

A Conductor
White Paper

182 Marketing Executives Reveal Their 2015 Success Tactics



Marketing executives often keep their cards close to the chest. That can be a frustrating omission in our collective understanding. After all, they hold the keys to our industry. They are our decision makers and budget holders. They lead our strategies and structure our teams. What do they know that we don't? What, as a group, do they agree on? What do they see in our future?

We wanted to understand the men and women at the helm of our industry. That's why we surveyed 182 B2B, B2C and agency marketing executives for this study on four core areas of the marketing machine. We asked them how they target their customers, measure their efforts, value their technology, and interact.

Here's what we learned, and what you can takeaway from their reveals.



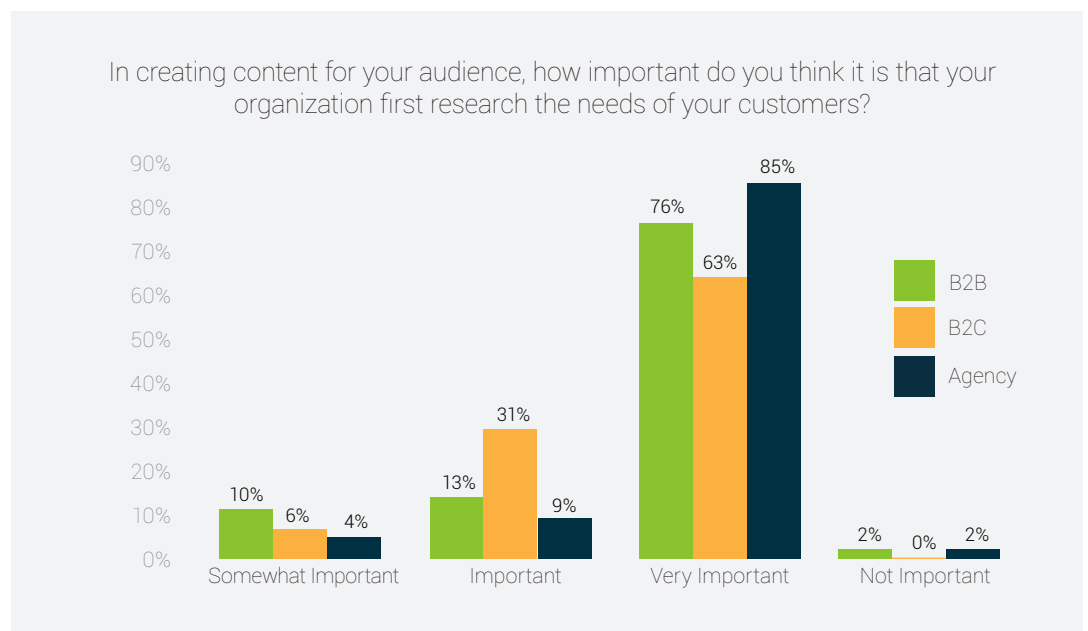
1) Marketing Executives Won't Invest in Content Unless it's Targeted

If the internet has changed one thing about consumer buying, it's the way we interact with brands.

We asked marketing executives to determine how important researching customer needs is to their organizations when creating content. An overwhelming majority agreed: on a 4-level scale from "not important" to "very important," customer research was "very important" to content creation across all organization types (B2B, B2C, Agency).

Agencies, typically more sophisticated than B2Bs and B2Cs, were most in agreement about the need for pre-content research; 85% of agency executives deemed it "very important" while 76% of B2B executives also described it as "very important."

2015 Tactic: Target your customers by who & how buy-ready they are.



Every audience has distinct pain points and desires that drive them to particular products or services. Translation: a “one-size-fits-all” approach to content risks losing your audience right when they come to your site.

This is where persona marketing enters the picture. Persona marketing is the process of developing generic characters to represent types of visitors who come to your site. Marketers find the pain points of their customers, and then create content to meet those needs.

To take it a step further, examine the personas you’ve built with the stages of the “buyer’s journey” (the buyer’s progression through the research and decision process). Then, perform a keyword search for each persona in relation to each step of the buyer’s journey. Using this knowledge, marketers can move beyond casting one, wide net and start servicing specific needs with better results.

That’s why brands are now creating “early-stage content,” which is content that speaks to their audience earlier in the buyer’s journey. Consumers are empowered to do their own research all the way thru the buying funnel; so, brands must equip themselves with content that speaks to consumers at every stage.

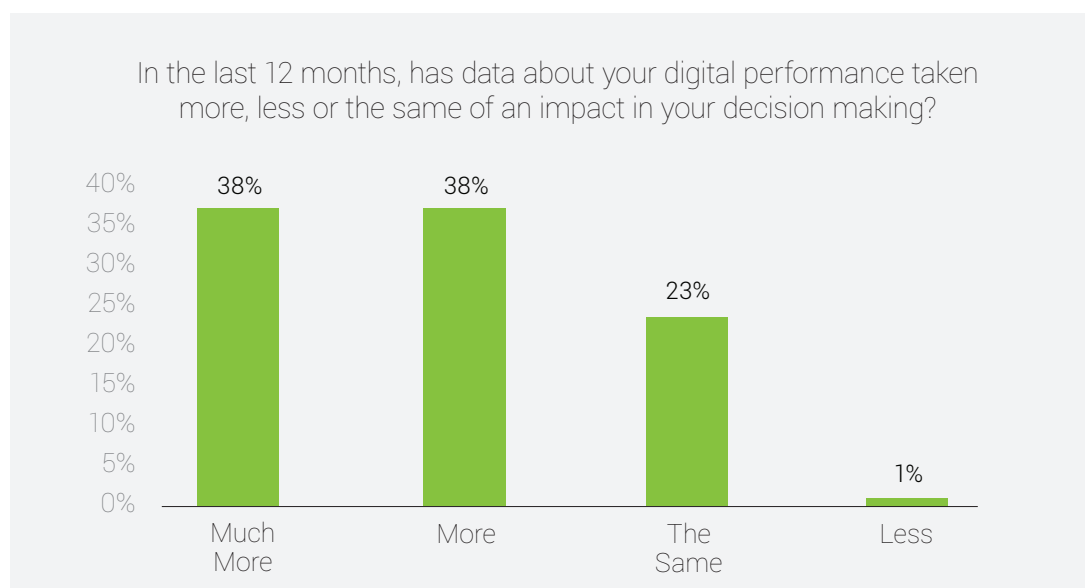
Marketers who are not already segmenting their audience have plans to do so soon. 72% of marketing executives reported that they are currently positioning their product differently and 19% reported they are planning to do so in the next 6 months.



2) Marketing Executives Believe that the Importance of Data is Skyrocketing

Content creation has always been treated as a creative process. But for the modern marketer, content isn’t successful without hard data.

61% of marketing executives say data is “more” or “much more” important than it was 12 months ago. This trend is reflective of the increasing importance of data in how marketers do their jobs—from content to SEO to



social, data serves as the foundation for everything. It measures tactics, identifies opportunity and exposes trends.

2015 Tactic: hire both creative and data-driven minds.

Organizations that still make content decisions based on “gut feeling” need to step back and re-evaluate. Of course, marketing teams need creative people to write compelling content, but they also need data-driven minds – the people with the data and measurement skills to segment an audience, identify content opportunities, and measure what is and isn’t working. Content marketing is most successful when data and creativity work hand-in-hand; ultimately, one just won’t work without the other.



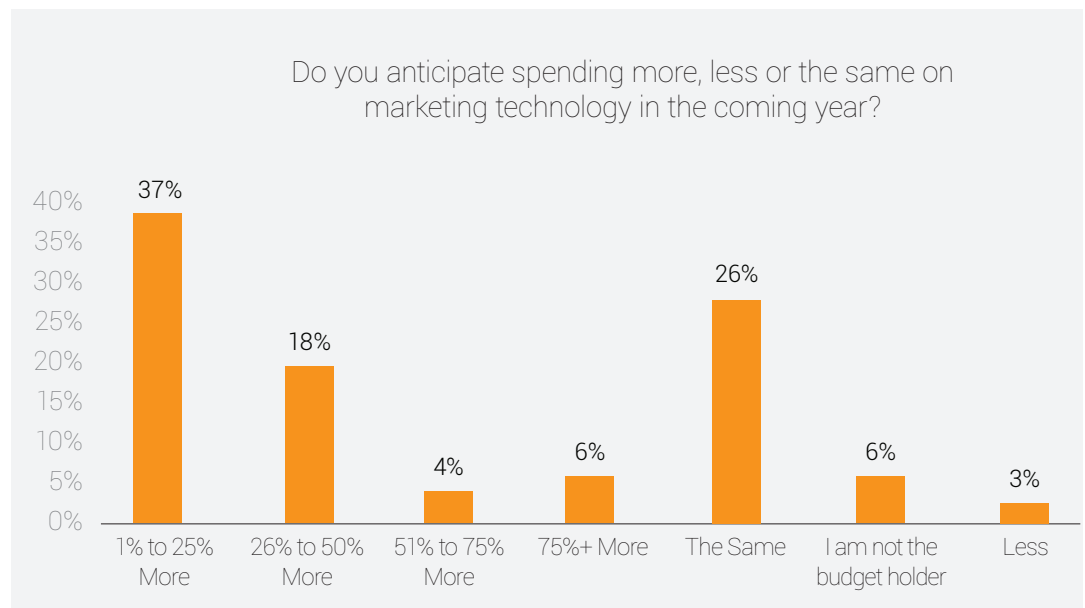
3) Marketing Executives Will Seize Market Share with Technology

These days, Marketers need huge swaths of data to stay competitive and understand their growing digital businesses. Technology makes it possible to scale data collection, analysis, and reporting. This study made it clear there’s a growing focus on technology among marketing executives.

65% of marketing executives plan on spending more on marketing technology in the coming year, with a large percentage (28%) planning to spend significantly more (25% or more).

2015 Tactic: pick the right technology for your organization

There are awesome possibilities as technology allows us to better scale data collection and analysis. It’ll also become important for marketers to conscientiously invest time in picking the best technology: carefully evaluating and determining the right combination of technology and people.

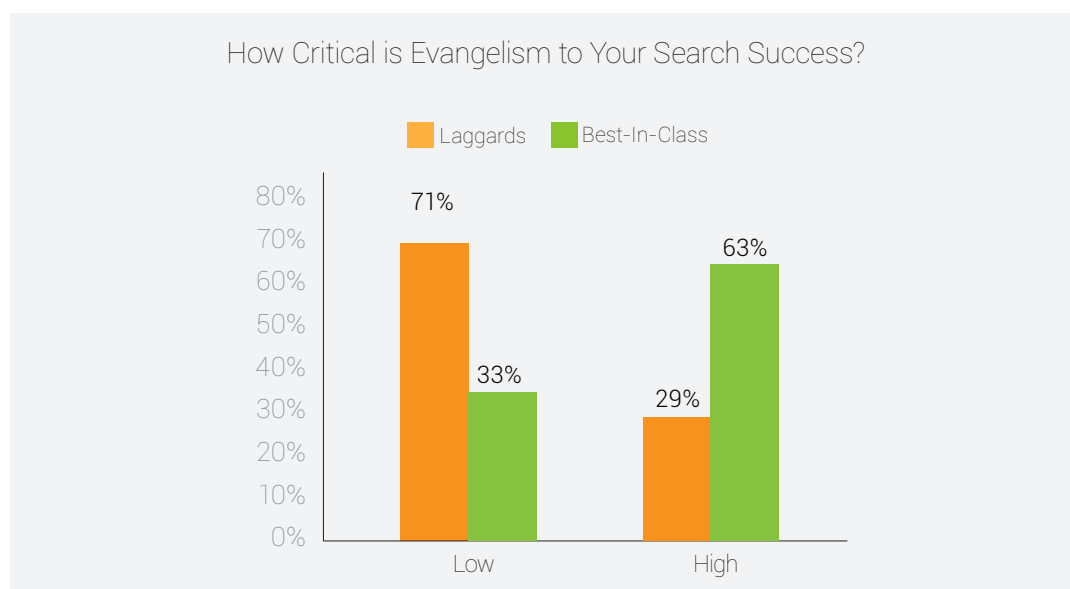




4) You'll Compromise Your Success without Cross-Departmental Support

Targeting content, data and technology are vital to the modern marketing organization's success, but so is cooperation from across the whole company.

In a previous study, we compared "best in class" digital marketers (those who had traffic and conversion growth more than their peers) to "laggards." We found that the best in class were 2X more likely to identify evangelism – which is rallying departments across the organization -- as critical to their digital success.



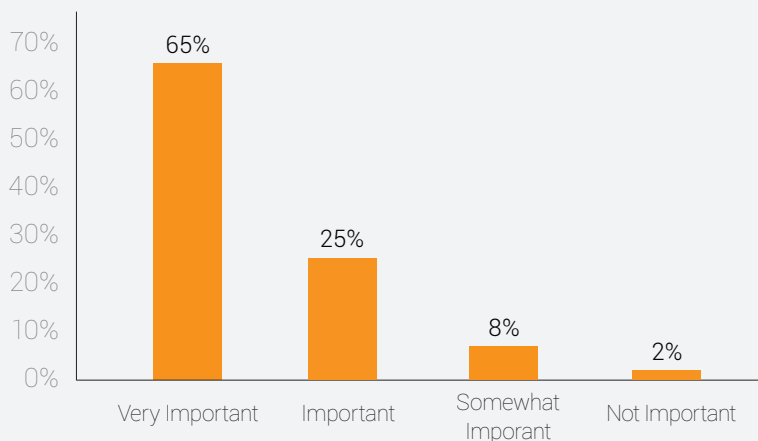
90% of those surveyed agree that inter-department support is "important" or "very important" to their brands' digital marketing success.

2015 Tactic: foster collaboration between teams

Look for ways to reduce silos between departments and enable inter-departmental collaboration. Find out the types of reports other departments need or hold educational lunches to teach search and content. Look

for ways to interact with and involve others to make the company's digital success an organization-wide effort. (Check out our Learning Center to find great advice from REI's Justin Schoen and M&T Bank's Missi Carmen on how they rallied their teams around SEO).

How important do you think it is for your digital marketing team to have support from departments across the organization such as PR, IT, Product etc?



Here's what You Need to Know about Marketing Tactics in 2015

The future of marketing sets its eyes on the customer. The goal of marketing will remain the same but its execution will have to change.

Now that customers can pick-and-choose when, where, and how they interact with brands, organizations must look at creative ways to drive a consumer through the purchase funnel. In order to stay in the marketing game, marketing executives must invest in the biggest growing areas of marketing: customer research, data and measurement, marketing technology, and inter-departmental support.



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