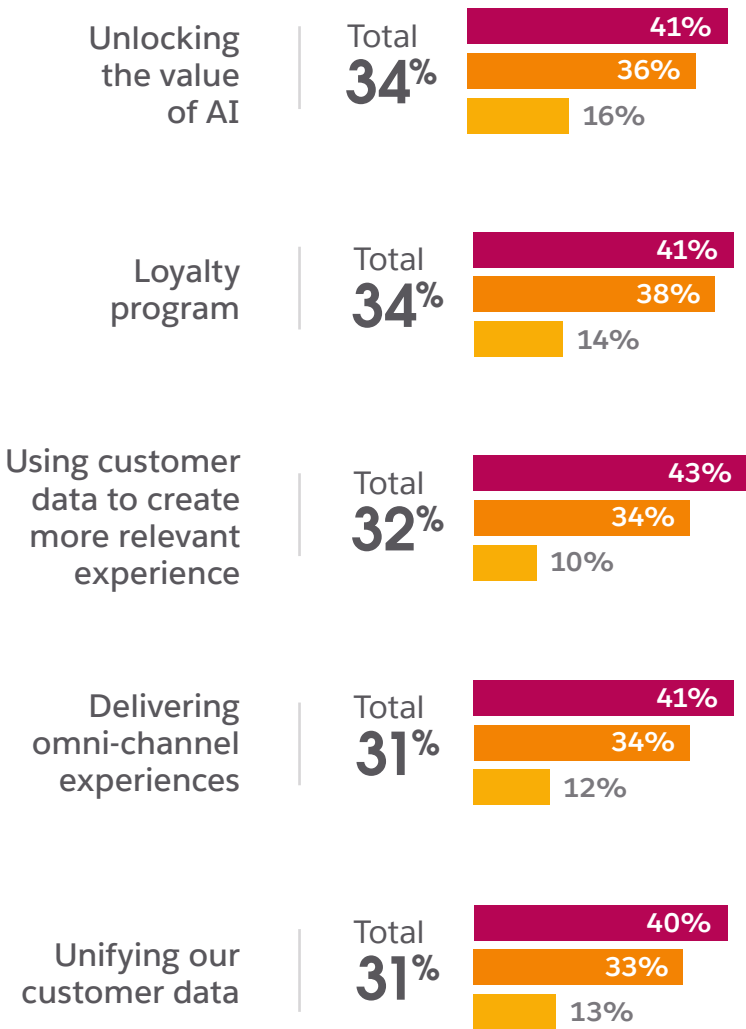
Only 32% of marketers are completely satisfied with how they use customer data to create relevant experiences.

Many marketers are looking to deepen their customer relationships through loyalty programs and omni-channel experiences, but satisfaction is low on these initiatives too. On average, only one in three marketers is fully satisfied with performance on core initiatives, highlighting a gap between expectations and outcomes.

Performance On Key Initiatives Leaves Room for Growth

Marketers Completely Satisfied With Performance Across the Following

■ High performers ■ Moderate performers ■ Underperformers



01

Marketers Shore Up Their Data Foundations



01

Marketers Use Mix of Tactics To Deepen Audience Understanding

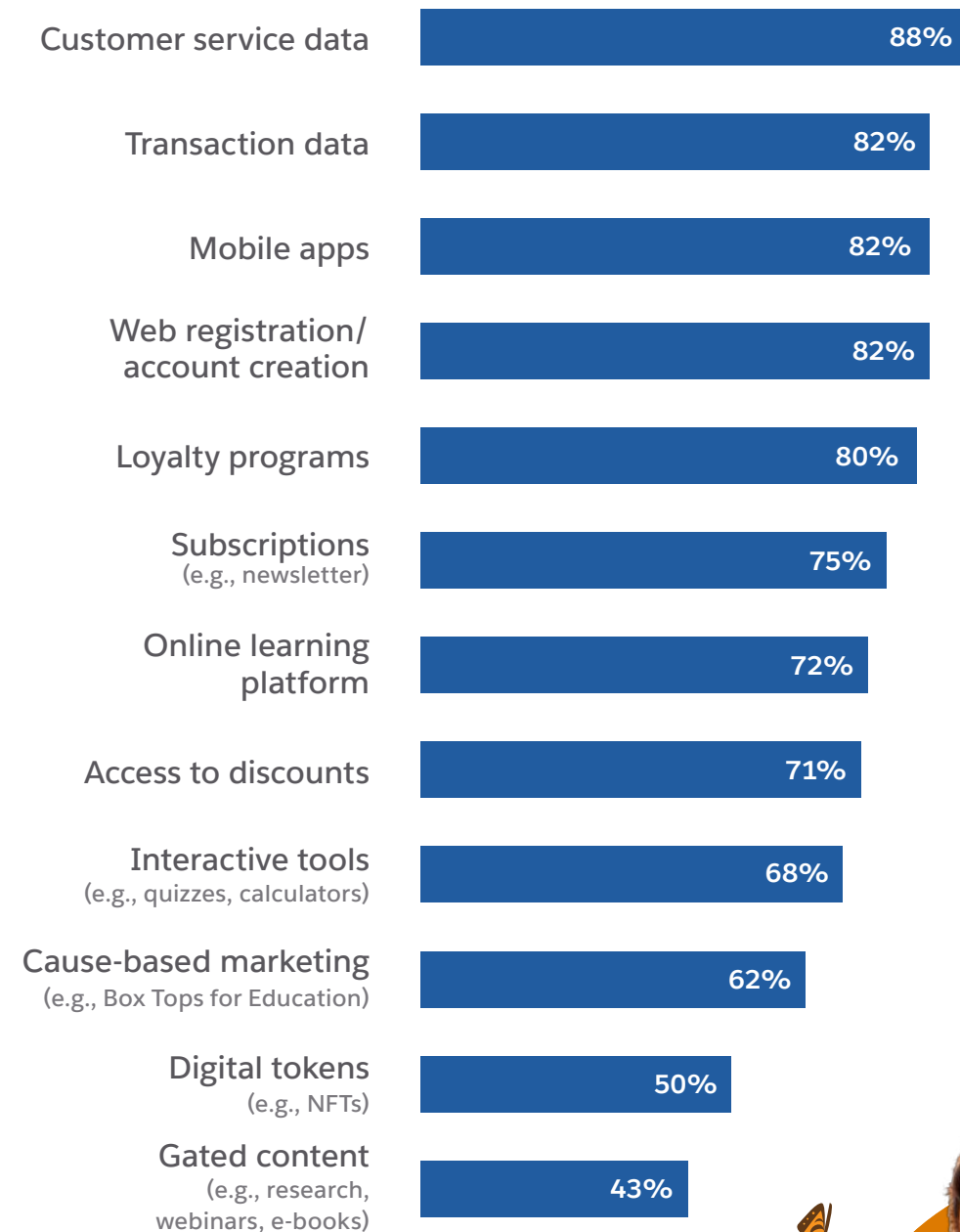
With every click and conversation, customers and prospects leave behind a trail of digital breadcrumbs. Eager to make the most of every interaction, marketers deploy a wide variety of tactics to collect clues for better audience understanding.

Marketers use an average of 9 different tactics across the entire customer journey.

Ever the innovators, marketers are branching out from the most popular tactics – leveraging customer service and commerce data that falls outside of their traditional purview. This suggests marketers are patching together a connected view of their customers and taking a full-funnel approach to data.

Marketers Use a Wide Array of Strategies To Capture Data

Marketing Tactics Used



01

Trusted Customer Data Takes Center Stage

With the end of third-party cookies near, marketers, publishers, and advertisers are increasingly looking to first-party data (both known and anonymous) to understand their audience.

Customer insight data and transactional data also help provide a deeper look at what the audience wants and needs. These sources are also first-party data in all but name, as they're gleaned directly from customer activity with the business.

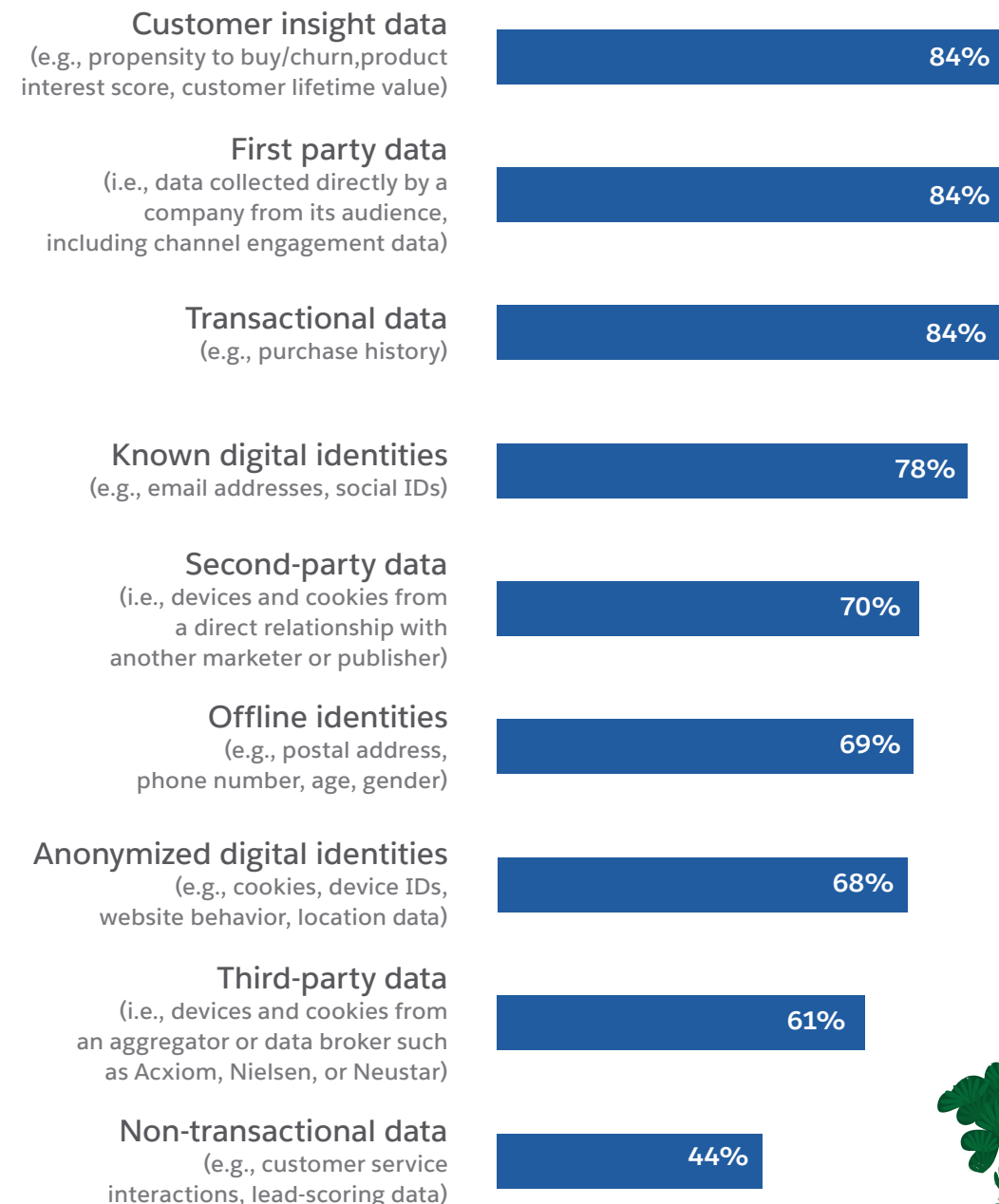
38% of marketers don't use third-party data.

While on the decline, 61% of marketers still use third-party data, compared to 75% in 2022.* This downward trend shows that there is more work to be done for marketers to wean themselves off this increasingly devalued source of information.

*Salesforce State of Marketing, November 2022

A Detailed View of the Customer is the Clear Priority

Customer Data Sources Used by Marketers



01

Unified Data is a Tenet of High Performance Marketing

The modern marketer's challenge isn't a lack of first-party data: it's fully integrating this data across departments to glean insights, plan campaigns, and suppress messages from reaching the wrong audiences, to name a few examples.

Only 31% of marketers are fully satisfied with their ability to unify customer data sources.

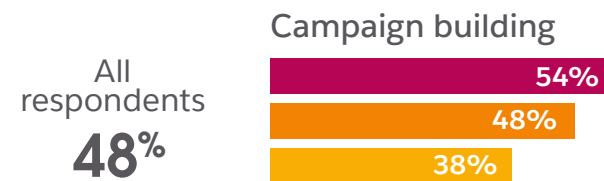
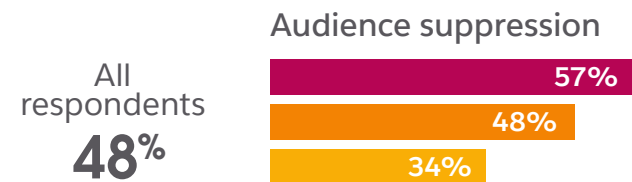
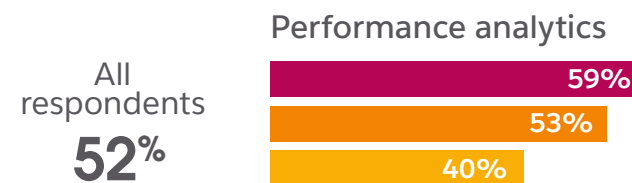
While the majority of marketing teams have at least partially integrated data for these tasks, roughly half or fewer have done so *fully*.

Fully integrated data is more common among high performers, suggesting that investing in the right tools can pay off and investing in unification can give marketers an edge.

Full Integration Gives High Performers a Head Start

Marketers With Fully-Integrated Cross-Departmental Data for the Following Tasks

■ High performers ■ Moderate performers ■ Underperformers



01

Most Marketers Still Need Help Acting on Data

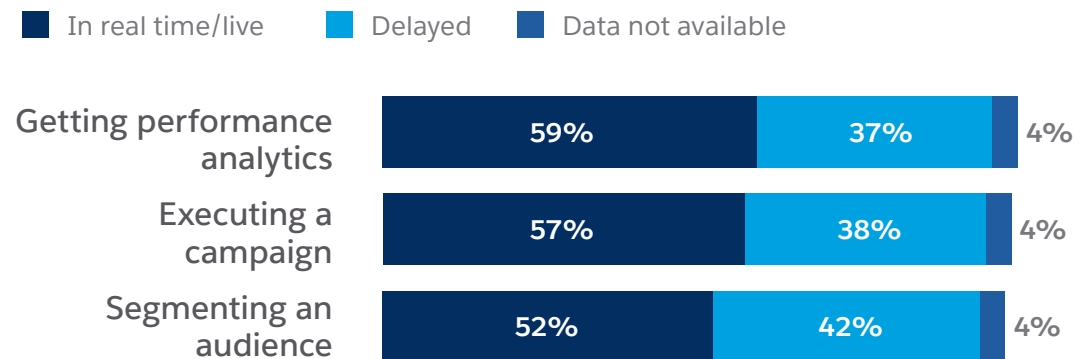
Marketers are under pressure to make sense of and apply the information they collect about prospects and customers – and fast. Timeliness has become a major emphasis. How long does it take for a platform to update its data, and how quickly can marketers act on it?

About two in five marketers still don't have real-time data at their disposal for crucial tasks, relying instead on potentially outdated insights – or even intuition. Even teams with live data are slowed down by their ability to activate it.

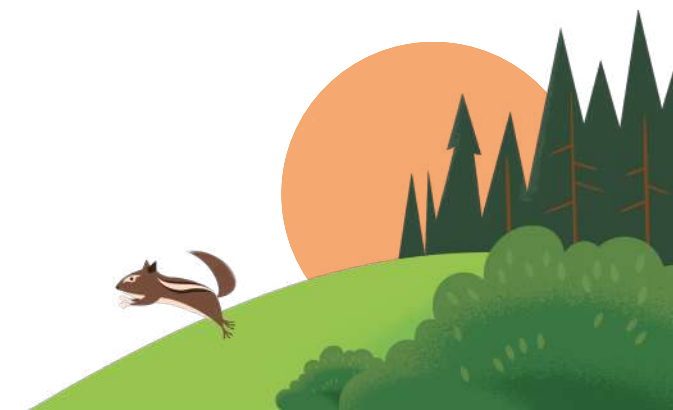
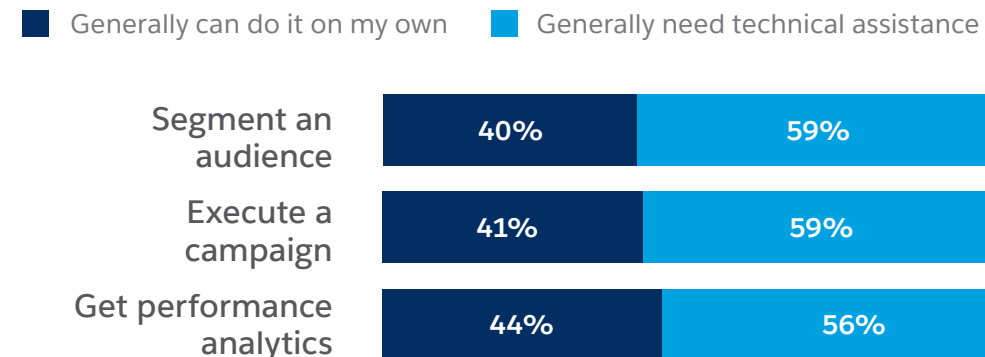
Case in point: while over half of marketers say data is available in real time to execute a campaign, 59% need the IT department's help to do so. This could hint at a lack of tools needed to quickly unearth real-time data, or a shortage of expertise and training necessary to use said tools.

Data Goes Real-Time, but Access Can Be a Barrier

Speed of Data Availability for the Following Activities



Tasks Marketers Can Generally Do On Their Own vs. Need Assistance



02

Marketers Embrace AI With an Eye on Trust



High Performers Outpace Rivals with AI Integration

From scaling creativity to automating processes, AI holds a lot of promise – and a growing number of marketers are looking to take advantage. In 2022, 68% of marketers had a defined AI strategy.* Today, 75% of marketers are already rolling up their sleeves and experimenting with or fully implementing AI. Yet a closer look reveals an uneven landscape.

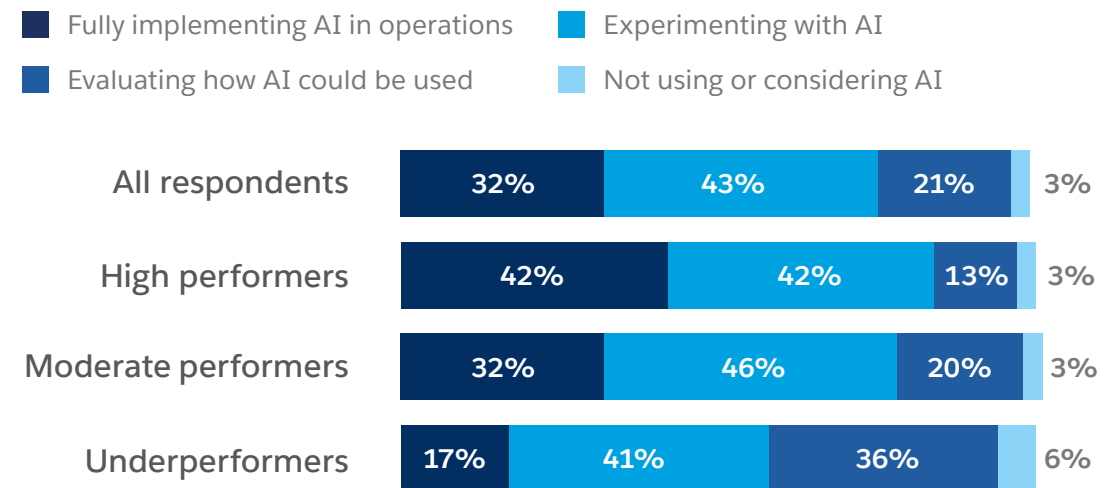
High performers are 2.5x more likely than underperformers to have fully implemented AI within their operations.

While the majority of high and moderate performers are testing, refining, and deploying AI, over one-third of underperformers have yet to graduate from a formal consideration phase. As a result, any AI benefits will elude these underperformers until they shift from evaluation to active experimentation.

*Salesforce State of Marketing, November 2022

Marketers Look to Experiment With AI Before Implementation

State of AI Adoption by Marketing Organizations



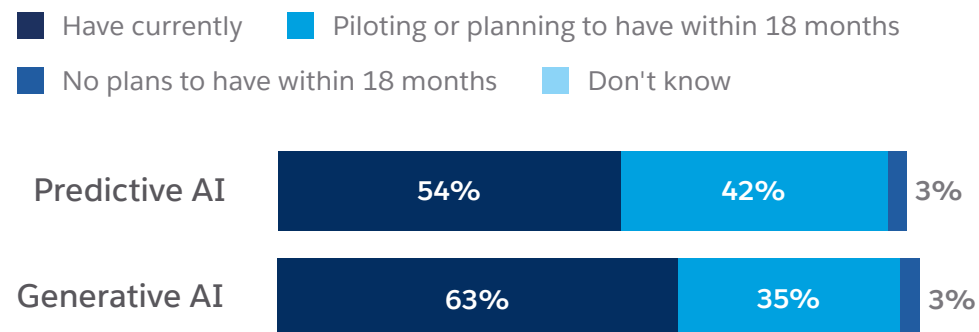
AI Opens Possibilities For Next-Level Customer Experience

Generative AI may be relatively new, but marketers have been quick to add it to their arsenal. Over half of marketers say they use predictive AI and even more cite using generative AI. This could reflect and the behind-the-scenes nature of predictive AI applications and the buzz surrounding the explosive growth and accessibility of generative AI since ChatGPT's release in late 2022.

Already, generative AI use cases rank among marketers' favorites alongside more established predictive AI applications. As a result, marketers are leaning on both flavors of AI to boost creativity, generate content, and do more with fewer resources.

Marketers Lean on AI to Automate and Create

Marketers' Plans to Use the Following AI Type



Base: Marketers who use AI

Top Marketing AI Use Cases

- 1 Automating customer interactions
- 2 Generating content
- 3 Analyzing performance
- 4 Automating data integration
- 5 Driving best offers in real time



02

Marketers Have Broad Concerns About AI

Inspired by generative AI's use cases, marketers are eager to test the technology out for themselves, particularly when compared to their peers. Eighty-eight percent of marketers worry about missing out on generative AI's benefits, compared to 78% of sales and 73% of service colleagues.* Yet marketers, especially at the executive level, have concerns about embracing the technology while protecting data integrity and job stability.

41% of CMOs cite data exposure as a top concern compared to 29% of VPs and 32% of team leads.

Ninety-eight percent of marketing leaders believe trustworthy data is essential.* But, just as the data must be trustworthy, so should its integration with AI. Generative AI systems require access to large datasets to learn, generate content, and create interactive experiences, underscoring the need to follow ethical and accurate guidelines while also taking steps to safeguard sensitive customer information.

*[Salesforce State of Data and Analytics, November 2023.](#)

Data Tops the List of AI Concerns

Ranking of Marketers' Generative AI Concerns

- 1 Data exposure or leakage
- 2 Lack of necessary data
- 3 Lack of strategy or use cases
- 4 Inaccurate outputs
- 5 Copyright or intellectual property concerns
- 6 Distrust in generative AI
- 7 Biased outputs
- 8 Fear that AI will replace my job
- 9 Adherence to brand guidelines
- 10 Difficulty learning how to use the technology
- 11 Environmental impacts



03

Full Personalization Remains a Work in Progress



03

Underperformers Still Struggle to Connect Traditional Channels

"Meeting customers where they are" is a familiar marketing mantra. Yet that doesn't make it easy, especially when customers' channel preferences are context-dependent.*

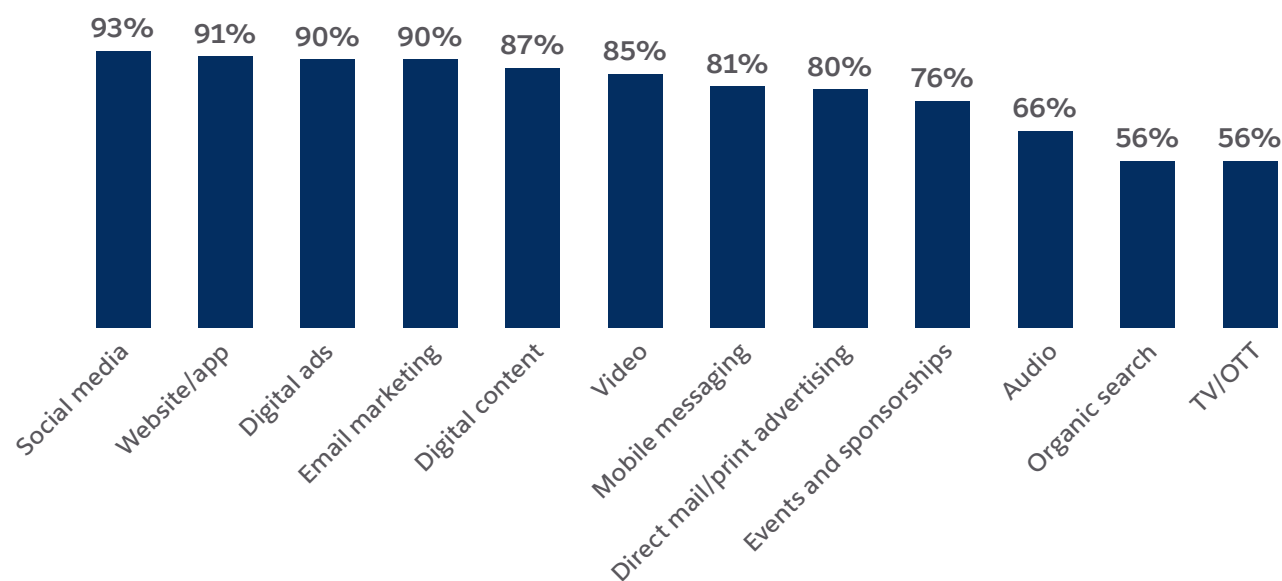
Marketers engage customers across an average of 10 channels.

Seventy-eight percent of marketers are satisfied with their ability to engage customers across channels, but this overall figure masks a large divide between high and low performers. Half of underperformers struggle to engage customers across more than one channel while 93% of high performers are satisfied with engaging customers across channels.

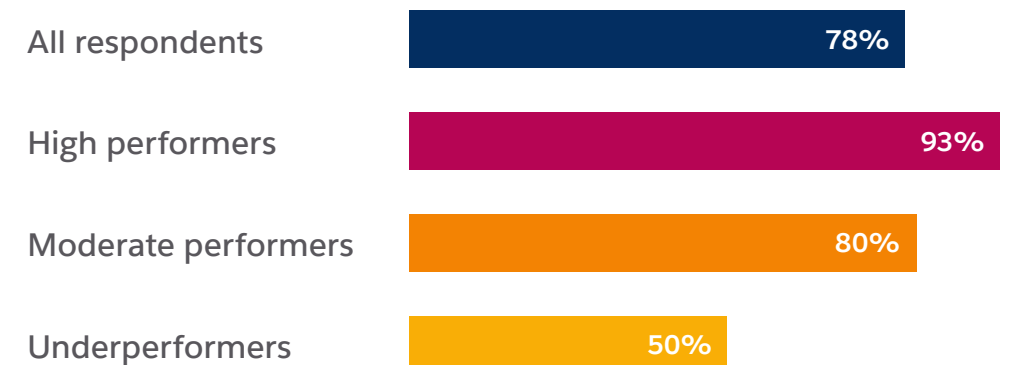
Many marketers are also neglecting organic search, which can be among the most effective channels. According to a survey of more than 450,000 businesses, 88% of B2B sites and 58% of B2C retail sites are found through unbranded search.**

Tried and True Channels Dominate While Audio/Video Lag

Marketing Channels Used



Marketers Satisfied With Cross-Channel Customer Engagement



*Salesforce State of the Connected Customer, August 2023.

**"Branded vs. Unbranded Search in Today's Retail Landscape," Total Retail, June 2020.

Spotlight: Retail and Consumer Goods Marketers Boost Mobile Messaging

Email remains by far the favorite when it comes to number of messages sent, but retail and consumer goods marketers don't rely on that channel alone.* With stiff competition for customers' attention, marketers are investing in higher-growth channels like mobile.

While the amount of growth varies quarter-to-quarter, there is consistent upward movement in message sends across email, push notifications, SMS, and OTT.

81% of marketers say mobile messaging will be a bigger priority in the coming year.

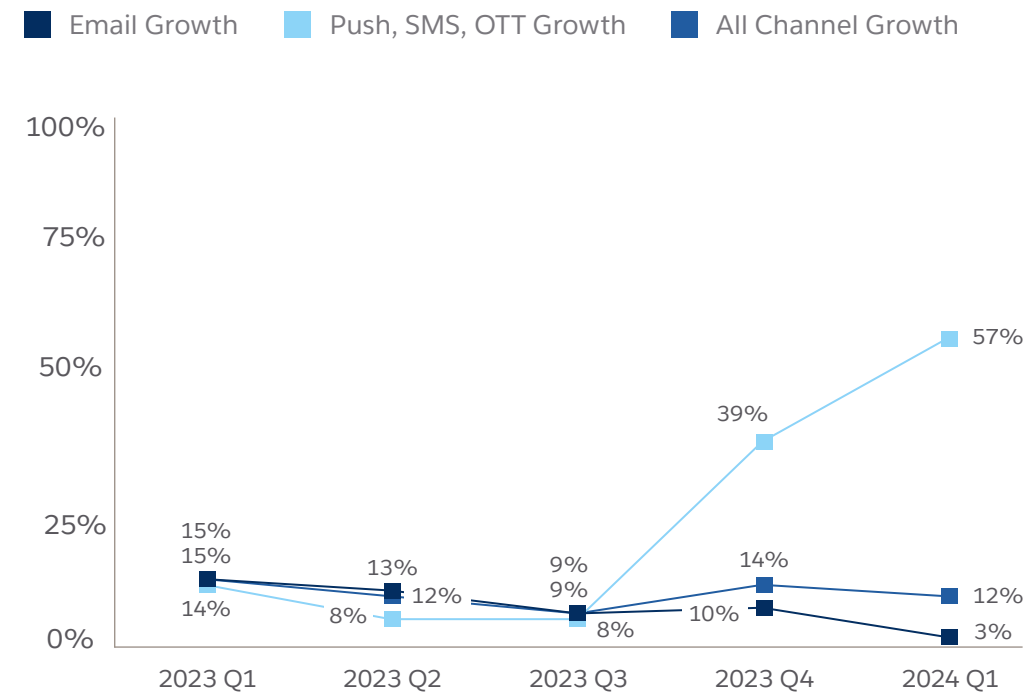
The overall growth of mobile messaging has dramatically outpaced email messaging growth in two of the last five quarters. Q4 of 2023 saw mobile's growth rate reach more than 19 times that of email.

Given that the retail and consumer goods industry is often on the leading edge of marketing tactics, this could be a signal for what's to come for other industries.

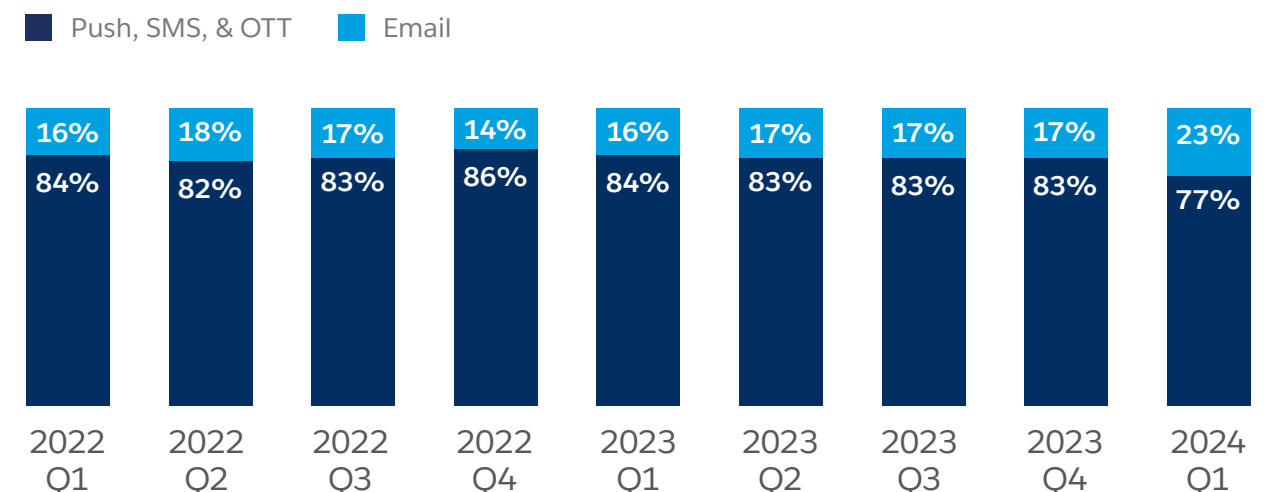
*Salesforce Shopping Index, April 2024.

Messaging Volume Grows, Albeit Unevenly, Year Over Year*

Retail & Consumer Goods Marketing Message YoY Growth



Share of Retail & Consumer Goods Marketing Message Sends



03

Marketers Move to a Lifecycle Approach for Personalization

Creating a unique brand experience requires ongoing, targeted engagement throughout the customer journey. This can be particularly challenging during early stages, when less customer data is available. Such constraints could explain why marketers are more likely to personalize content for established customers than onboarding materials for newcomers.

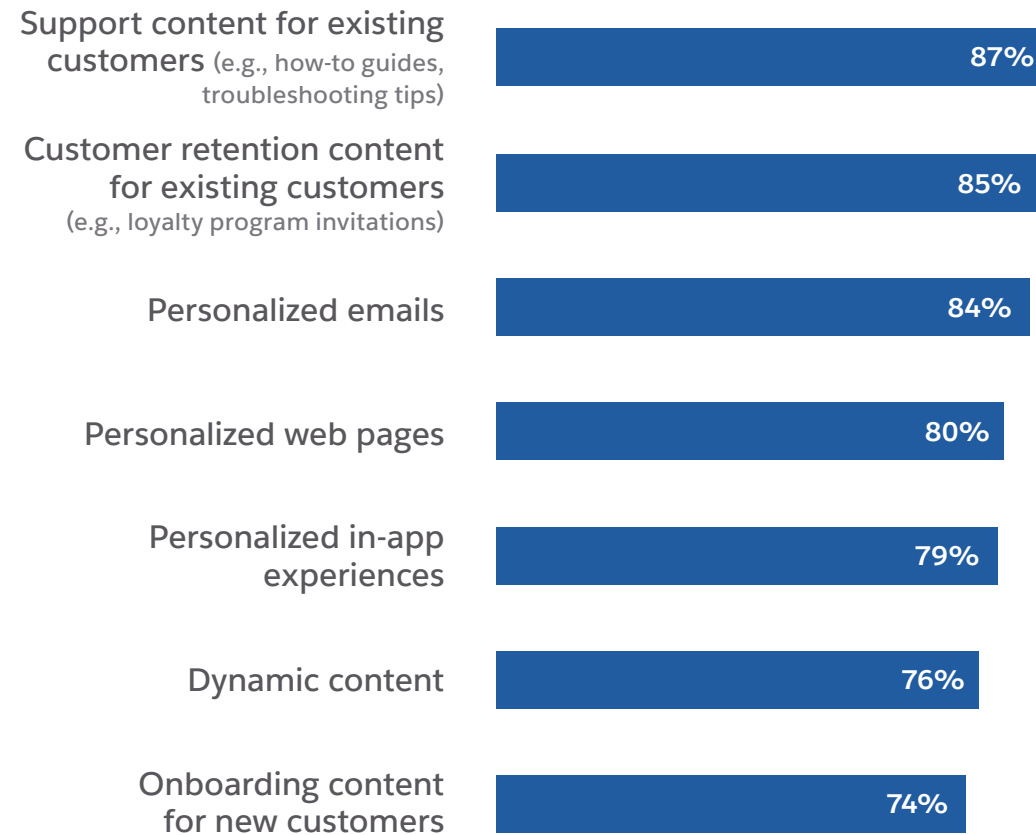
Over half of marketers provide all of the above, taking a lifecycle approach to personalization.

A lifecycle approach is when marketers personalize content along the entire customer journey — from onboarding to retention and ongoing support.

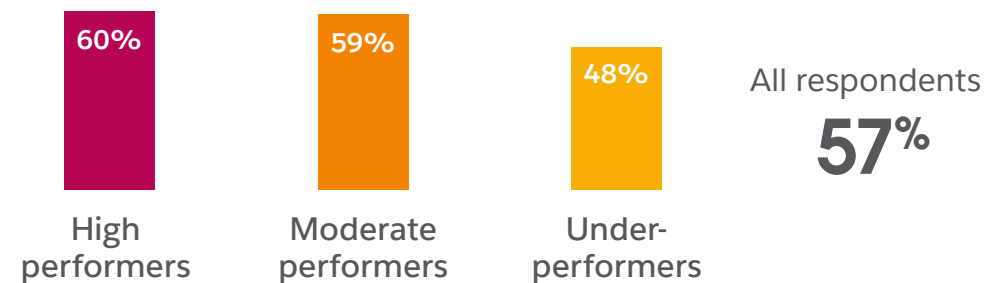
Still, 43% of marketers take a fragmented approach to personalization – demonstrating an understanding of customer needs at certain stages and leveraging mass messaging at others. The divide is sharper when segmented by performance, as underperformers fall behind their high- and moderate performing peers.

Marketers Connect the Dots to Reach Their Audience

Strategies Used for Personalization



Marketers Using a Lifecycle Approach To Personalization



03

High Performers Move Closer to Full Cross-Channel Personalization

The battle to win over audiences is only getting harder as customer expectations continue to rise. Seventy-three percent of customers expect better personalization as technology advances.*

Yet, fewer than six in 10 marketers are able to fully personalize familiar channels such as email and mobile messaging. A closer look at maturity levels shows a wide gap between performance tiers.

Average number of channels with full personalization:

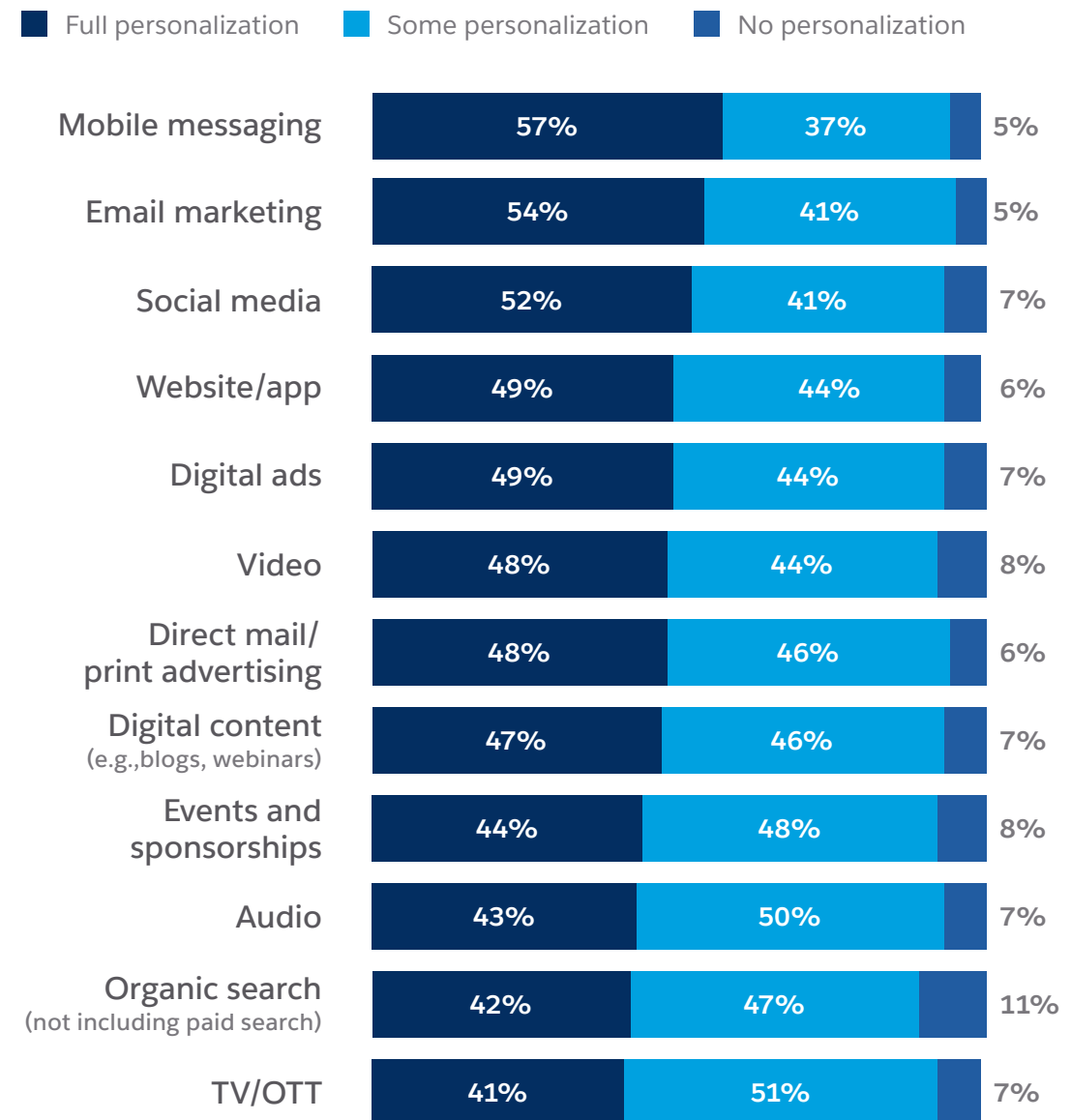
- High performers: 6
- Moderate performer: 5
- Underperformers: 3

While personalization is highest on channels that are easy to test and iterate on the fly like mobile and email, it remains a work in progress for channels demanding more production time and planning like audio or TV/OTT.

*Salesforce State of the Connected Customer, August 2023.

Marketers Focus More on Their First-Party Channels

Extent of Personalization Within The Following Channels



Base: Marketers who use the selected channels



04

Marketers Seek Unified Analytics



04

KPIs Focus on Revenue

Marketers are metrics-minded, using data to track value, refine performance, and drive sales forward.

The three most common marketing KPIs align with the sales function, showing efforts to reduce siloed work, coordinate in the pre-sales process, and present a cohesive, unified front to customers and prospects.

Marketers closely monitor their marketing/sales pipeline (64%) and funnel (63%).

Low adoption of KPIs beyond acquisition and topline revenue show there is progress to be made on full attribution.

48% of marketers track customer lifetime value.

This is especially apparent for longer term measurements such as customer lifetime value (CLV) that measure the ROI of nuanced and targeted customer retention strategies.

Marketers Keep Close Tabs on Sales Impact

Ranked Popularity of Marketing Metrics/KPIs

- 1 Marketing/sales pipeline
- 2 Revenue
- 3 Marketing/sales funnel (Base: B2B marketers)
- 4 Web/mobile analytics
- 5 Customer retention rates
- 6 Content engagement
- 7 Customer acquisition costs
- 8 Customer satisfaction metrics
- 9 Customer referral rates/volume
- 10 Customer lifetime value (CLV)



04

Top Performers Demonstrate Success Through Analytics

Analytics remains the watchword for both performance evaluation and strategic iteration. More than 80% of marketers feel they have a clear sense of their impact on revenue and pipeline.

But the work isn't done: improving marketing ROI/attribution remains a top priority, behind only adopting AI and refining the use of technology.

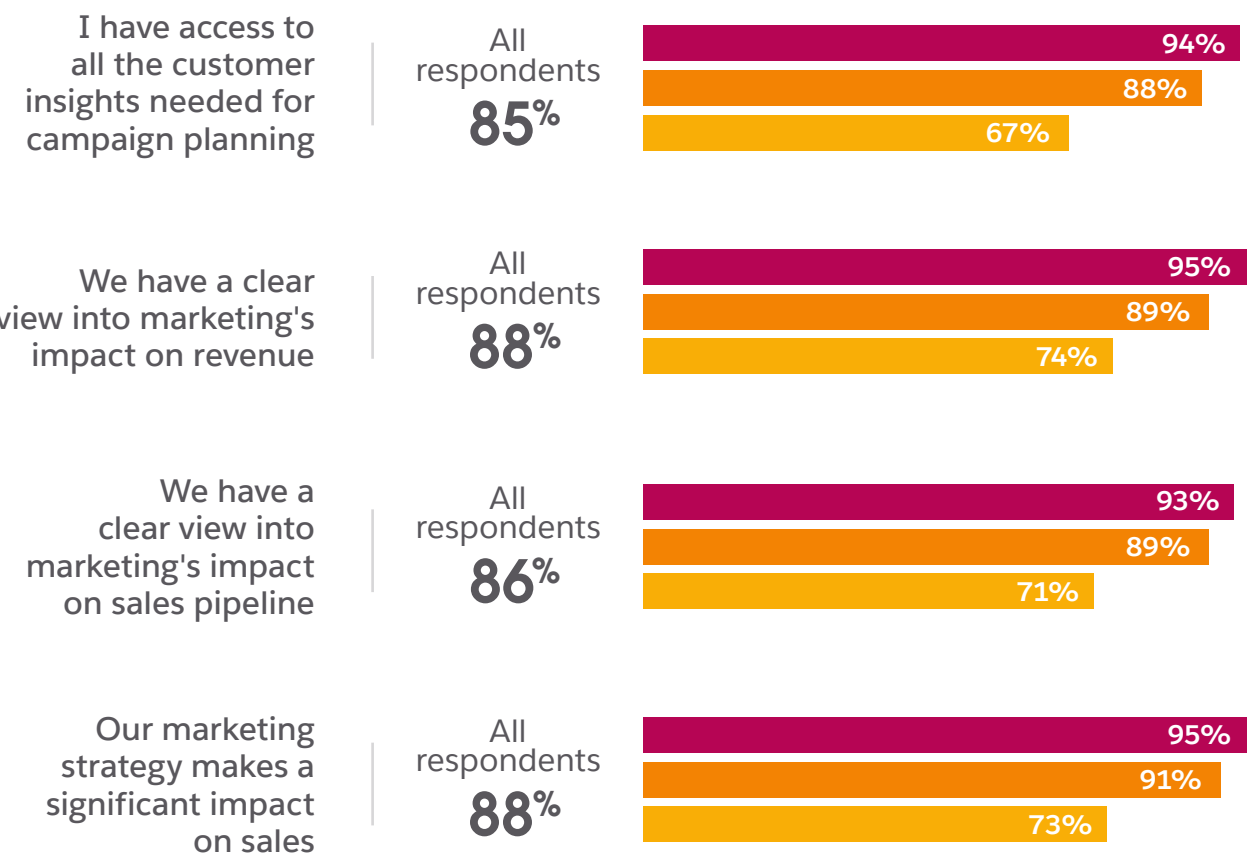
The ability to demonstrate value via sales, revenue, and pipeline impact is crucial for securing the support and budget needed to succeed. This is where high performers shine.

Nearly all high performers (93%) have a clear view into their impact on sales pipeline compared to 71% of underperformers. Unsurprisingly, marketers who can identify their impact and adjust as needed are outperforming those who can't.

Marketers Connect the Dots to Revenue

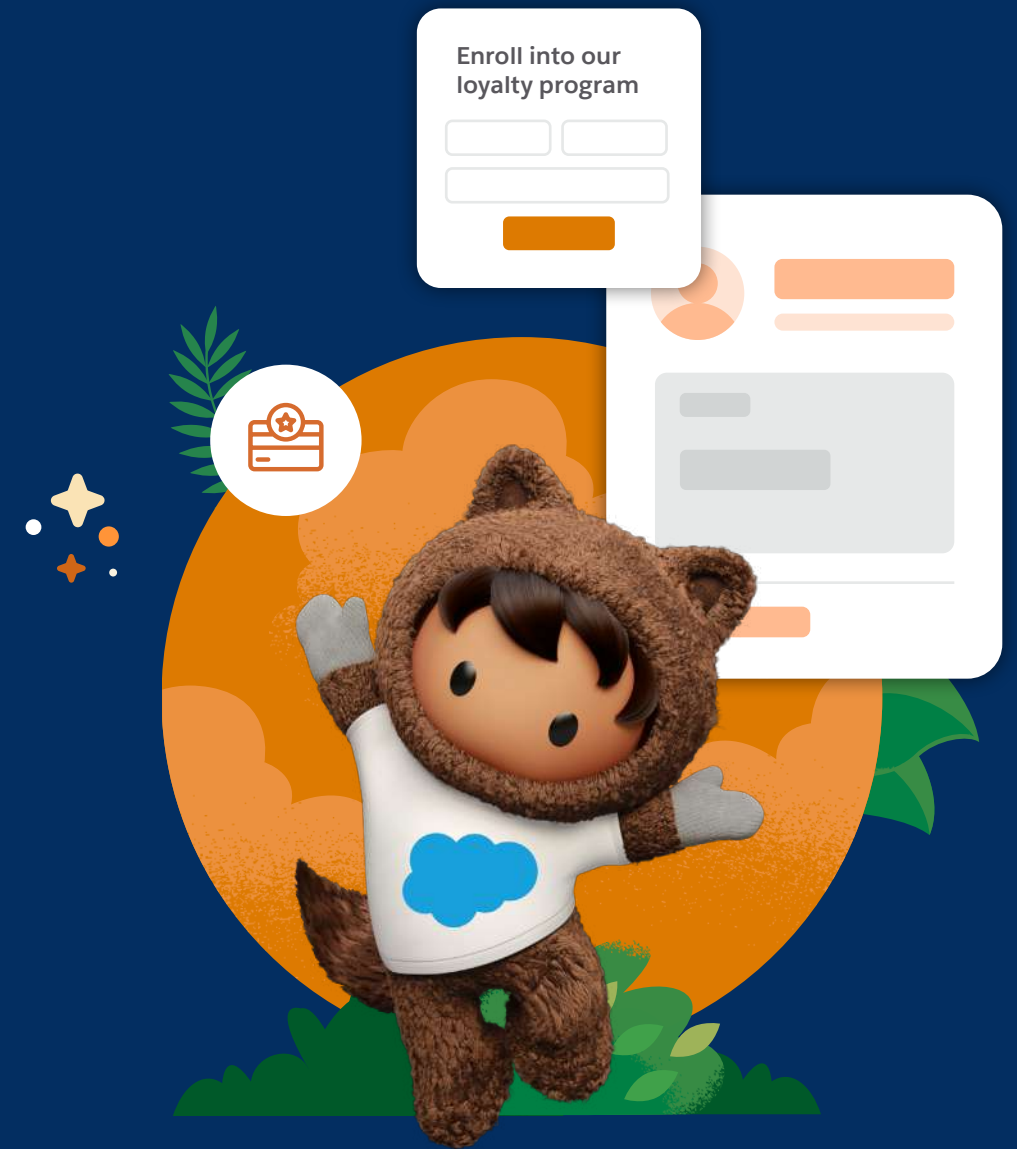
Marketers Who Agree With the Following Statements

■ High performers ■ Moderate performers ■ Underperformers



05

Deeper Relationships Emerge with ABM and Loyalty Programs



05

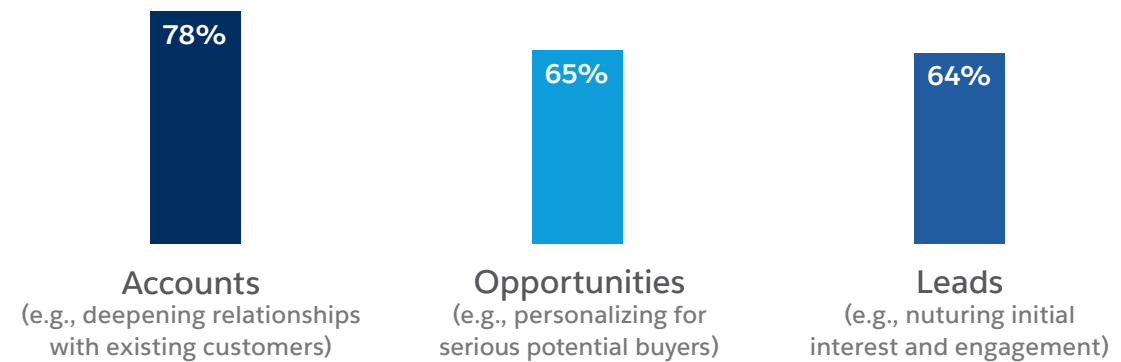
B2B Marketers Use ABM to Grow Customers at Every Stage

Account-based marketing (ABM) requires close collaboration between marketing and sales teams to identify and prioritize key accounts. At its core, ABM unleashes a concentrated marketing effort for more targeted results. In fact, B2B marketers allocated an average of 12% of their budgets on ABM programs, emphasizing the value in directing resources toward accounts with the highest potential for conversion.

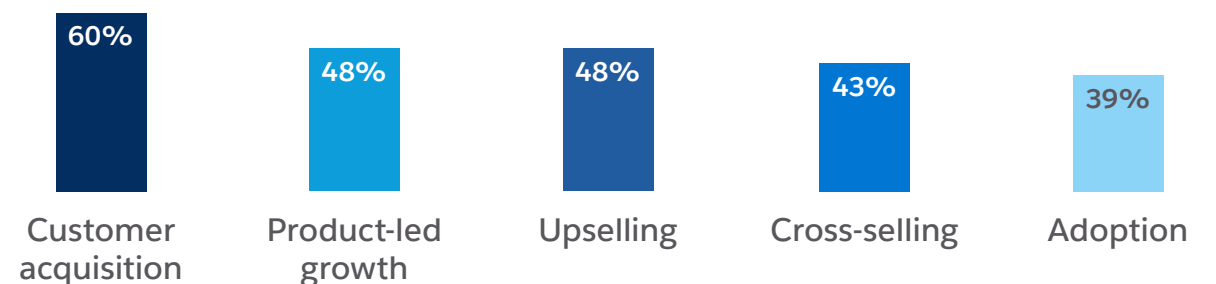
However, B2B marketers aren't just focused on existing customers: Six in 10 use ABM for customer acquisition. Nearly the same number of marketers (65%) are expanding scope to pursue potential buyers showing an interest in partnering with sales earlier on in the process.

Marketers Focus Efforts On Customers

Percent of B2B Respondents Who Market to the Following Audiences



How B2B Marketers Use Account-Based Marketing



05

Loyalty Data Gets Synced, But Functionality Lags Across Touchpoints

When customers provide more data, they expect better experiences. It's a simple trade, but when it comes to loyalty, marketers are falling short. Only 39% say their customers get full loyalty program functionality across touchpoints.

While internal data integration is relatively strong, the underlying issue may be connecting all the channels where customers engage.

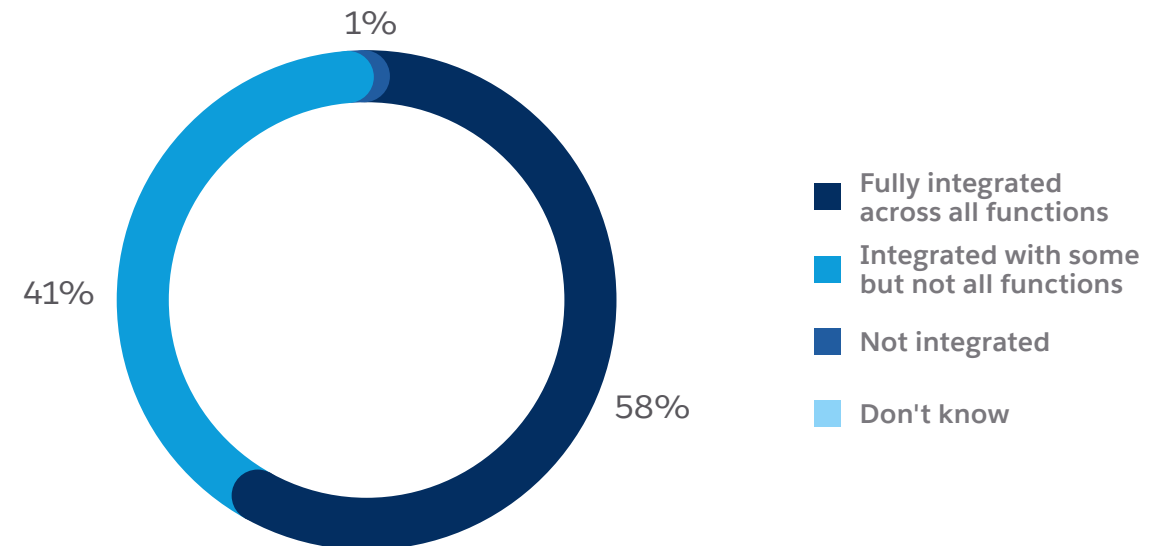
On average, consumers engage with companies across 8 channels.*

With diverse touchpoints, consolidating and synchronizing data becomes increasingly complex, leading to fragmented experiences instead of seamless access to the benefits that customers expect.

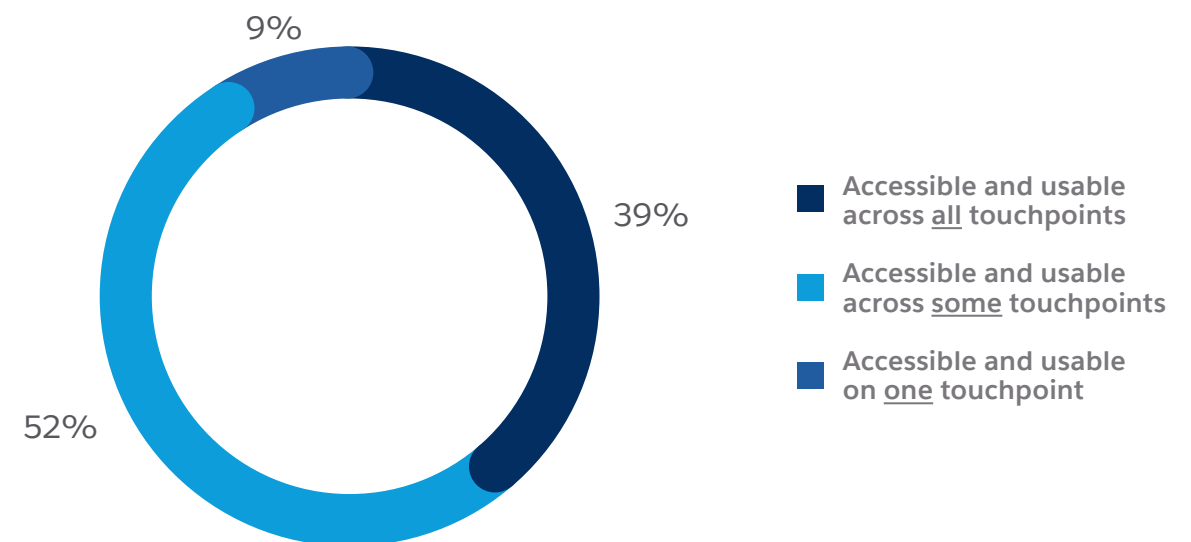
*Salesforce State of the Connected Customer, August 2023.

Loyalty Data is Powerful – If It's Easy to Access

Extent Loyalty Data Is Integrated Across Departments



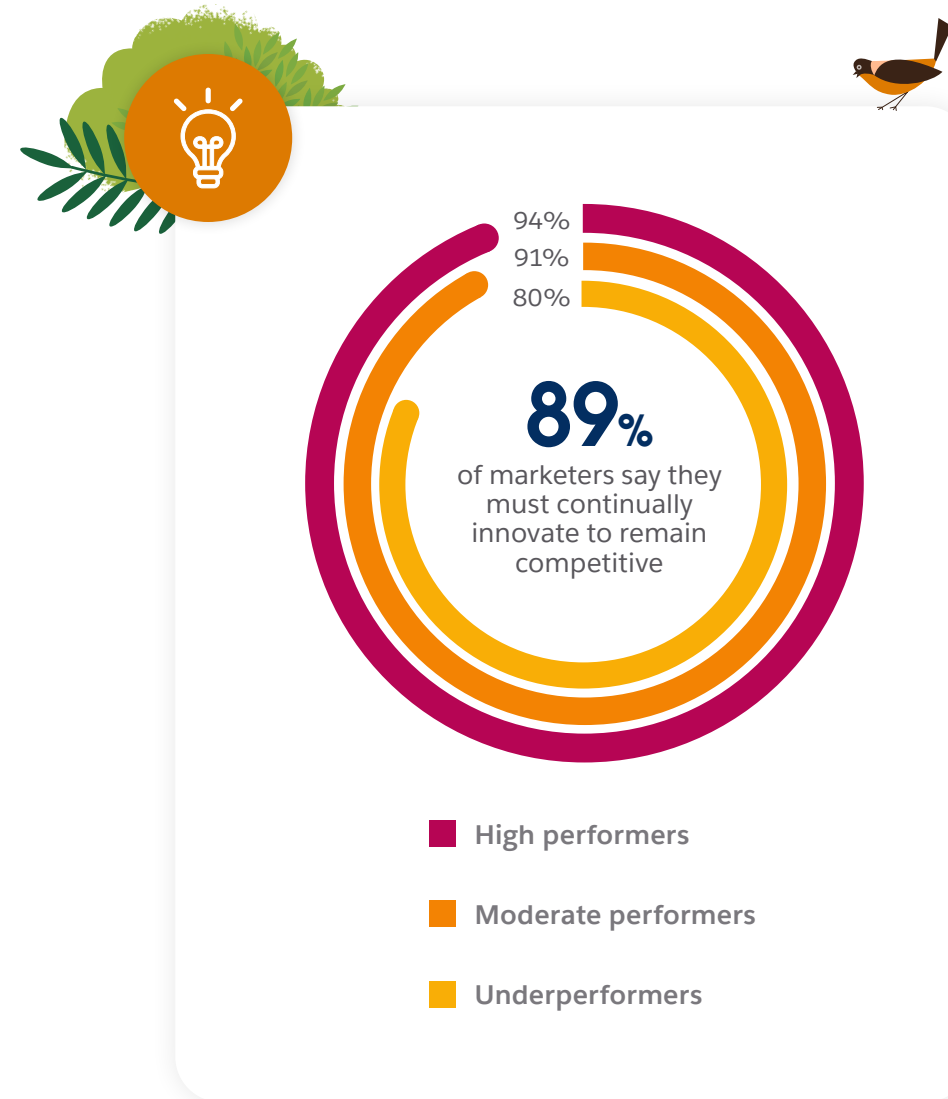
Extent Customers Can Use Loyalty Program Functionality Across Touchpoints



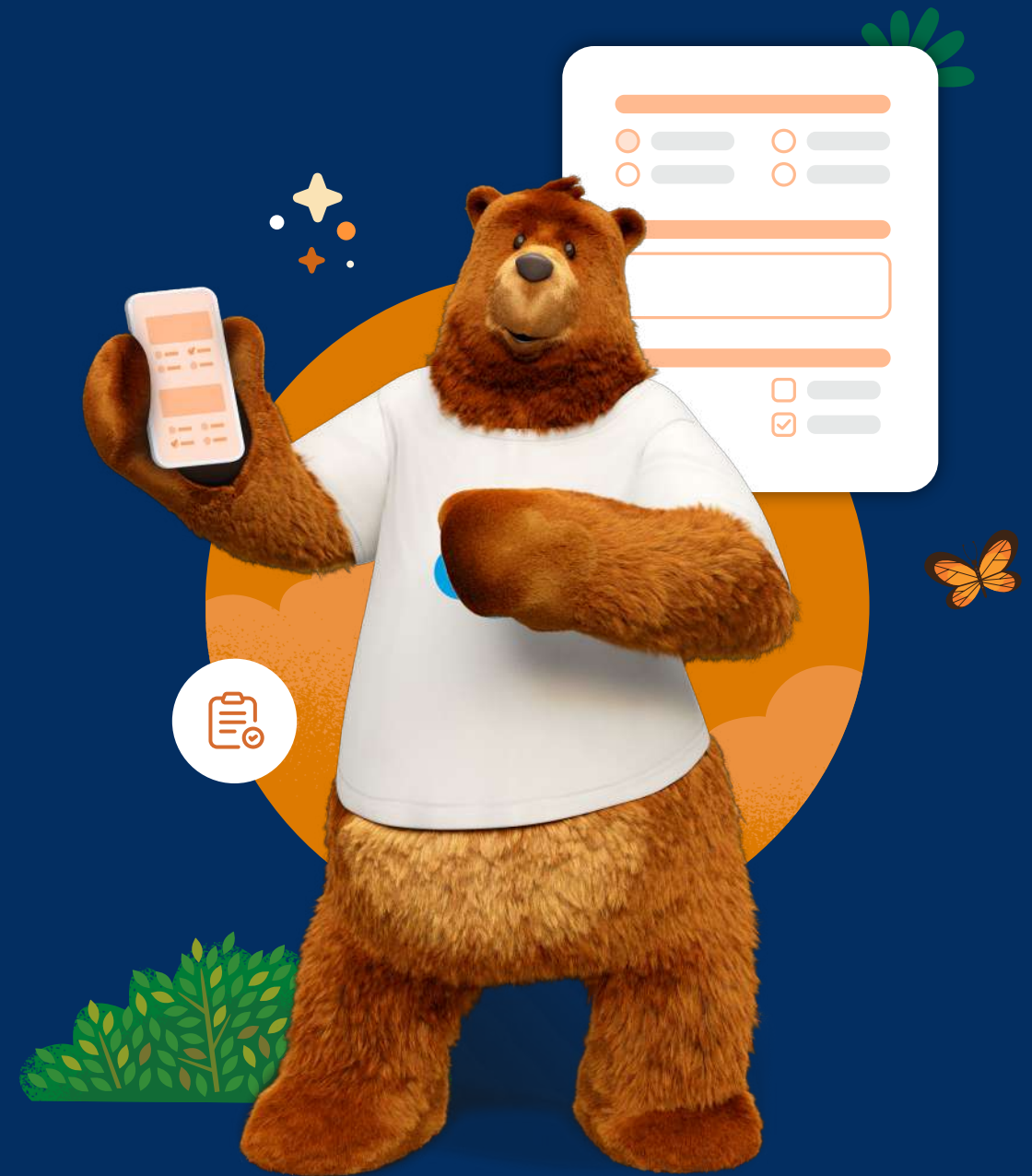
Look Ahead: A Future Full of Marketing Innovation

In the face of an increasingly competitive and tech-driven marketing landscape, marketers are more determined than ever to captivate customers and find new ways to connect with audiences. In fact, 89% of marketers believe they must continually innovate to remain competitive.

With the promise of change a constant, marketers understand the importance of fueling innovation and creating connected, personalized, and immersive experiences to stay ahead of customer expectations.



Survey Demographics



Survey Demographics

Country

Argentina	3%
Australia	4%
Belgium	2%
Brazil	5%
Canada	5%
Chile	2%
Colombia	2%
Denmark	<1%
Finland	<1%
France	5%
Germany	5%
India	5%
Ireland	2%
Italy	5%
Japan	5%
Mexico	4%
Netherlands	3%
New Zealand	2%
Norway	1%
Poland	3%
Portugal	2%
Singapore	2%
South Africa	3%
South Korea	5%
Spain	3%
Sweden	1%
Switzerland	2%
United Arab Emirates	2%
United Kingdom	5%
United States	10%

Industry

Architecture, engineering, and construction	5%
Automotive	7%
Communications	3%
Consumer goods	7%
Energy and utilities	5%
Financial services	12%
Government/public sector	5%
Healthcare	6%
Hospitality	4%
Life sciences and biotechnology	3%
Manufacturing	6%
Media and entertainment	4%
Nonprofit	5%
Professional and business services	5%
Retail	12%
Supply chain and logistics	3%

Technology	3%
Travel and/or transportation	5%
Other	1%

Business Model

B2B	25%
B2C	50%
B2B2C	25%

Seniority

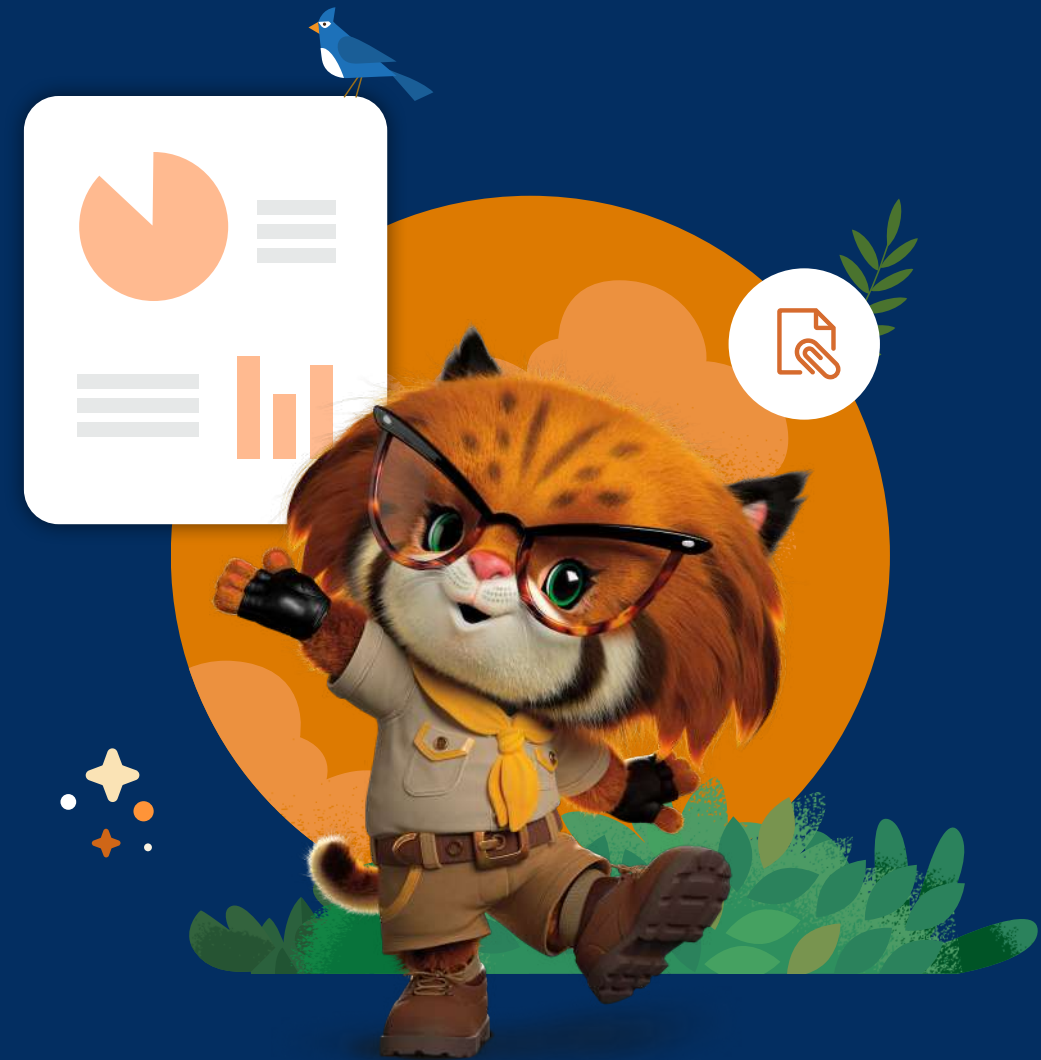
Chief Marketing Officer	12%
Vice president or equivalent	27%
Team leader, supervisor, manager, director, or equivalent	61%

Company Size

Small and medium-sized businesses (1-100 employees)	30%
Mid-market businesses (101-3,500 employees)	50%
Enterprises (over 3,500 employees)	20%

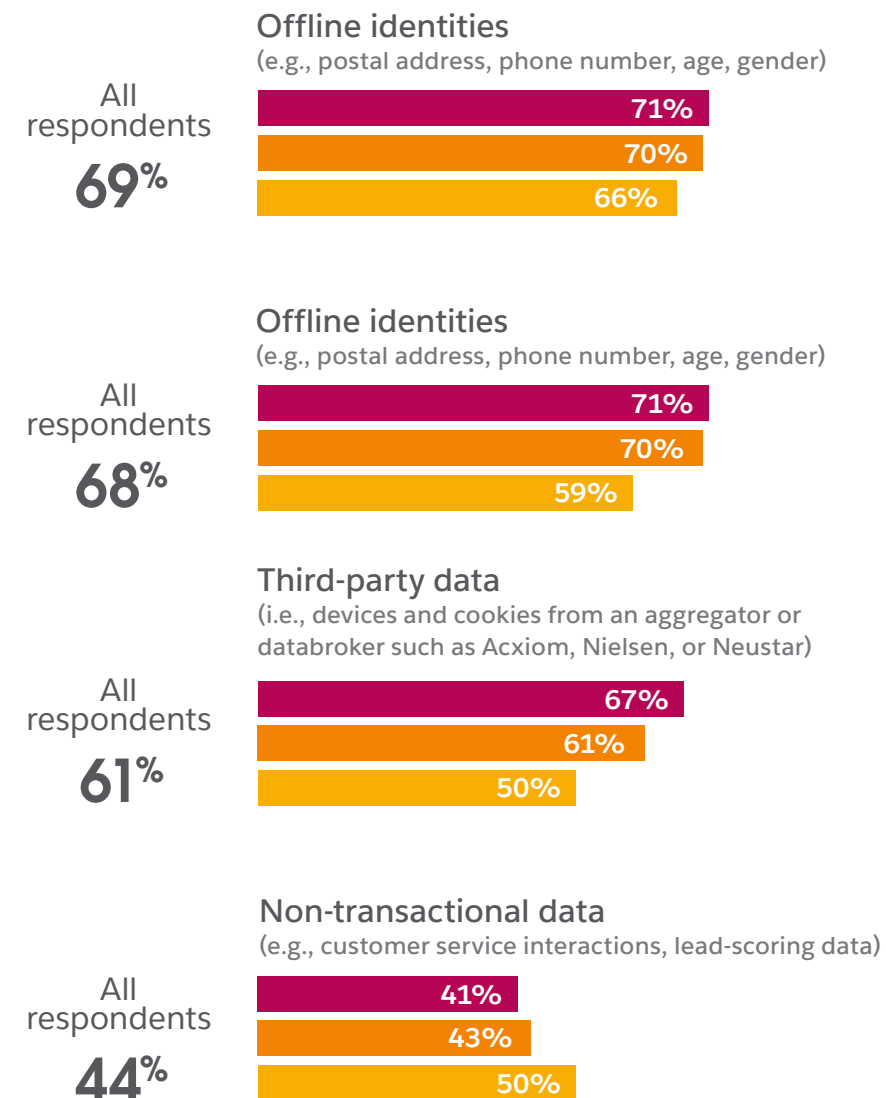
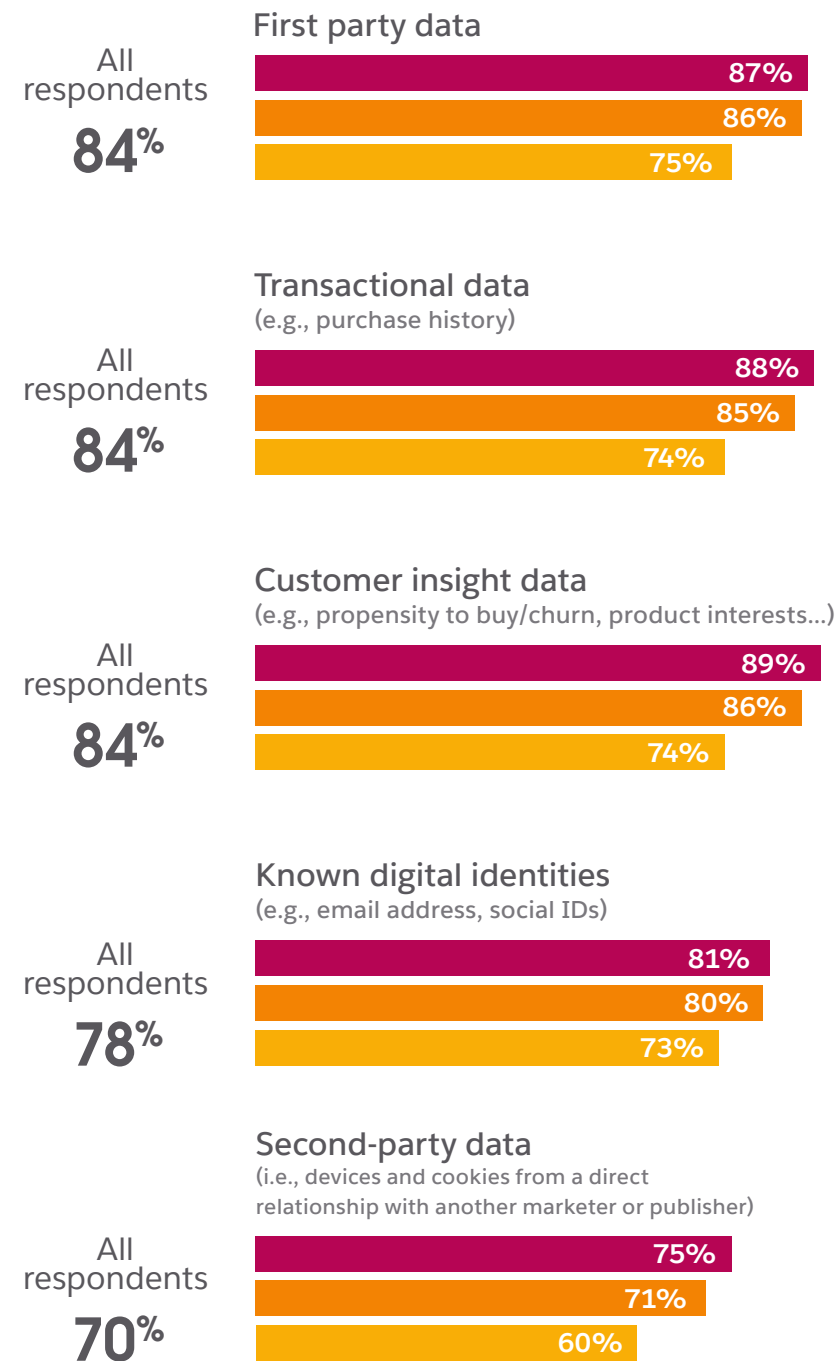


Appendix



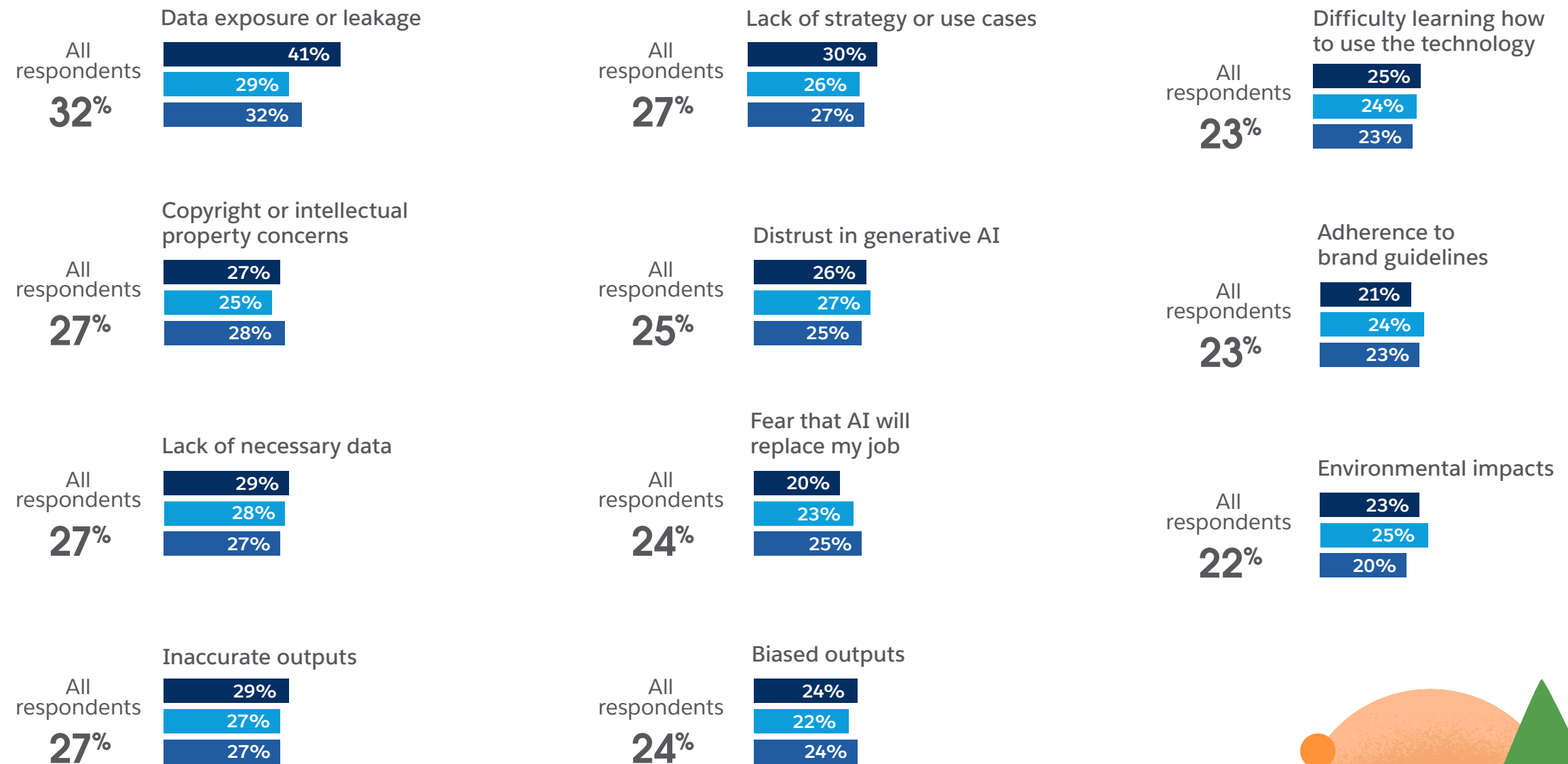
Marketing Data Sources Used By Maturity Level

■ High performers ■ Moderate performers ■ Underperformers



Marketers' Generative AI Concerns By Seniority

■ Chief Marketing Officer ■ Vice President, SVP, EVP, or equivalent ■ Team leader, supervisor, manager, director, or equivalent

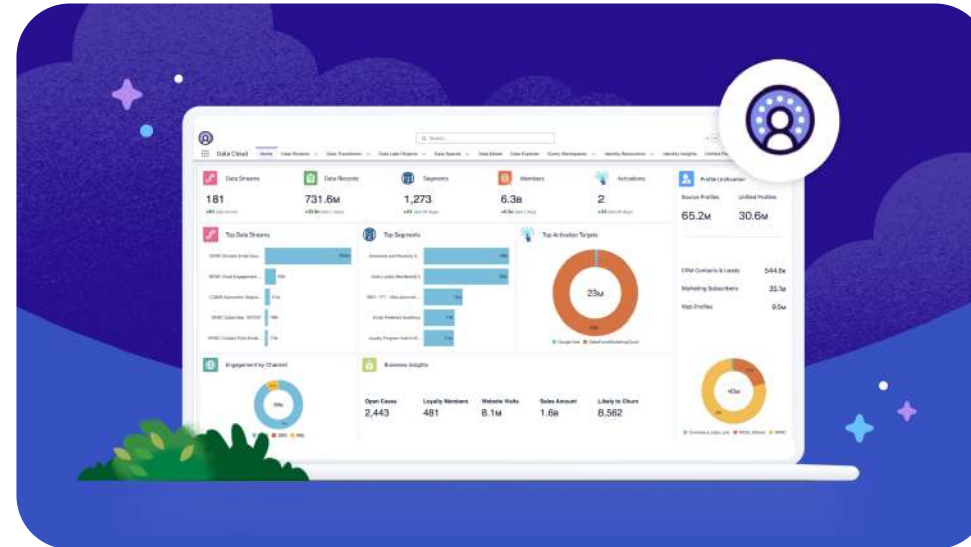


Want More?



Marketing Cloud Overview

See how top brands activate data and AI with Salesforce to grow customer relationships.



Salesforce Data Cloud

Centralizing data is just the first step, but it's not enough. Learn what marketers can do with Data Cloud.



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