



THE STATE OF MARKETING AUTOMATION

New Research for the B2B Marketer

Research Conducted in Partnership with Ascend2



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SURVEY RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Company Size

More than 500	18%
50 to 500	24%
Fewer than 50	58%

Primary Role in Company

Owner / Partner / C-Level	54%
Vice President / Director / Manager	30%
Non-Management Professional	16%

METHODOLOGY

Ascend2 benchmarks the performance of marketing strategies, tactics and the technology that drives them with a standardized online questionnaire and a proprietary 3-Minute Survey format.

This survey was fielded to a panel of marketing professionals and marketing research subscribers.

MARKETING AUTOMATION FOR THE B2B MARKETER

Marketing automation can be a key component to the success of a B2B organization by giving marketers the power to elevate the customer experience while increasing engagement and improving efficiencies.

But where do B2B marketers stand with marketing automation today and how do they plan to utilize it in the year ahead?

To help you answer this question, Ascend2 and Act-On fielded The State of Marketing Automation Survey.

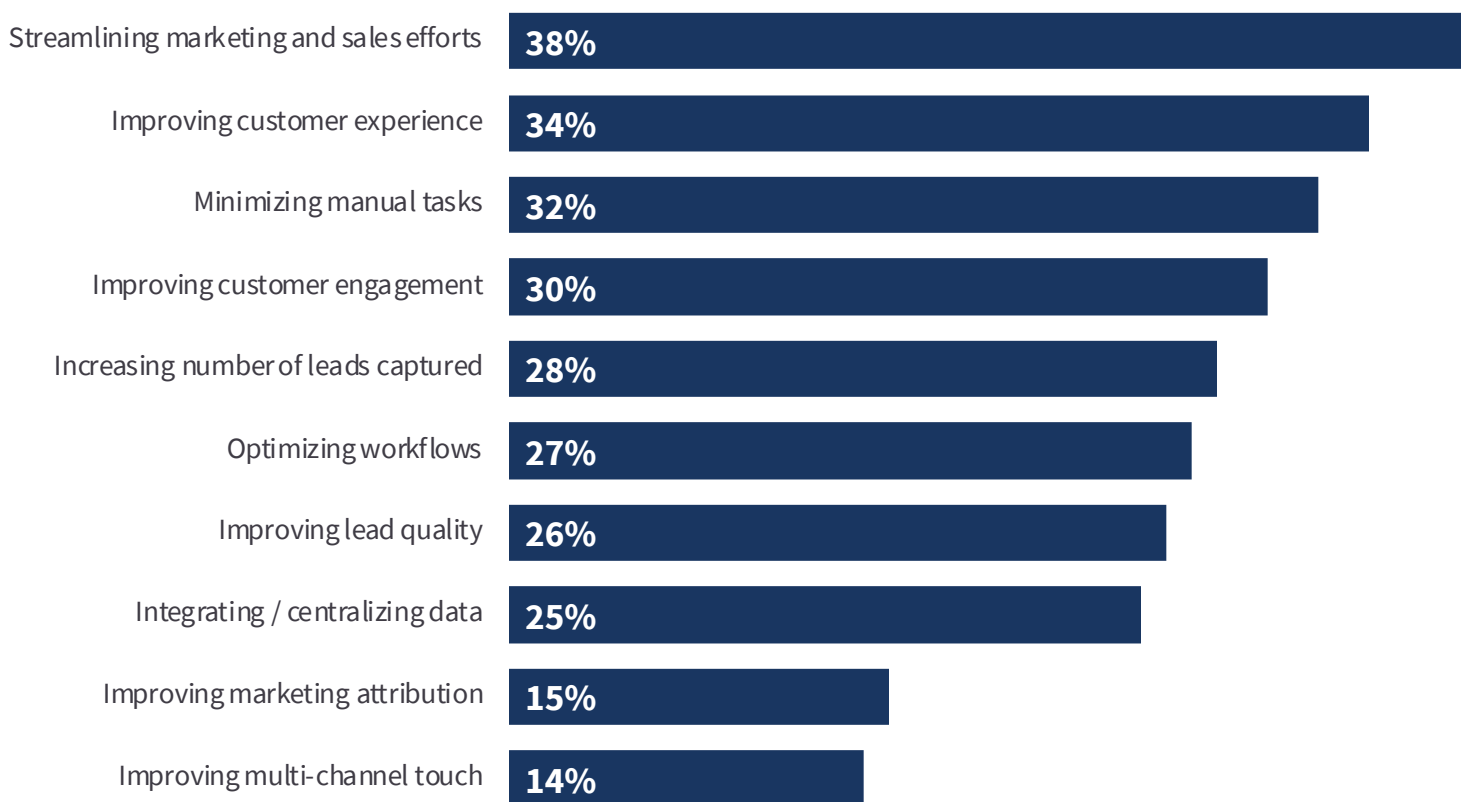
This report, titled Marketing Automation for the B2B Marketer, represents the opinions of the 163 marketing professionals responding to the survey who operate in business-to-business (B2B) organizations.

This research has been produced for your use. Put it to work in your own marketing strategy. Clip the charts and write about them in your blog or post them on social media. Please share this research credited as published.

REASONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

For marketers operating in the business-to-business (B2B) channel, marketing automation is used to streamline marketing and sales efforts and improve the customer experience according to 38% and 34% of those surveyed, respectively. When sales and marketing teams are aligned, B2B companies can better deliver an exceptional customer experience and ultimately generate more business.

WHAT ARE THE TOP REASONS FOR IMPLEMENTING MARKETING AUTOMATION?



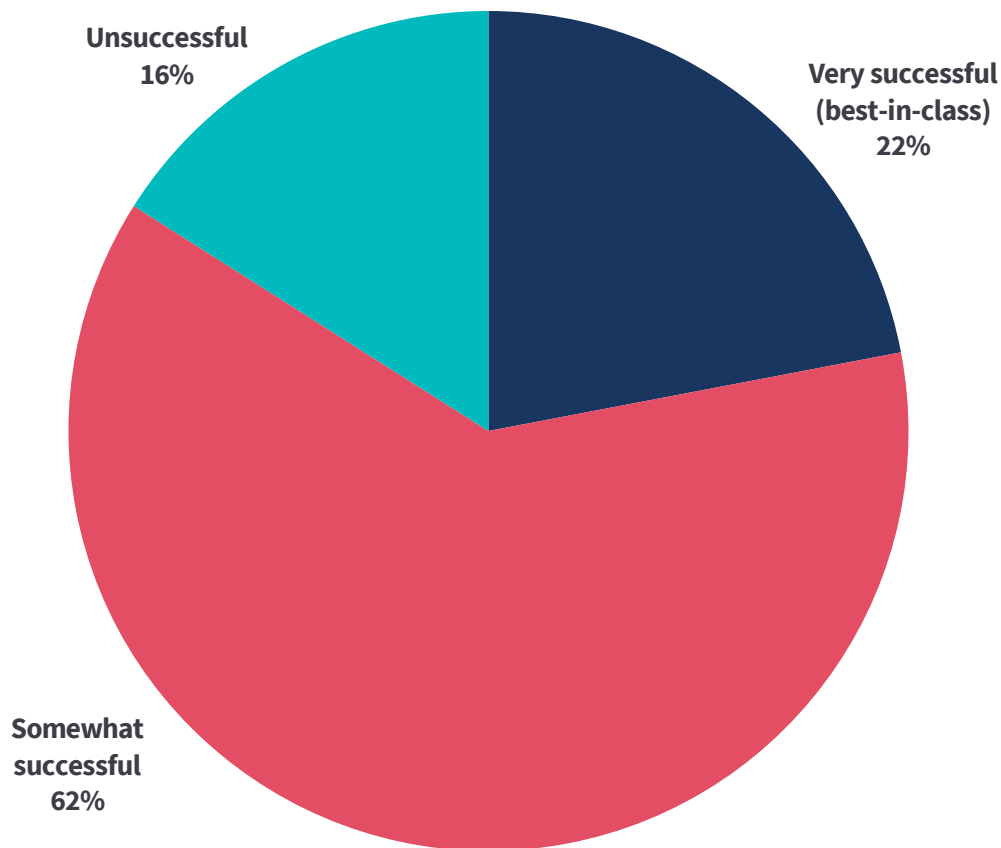
TIP

Most marketers and sales professionals realize that solid marketing automation and CRM integration can minimize costs and increase productivity, but there's more to it than that. The right CRM and marketing automation combination enables you to take full advantage of each tool's capabilities and empowers you to transform and improve how you engage with customers. Advantages include improved customer journey, data hygiene, personalization, lead scoring, and more.

GAUGING STRATEGIC SUCCESS

Are B2B marketers successfully utilizing marketing automation to achieve their top strategic priorities? Nearly one-quarter (22%) of those surveyed say yes, describing their achievements as “very successful.” There is still room for improvement, however, with 62% of B2B marketers reporting just some success and 16% labeling their marketing automation use as unsuccessful.

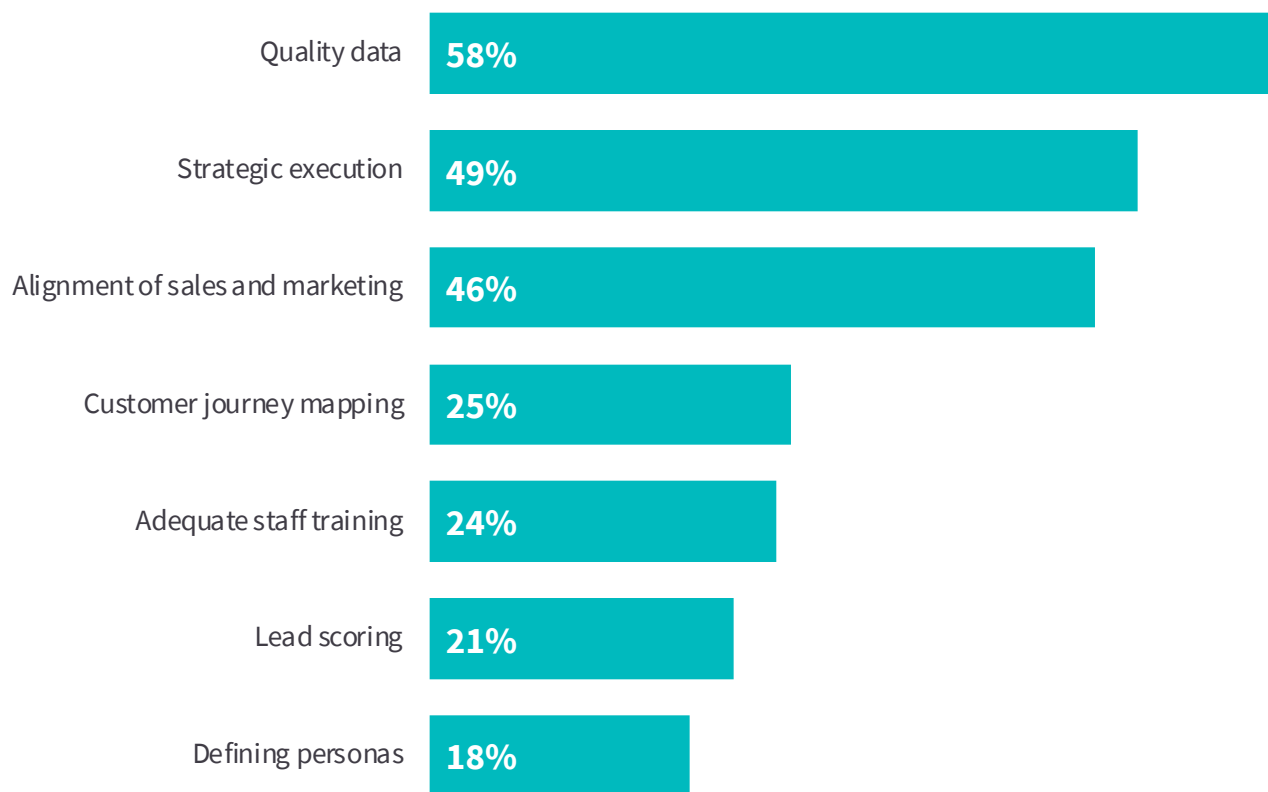
WHICH BEST DESCRIBES YOUR (OR YOUR TYPICAL CLIENT’S) SUCCESS AT USING MARKETING AUTOMATION TO ACHIEVE YOUR TOP PRIORITIES?



TACTICS TO AMPLIFY SUCCESS

58% of marketers operating in the B2B channel believe that a marketing automation tool is only as effective as the quality of data utilized with it. Collecting high-quality data allows B2B marketers to create more relevant experiences for the customer. Nearly half (49%) of those surveyed also feel that when executed strategically, marketing automation solutions will be more successful.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING EFFORTS OR TACTICS MOST AMPLIFIES THE SUCCESS OF YOUR MARKETING AUTOMATION TOOL?



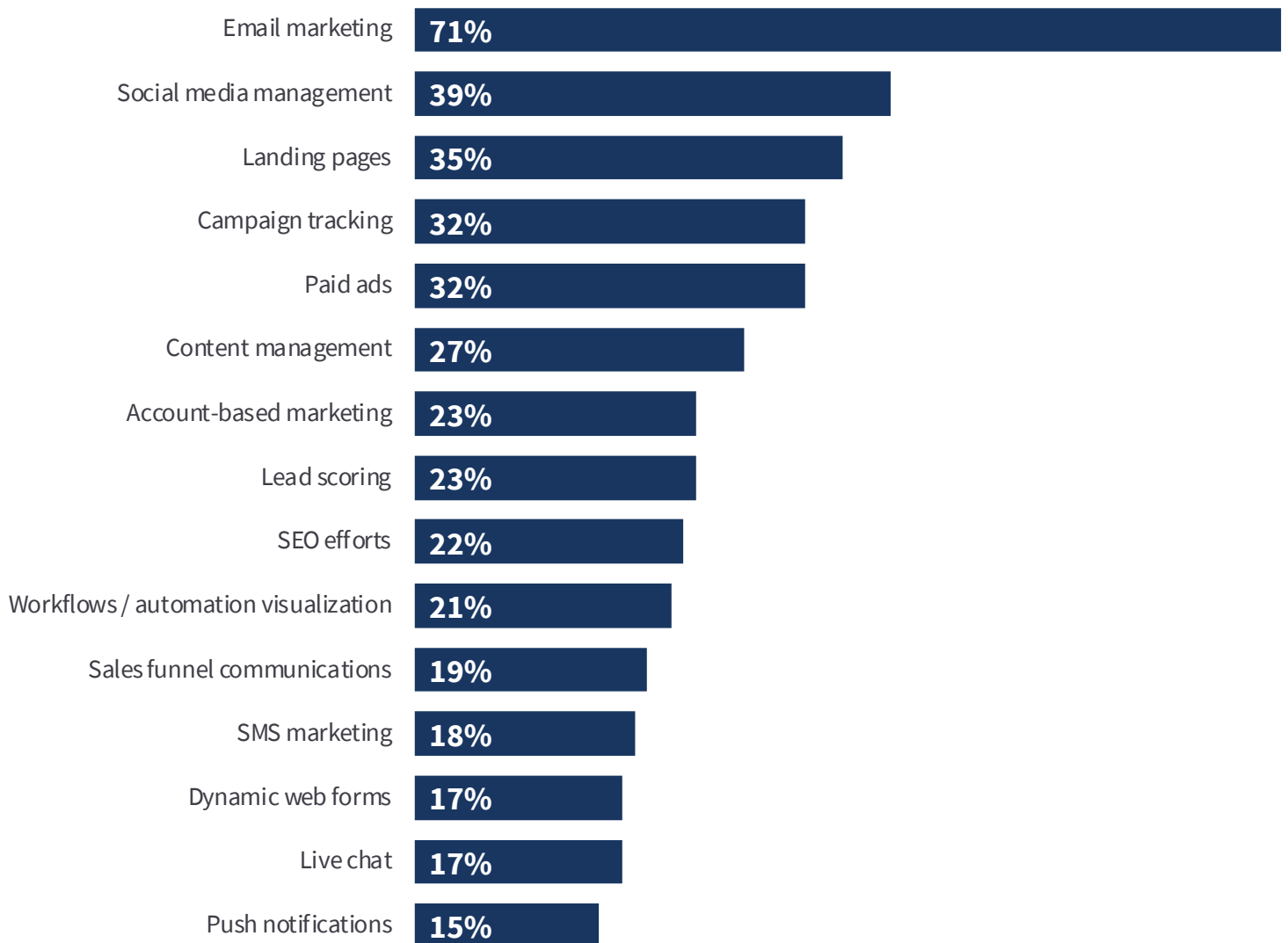
What factors contribute to quality data? Data needs to be accurate, valid, complete, current, relevant, and consistent. Marketing automation helps to improve the quality of your data and embrace a data-driven marketing strategy. An “all-in-one” solution that stores all data in one place so that it becomes a single source of truth and insights for your whole team.

TIP

CURRENT USE OF AUTOMATION

A 71% majority of B2B companies are using automation to execute their email marketing strategy, while 39% are managing their social media through automation. But only 17% of B2B marketers report using dynamic web forms to automate the process of collecting crucial information on leads and creating tailored buyer profiles to improve engagement. Less than one-quarter (22%) of those surveyed report using automation in their SEO efforts to optimize content and improve messaging and search rankings.

IN WHICH AREAS DO YOU CURRENTLY UTILIZE MARKETING AUTOMATION?



PLANNED USE OF AUTOMATION

Over one-third of B2B marketers plan to implement automation into their social media management (36%), email marketing (36%), and paid advertising (34%) in the coming year. A notably higher percentage of B2B companies will be adopting automation into certain strategic areas such as account-based marketing (ABM), live chat, push notifications, and sales funnel communications compared to those who report already using automation in these areas. Implementing automation in these areas can up-level B2B strategy by identifying and prioritizing prime opportunities, aligning marketing and sales, and delivering an exceptional customer experience.

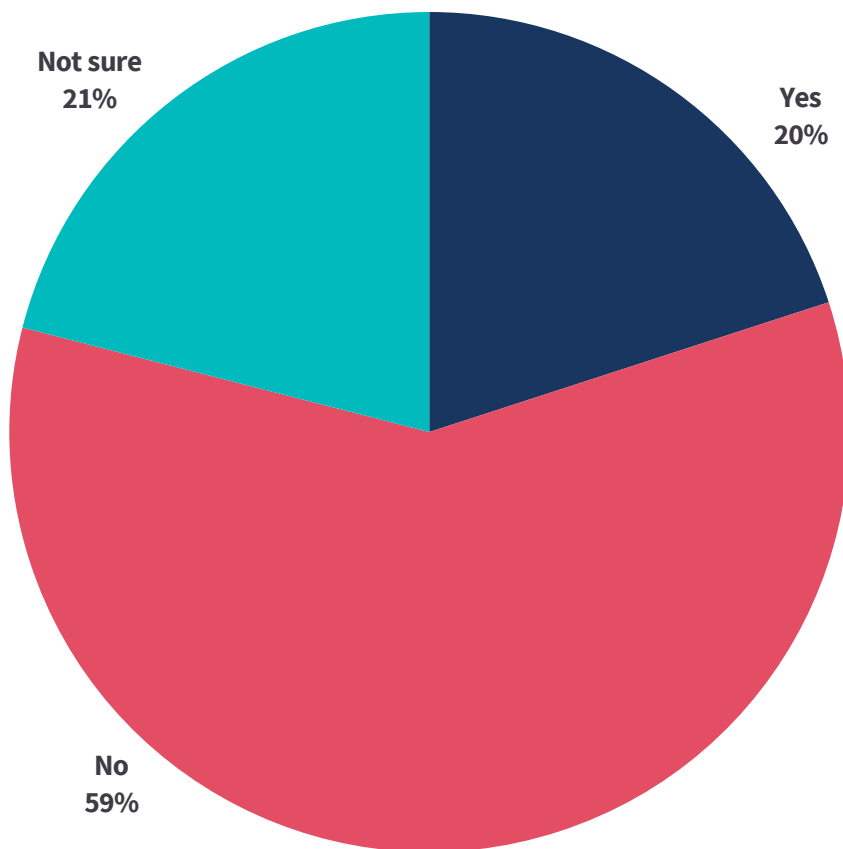
IN WHICH AREAS DO YOU PLAN TO IMPLEMENT MARKETING AUTOMATION IN THE YEAR AHEAD?



EXTENT OF UTILIZATION

When utilized to their fullest potential, automation solutions can be applied to nearly every facet of a B2B strategy, but nearly three out of every five B2B marketing professionals feel that they are not utilizing existing marketing automation tools as much as they could be. 20% of those surveyed feel they are using their marketing automation tools to their fullest potential.

DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU ARE UTILIZING YOUR MARKETING AUTOMATION TOOLS TO THEIR FULLEST POTENTIAL?



TIP

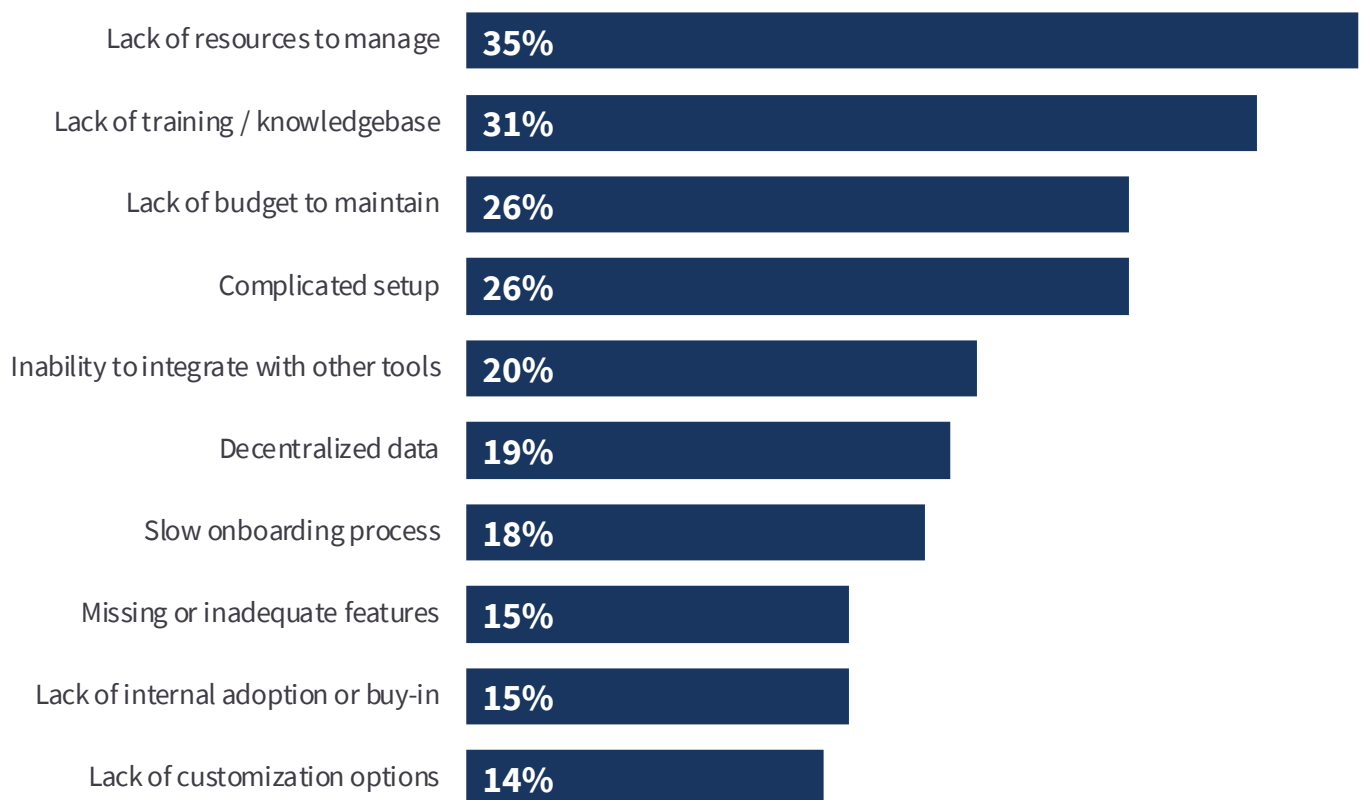
Get more from your marketing automation platform. Here are 5 ideas to prepare for marketing automation success.

1. Develop Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each goal.
2. Get marketing and sales aligned on funnel stages and definitions
3. Get marketing and sales agreement on lead scoring criteria.
4. Map your content to your personas and your funnel stages.
5. Build a content calendar to keep new and targeted content flowing into your campaigns.

CHALLENGES TO UTILIZATION

Ensuring that a marketing automation solution comes equipped with adequate resources such as training and a helpful knowledgebase is critical to utilizing these tools to their fullest potential according to 31% of B2B marketers. Over one-third of marketers operating in the B2B channel feel that they do not have the resources necessary to successfully manage their marketing automation solution.

WHAT ARE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT BARRIERS TO UTILIZING YOUR MARKETING AUTOMATION TOOL(S) TO THE FULLEST POTENTIAL?



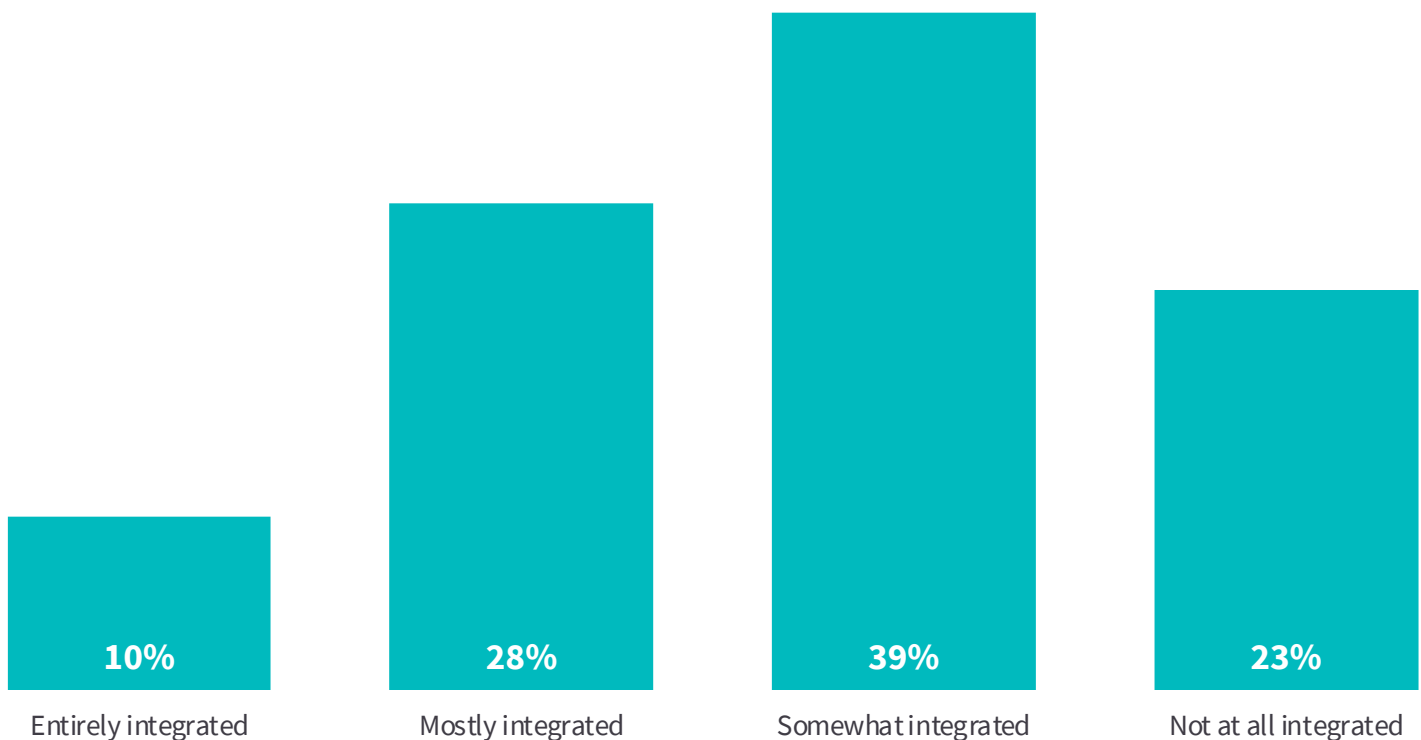
TIP

With nearly one-third of marketers surveyed citing the importance of training to get the most out of their marketing automation platform, make sure that your marketing automation provider has engaging, interactive courses in a variety of formats. Act-On training features instructor-led training, on-demand courses, fast-track onboarding, and new-user training workshops. [Learn more.](#)

INTEGRATING AUTOMATION

Only 10% of B2B marketers report having their marketing automation solutions entirely integrated with the rest of their existing technology stack, while just over one-quarter (28%) of survey participants have their automation tools mostly integrated. To effectively streamline efforts and elevate campaign success, integration with existing tools is a critical part of implementing marketing automation. With 62% of B2B marketing professionals reporting being only somewhat or not at all integrated, there is opportunity for improvement.

WHICH BEST DESCRIBES THE INTEGRATION OF YOUR MARKETING AUTOMATION SOLUTION(S) WITH THE REST OF YOUR TECHNOLOGY STACK?



ABOUT THE RESEARCH PARTNERS



Act-On Software is the world's growth marketing leader, offering solutions that empower marketers to move beyond the lead and engage targets at every step of the customer lifecycle. Act-On makes customer data actionable so marketers can strategize smart, effective solutions to grow their businesses and generate higher customer lifetime value – all with the fastest time-to-value.

For more information, visit [Act-On Software](#).



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