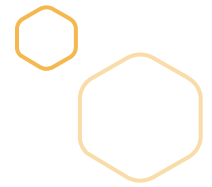


2021 E-COMMERCE MARKETER SURVEY

SKILLS, TEAMS & PROCESSES FOR THE FUTURE



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HOW ARE E-COMMERCE MARKETERS CHANGING?

E-commerce marketing, as an industry, is well-reported. But while we've seen many studies examine how the practice of e-commerce marketing is changing, we recognized a gap in the market on how the people of e-commerce marketing are changing.

These professionals have been Sidecar's one and only focus since our founding. 100% of our customers are retailers. Our team members are marketers themselves who work directly with e-commerce and marketing teams inside retail organizations.

Our partnerships integrate us into the career and team development shifts happening in the e-commerce marketing sector. We can share a multitude of anecdotes on these changes. But like any data-driven marketer, we wanted to fill the knowledge gap with data.

We surveyed 146 professionals who strictly work on digital and e-commerce marketing teams in-house at retail organizations in North America. Respondents range from associate-level to C-level marketers who hail from small to enterprise retail organizations.

You're viewing the results and analysis of that survey. Sidecar's annual deep dive into the e-commerce marketing role will help you:

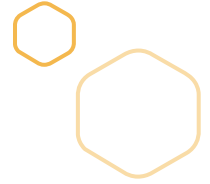
- **Learn how your peers are growing their skills and experience.**
- **Understand if you're spending your time on the right efforts.**
- **Look ahead to hiring trends and what they mean for your team.**
- **Identify areas of improvement in your own marketing processes.**

We hope this report empowers you to make more informed decisions for your individual growth and team development.



METHODOLOGY

Sidecar surveyed 146 marketing professionals in the retail industry. The majority of respondents are based in the U.S., with the remainder based in Canada. All respondents reported that they contribute to the e-commerce marketing efforts at their company (i.e., they execute e-commerce marketing campaigns, set e-commerce marketing goals, and/or develop e-commerce marketing strategies).



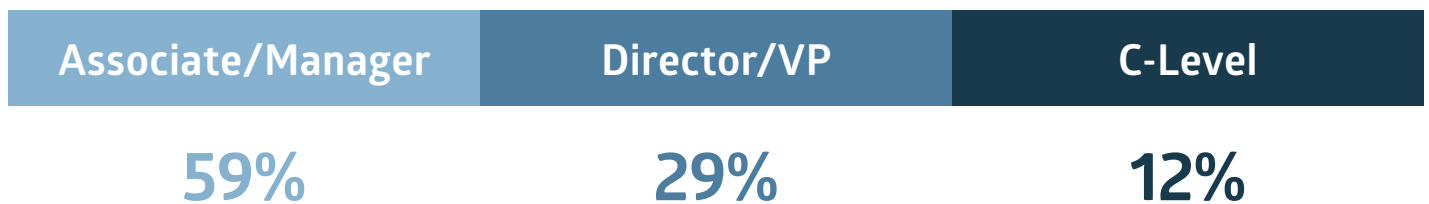
Respondents reported job titles including associate, manager, director, VP, chief marketing officer (CMO), and chief executive officer (CEO). Our analysis groups these titles into three buckets: associates and managers, directors and VPs, and C-level.

Respondents also reported their company's annual revenue, which spanned <\$1 million to \$10 billion+. Our analysis groups these revenues into three buckets: <\$10 million (referred to as "small" retailers), \$10 million to <\$50 million (referred to as "mid-sized" retailers), and \$50 million+ (referred to as "enterprise" retailers).

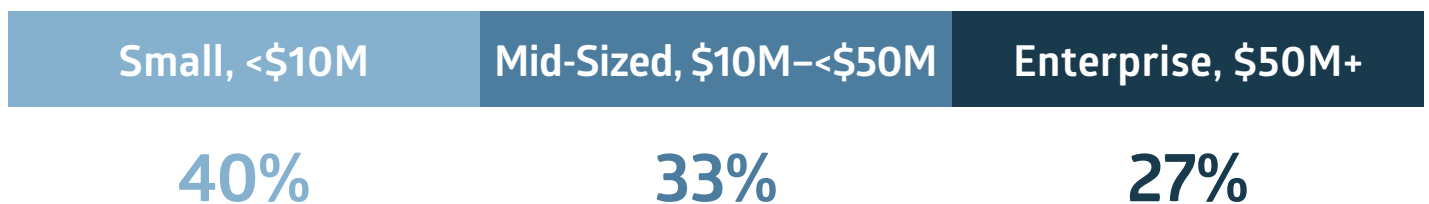
Sidecar collected responses in September and October 2020.

Survey Respondents

By Job Role



By Company Size





PART 1

HOW IS YOUR ROLE CHANGING?





SKILLS AND TRAINING SELF-ASSESSMENT

One major topic we sought to understand is how marketers are personally cultivating expertise and experience in their roles. We started by asking respondents whether they feel they have the necessary training and skills to succeed in retail and e-commerce marketing.

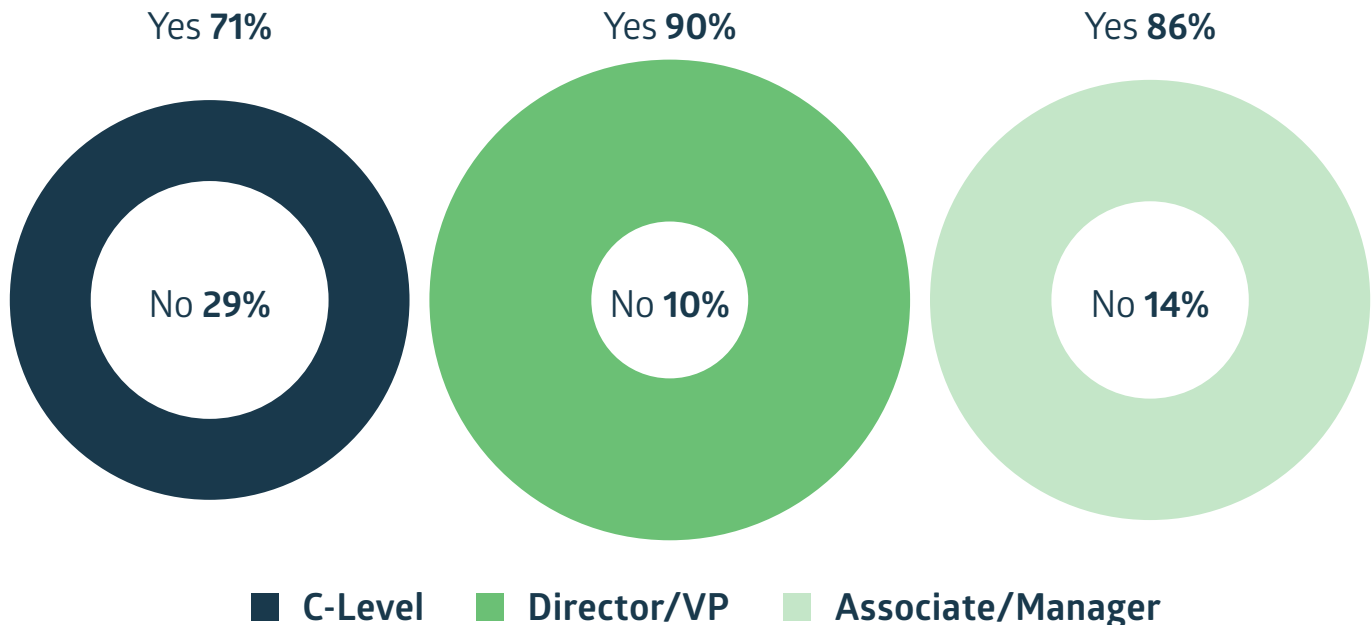
Of the respondents who feel they don't have the training and skills to succeed, we found C-level respondents are least confident in their training and skill sets. Perhaps because leadership is tasked with looking ahead and anticipating trends, this group realizes there are a slew of emerging technologies and skill sets to master to remain current.

Do You Personally Feel You Have The Training And Skills Necessary To Succeed In Retail Marketing Over The Next 12-24 Months?



Whether Marketers Have The Training And Skills To Succeed

By Job Role



14% of e-commerce marketers feel they don't have the training and skills to succeed in their field, with the C-level feeling least confident.

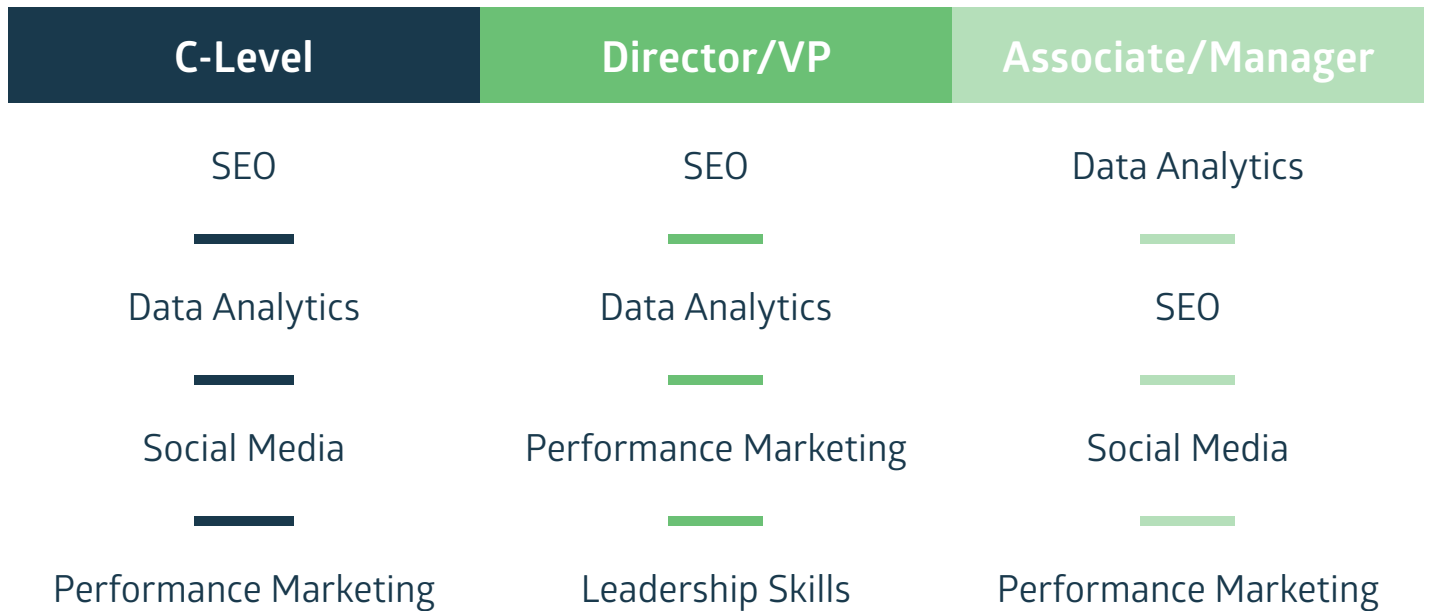


TOP SKILLS

Keying off the previous question, we asked marketers to fill in the blank for this question: **What skill or training do you think would be most valuable for you to obtain to advance your career?**

Although our survey found that 86% of marketers feel they are adequately trained and skilled, nearly all still reported a new skill they wished to obtain to advance their careers. The most frequently reported skills were data analytics, performance marketing, social media, and SEO.

Top Skills E-commerce Marketers Want By Job Role



STRATEGIC KNOWLEDGE



Some of the most interesting responses were not discrete skills that marketers want, but rather strategic knowledge and big-picture capabilities they hope to acquire. Here are a few.

Strategic Knowledge E-commerce Marketers Want

“How to identify and create the perfect balance between digital marketing spend and great content” - **CEO**

“Artificial intelligence and marketing uses” - **CEO**

“Strategic thinking on how to lead a brand through the changing environment” - **Director**

“Better understanding of our core customers, their engagement with us on the differing digital platforms, i.e., social vs. e-commerce” - **Manager**

“Understanding current trends in marketing for non-big-box e-commerce retailers” - **Manager**

“Adaptability to evolving marketplaces” - **Manager**

Many of the capabilities and skills that marketers are prioritizing point to a changing industry that is increasingly online and data-driven. The fact that so many marketers, regardless of role or company size, identified skills to develop may also indicate a gap in expertise that can be filled by talent acquisition or vendor partnerships. In fact, we found that marketers' desired skills and training aligns with their teams' top hiring priorities (page 28).



TAKE ACTION

Advance your strategic knowledge by learning [do's and don'ts](#) of connecting with Gen Z shoppers to win the battle for consumers.

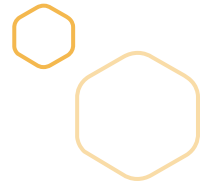


KEY TASKS

We continued to unearth marketers' top priorities for their roles, asking what tasks they want to devote more time to. "Brand building" and "data analysis" tied for the #1 response, followed by "competitive analysis."

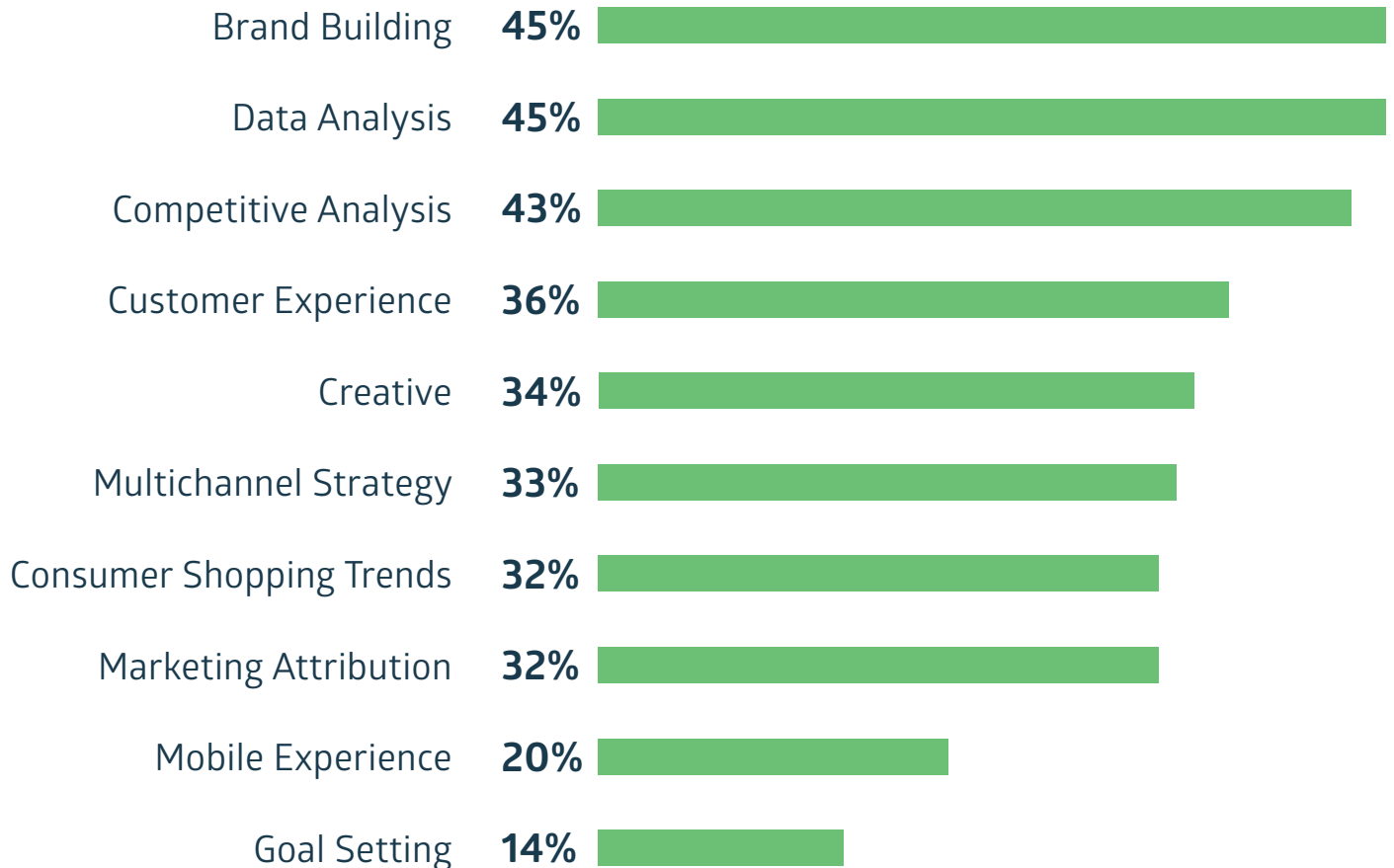
The top two responses in particular align with the skills marketers prioritized earlier in our survey. Many retailers who want to learn more about data analytics also want to spend more time with their data. Similarly, brand building may relate to respondents' emphasis on learning SEO and social media marketing.

Equal priority: 45% of e-commerce marketers want to devote more time to both brand building and data analysis.



What Marketing Tasks Do You Wish You Had More Time For?

Select All That Apply



Part 1: How Is Your Role Changing?

When we segmented the data by job role, we found that senior-level marketers prioritize brand building slightly more than their colleagues, with 53% of the C-level respondents and 50% of directors and VPs prioritizing that task. As leaders of their companies, this response may indicate an industry-wide trend to build the top of the funnel as low-funnel, direct response advertising becomes more competitive.

The majority of senior-level e-commerce marketers want more time for brand building.

Tasks Marketers Want More Time For By Job Role

Brand Building



Data Analysis



Competitive Analysis



Customer Experience



Creative



Multichannel Strategy



■ C-Level ■ Director/VP ■ Associate/Manager

TAKE ACTION

Reach consumers who aren't aware of your brand by mastering [non-branded keyword strategies](#).

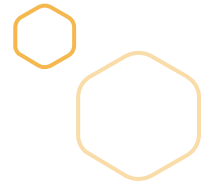


Part 1: How Is Your Role Changing?

Analysis by company size reveals that marketers are largely aligned on the types of tasks they wish they had more time for, regardless of the size of the retail business. That said, a standout finding is that 47% of marketers for small retail businesses want more time to develop creative, whereas only 23% of marketers for mid-sized retailers and 26% of enterprise retailers feel this way.

This may indicate the importance of creative for small and potentially lesser-known retailers to stand out online and break through to key audiences. Further supporting this idea is that 47% of marketers for small retailers said they want to spend more time on brand building.

47% of e-commerce marketers for small retail businesses want more time to develop creative.



Tasks Marketers Want More Time For By Company Size

Brand Building



Data Analysis



Competitive Analysis



Customer Experience



Creative



Multichannel Strategy



■ Enterprise ■ Mid-Sized ■ Small





PART 2

HOW ARE YOUR TEAM PRIORITIES CHANGING?



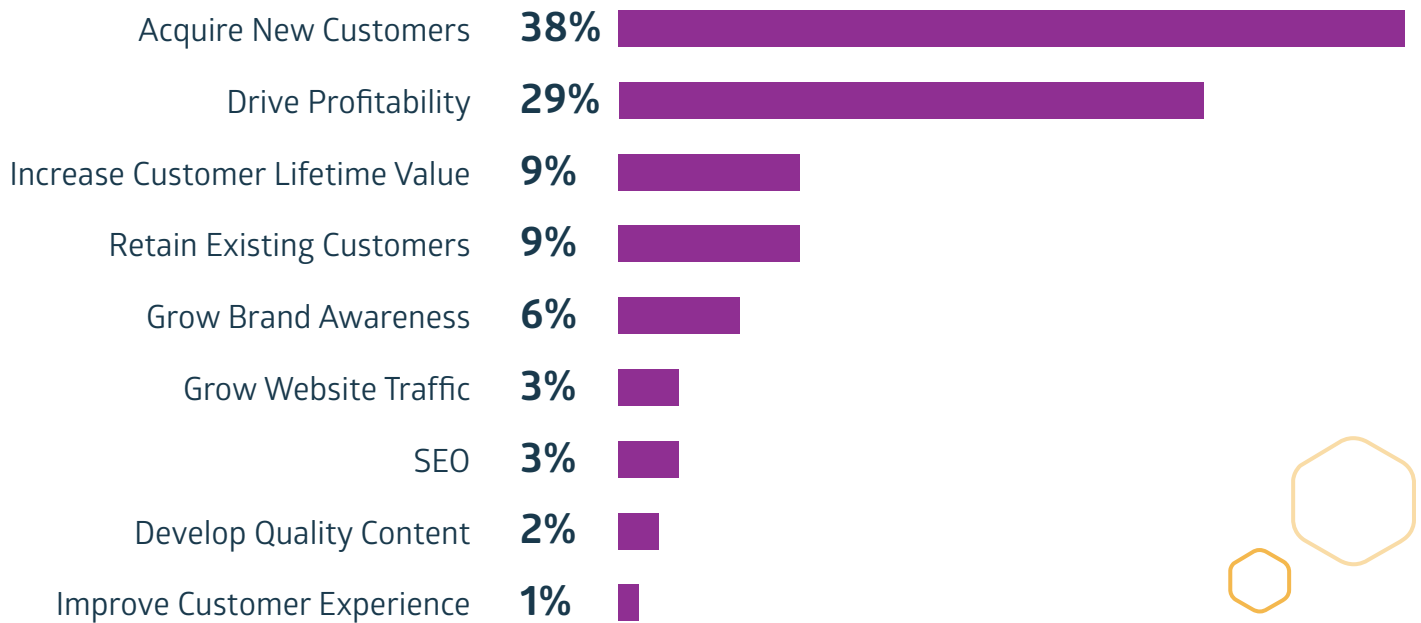
TEAM GOALS

Shifting focus from the individual marketer, we then asked a series of questions focused on respondents' teams and how they are focusing their group efforts.

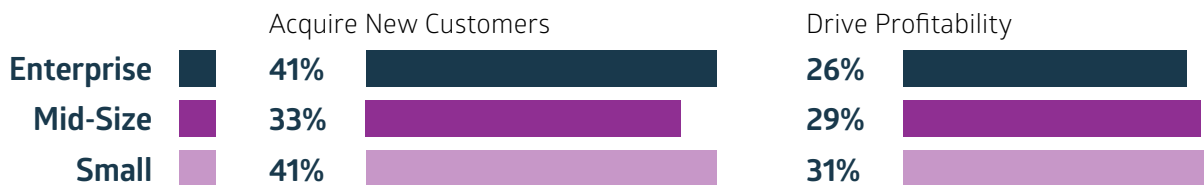
First, in terms of goals, we found that marketing teams' top two goals are acquiring new customers (38%) and driving profitability (29%). These responses relate to the tasks marketers wished they had more time for (page 9), including data analytics, as new customer acquisition and profitability depend on actionable data.

We also found that the goals of customer acquisition and profitability carry different weight for differently sized retailers. For instance, marketers from enterprise businesses chose profitability slightly less than marketers from smaller businesses. This may be due to enterprise retailers' stronger ability to experiment with budget across more channels, making profitability less of a priority.

What Best Describes The #1 Goal Of Your Marketing Team?



Top Marketing Team Goal By Company Size



BRAND AWARENESS

Only 6% of respondents reported that growing brand awareness is their top goal. However, earlier in our survey, we found that brand building is one of the top activities marketers want to devote more time to (page 9).

A couple thoughts come to mind to explain the discrepancy. While many marketers recognize the value of brand building, they may be unable to prioritize it as their team's #1 goal because it is less measurable than customer acquisition and driving revenue. Marketers may view brand awareness as an initiative to achieve the bottom-line goal of new customer acquisition.

45% of e-commerce marketers want more time for brand building, yet only 6% say growing brand awareness is their #1 goal.

TAKE ACTION

Listen to Garrett Wilson of Mission Boat Gear describe how he is [building brand awareness on Amazon](#).



CUSTOMER LIFETIME VALUE

The goal of increasing customer lifetime value also caught our eye, with 9% of responses. While many marketers ideally want to increase customer lifetime value, they struggle to execute upon it. We followed up with one respondent who said that increasing customer lifetime value is her team's #1 goal. Here's what she told us.

BEHIND THE DATA

"Customer lifetime value is certainly a challenge due to consumers having so much choice in the market. The importance of customer retention is apparent in that it costs more to acquire a new customer than to keep an existing one. By providing superior customer service, superior product value proposition, and superior storytelling that makes an emotional connection, the customer is more likely to return and increase her purchase value over time."

Shari Hoenig

Vice President, Marketing and E-Commerce for Yummie

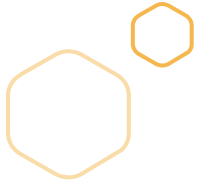


TOP CHALLENGES

Moving on in our survey, we asked marketers about their biggest challenges. The two biggest challenges marketers face are limited time (51%) and limited budget (40%).

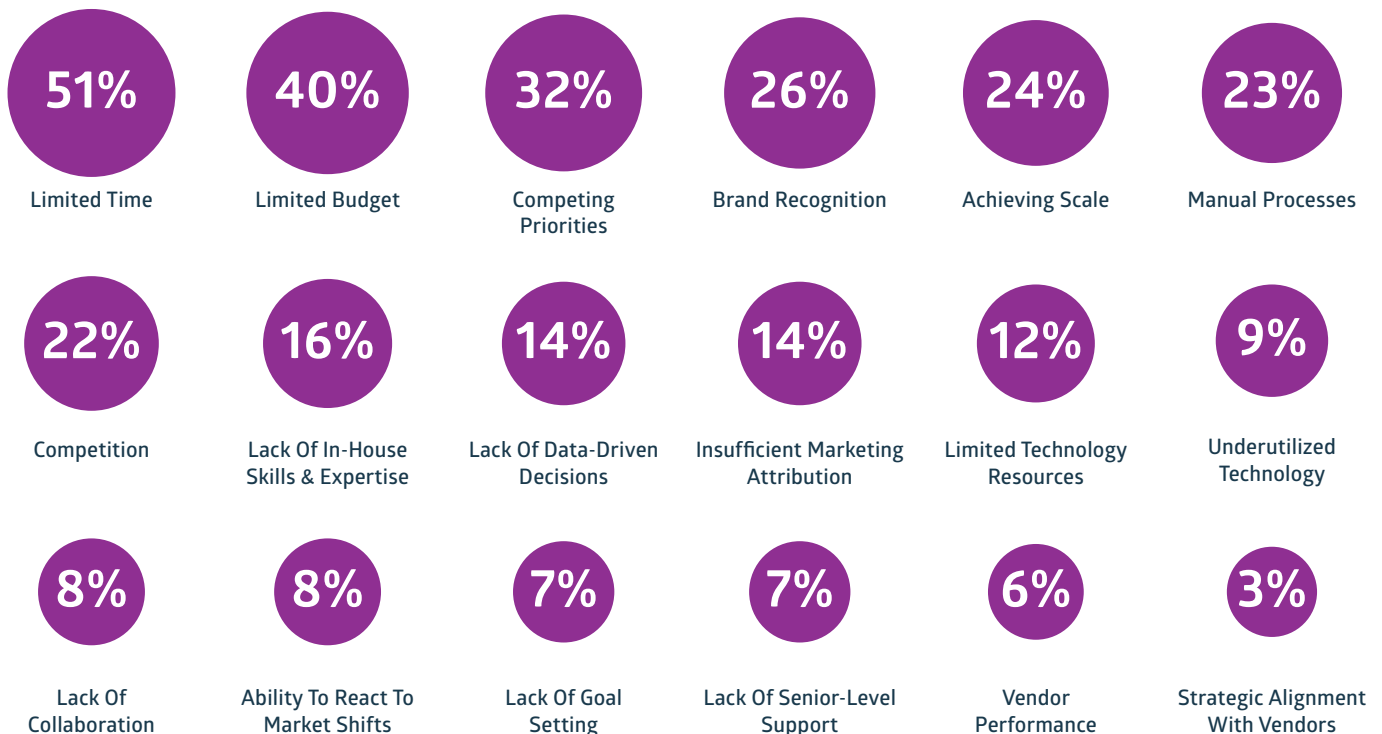
E-commerce Marketers' Top Challenges

1. Limited Time
2. Limited Budget
3. Competing Priorities



What Are The Biggest Challenges Limiting Your Marketing Team's Success?

Select All That Apply



Part 2: How Are Your Team Priorities Changing?

We sought to understand greater context around these challenges by dissecting the data by job role and company size. We found that some challenges perceived at the C-level do not necessarily align with director/VP-level and associate/manager-level concerns.

For instance, associate/manager-level respondents chose limited time (57%) as their biggest challenge, which makes sense as these roles are typically carrying out tactics to execute the larger strategy.

C-level respondents were unique in selecting lack of in-house skills and expertise as a top challenge, at 41%. It's possible C-level marketers find skills and expertise of their marketing teams lacking because they are anticipating changes in the retail landscape that will require new skill sets that can be added through training, talent acquisition, and external partners.

41% of C-level e-commerce marketers say that lack of in-house skills and expertise is a top challenge for their team.

Marketing Team Challenges

By Job Role

Limited Time



Limited Budget



Competing Priorities



Brand Recognition



Achieving Scale



Lack Of In-House Skills & Expertise



■ C-Level ■ Director/VP ■ Associate/Manager



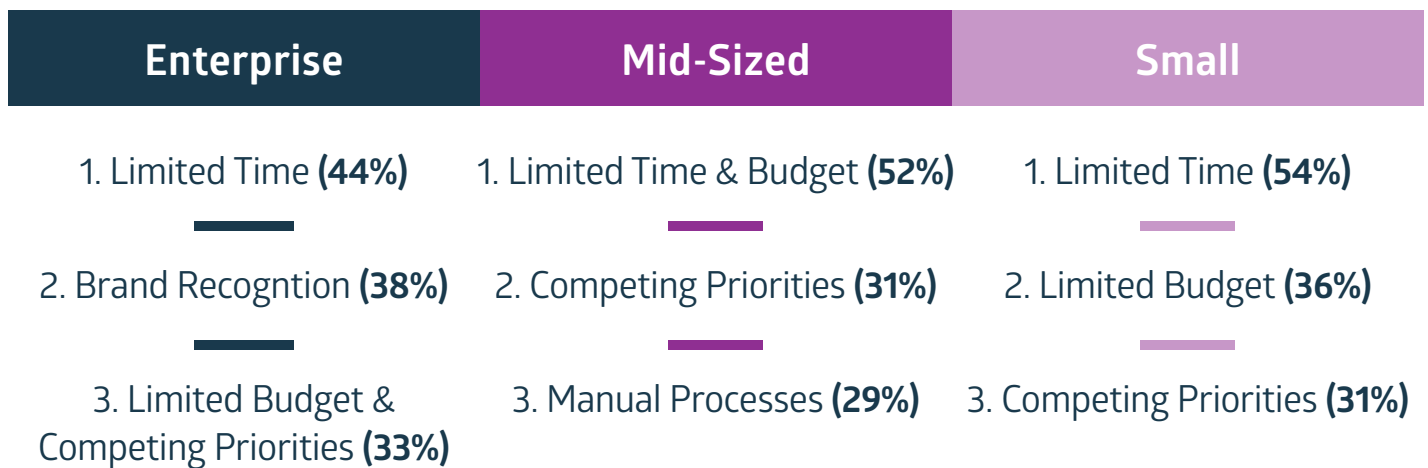
Part 2: How Are Your Team Priorities Changing?

When we analyzed the data by company size, a couple other challenges entered the mix. Thirty-eight percent of marketers at enterprise businesses reported brand recognition as a key challenge—a factor that did not make the top three challenges for small and mid-sized businesses.

This finding may be due to enterprise businesses having larger, multi-category product catalogs that overlap with other businesses of all sizes. As a result, enterprise retailers must go the extra yard to drive greater differentiation and value propositions. By contrast, smaller retailers with niche catalogs perhaps can rely on their product specialization more to stand out.

Another challenge that came to light was manual processes, reported by 29% of marketers at mid-sized retailers. This challenge may reflect the stage of business growth that many mid-sized retailers are at. As they continue to strive to become larger businesses, they are working to shed manual processes and increase efficiency.

E-commerce Marketing Team Challenges By Company Size



TAKE ACTION

Learn how The Warming Store [overcame time and budget constraints](#) to drive online sales.



PAID CHANNELS

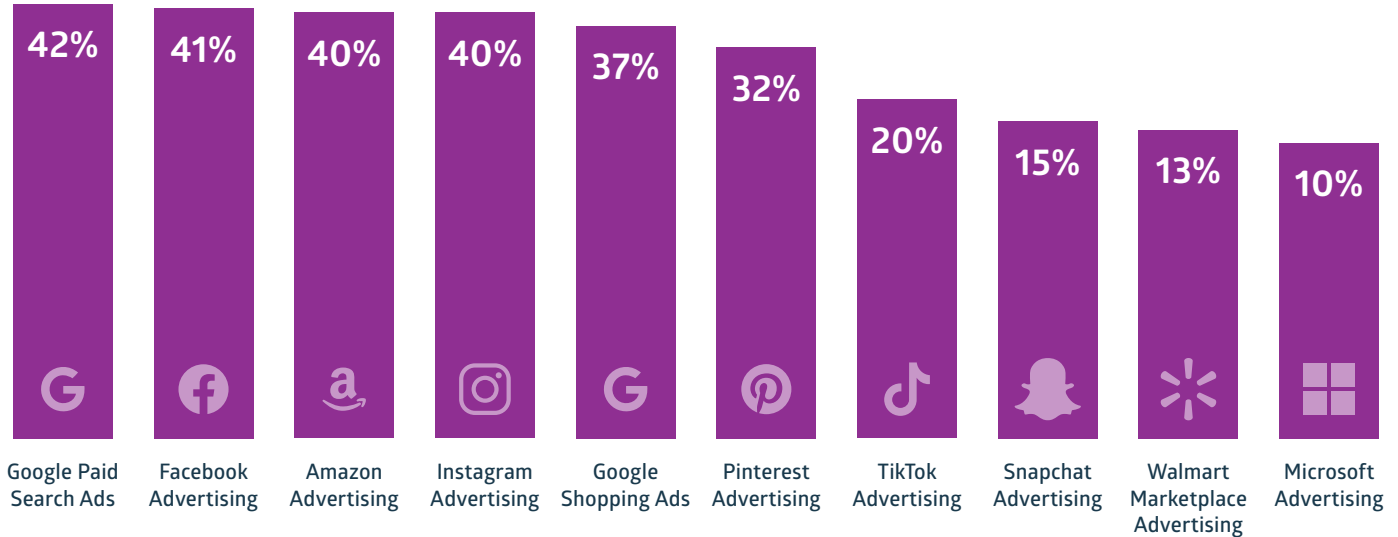
With so many marketing teams short on time and budget, our survey shed light on what marketers would do with additional time and budget, if they had it.

The big three platforms of Google, Facebook (along with Instagram), and Amazon dominated responses. This indicates that marketers want to double down on what's working. At the same time, this finding alludes to the ever-growing complexity of these platforms. Their ad offerings and optimization requirements are constantly changing. As a result, these platforms are demanding more of marketers' attention and time.

Google + Facebook + Amazon = The top 3 ad platforms that e-commerce marketers want to spend more time on. While these platforms deliver success, they grow more complex to manage.

What Platforms Do You Wish Your Team Could Devote More Time To?

Select All That Apply



TAKE ACTION

Track updates that major platforms are making to their ad offerings. Follow:

[Keeping Up With Google](#)

[Keeping Up With Facebook](#)

[Keeping Up With Amazon](#)



Part 2: How Are Your Team Priorities Changing?

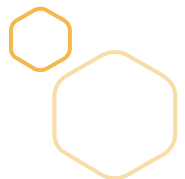
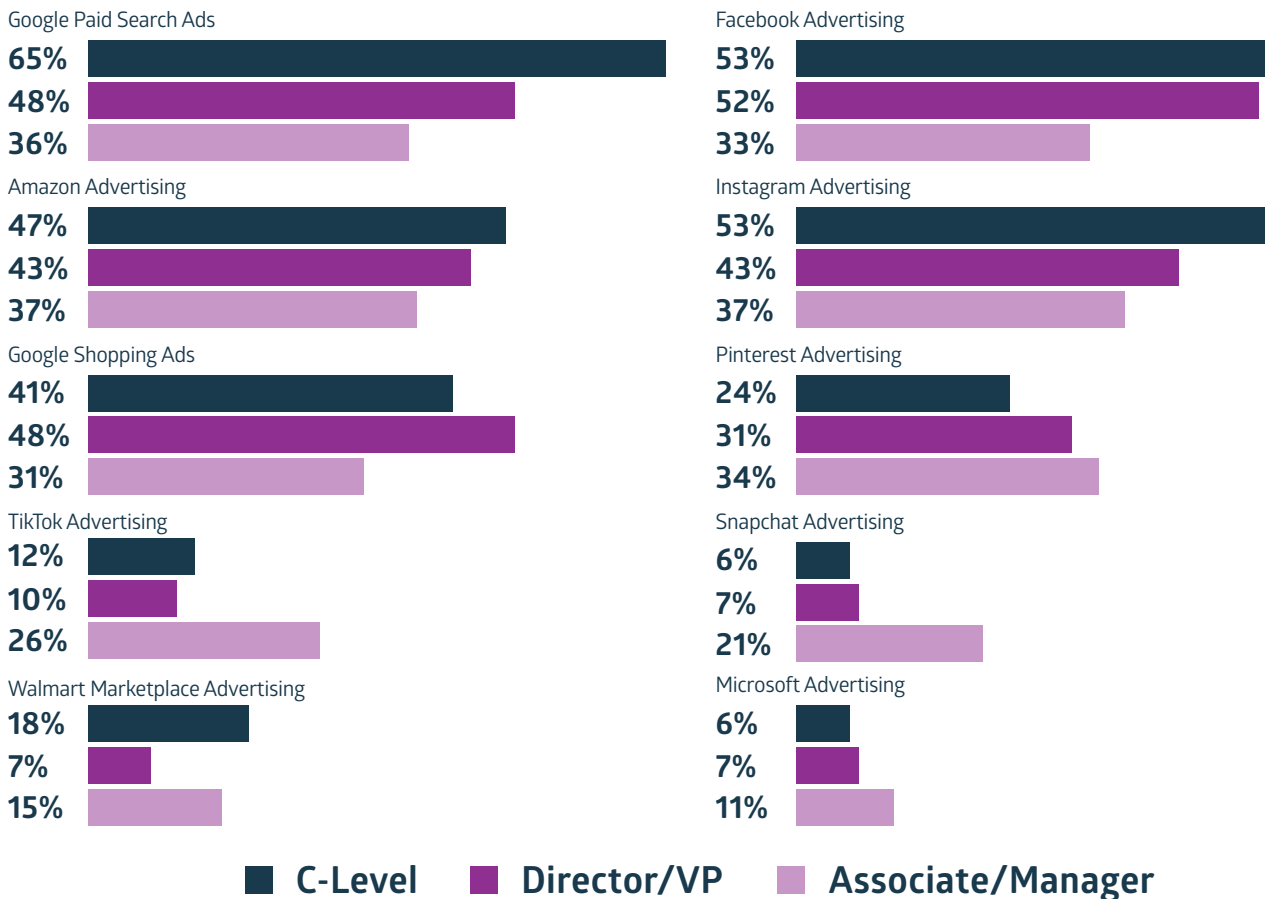
Our findings highlight how different job roles see value in certain platforms. While senior marketers lean toward the known entities of Google and Facebook, junior marketers tilt toward up-and-coming platforms, including Pinterest, TikTok, and Snapchat. From a workforce management perspective, these findings may highlight who on your team could be better suited for following or managing certain platforms.

What Ad Platform Do You Want To Prioritize?

- C-Level
Google
- Director/VP
Facebook
- Associate/Manager
Amazon & Instagram



Platforms That Marketers Want to Spend More Time On By Job Role





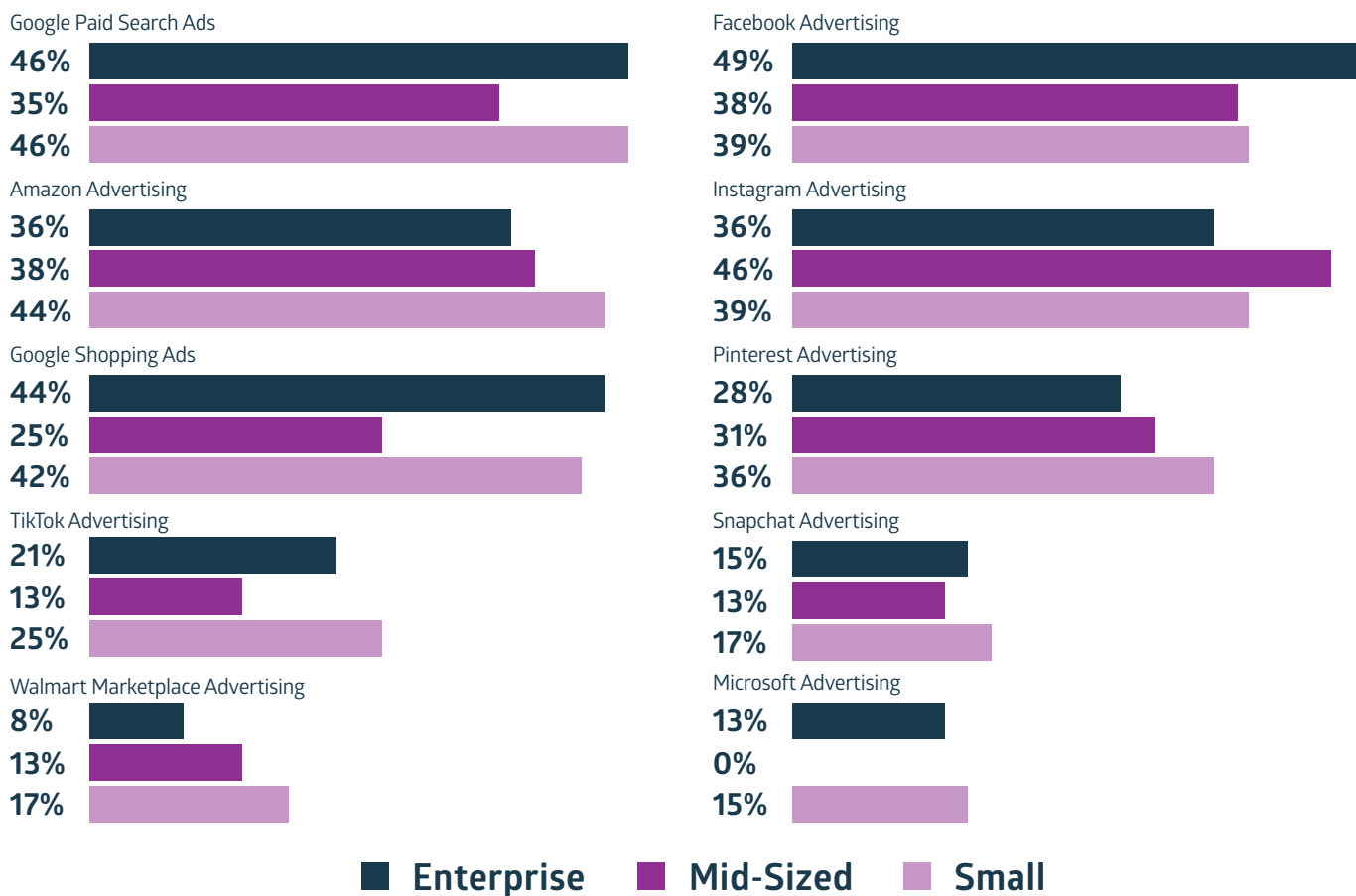
We then segmented the data by company size. A common thread emerges when looking at this view of the data in combination with the previous two charts. Marketers are showing solid interest in upper funnel platforms.

From our perspective, this finding alludes to a shift we've been closely watching in the e-commerce marketing industry. Direct response channels like Google Shopping are saturated.

Marketers are increasingly realizing that they need to diversify their advertising mix and engage shoppers in other important (and less expensive) places they frequent online.

Instagram is the top platform for mid-sized retailers, while enterprise retailers favor Facebook.

Platforms That Marketers Want to Spend More Time On By Company Size



TAKE ACTION

Get the deep dive into growth opportunities with the [2020 Benchmarks Report: Google Ads in Retail](#).



FACTORS DRIVING SUCCESS

We then studied success factors. What team efforts are working? Several responses speak to collaborative and organizational strengths. The top response marketers gave was in-house talent and expertise (41%) followed by strong collaboration (33%) and data-driven decisions (33%).

What Are The Biggest Factors Driving Your Marketing Team's Success?

Select All That Apply



Part 2: How Are Your Team Priorities Changing?

We asked one respondent to explain why team collaboration is such a point of success for her marketing team. She said it is not only an effective way to manage processes, but that collaboration is also a critical part of the company culture.

BEHIND THE DATA

“Being a part of a small team allows us to have our hands in multiple areas while working together on a lot of projects. We have a weekly marketing team meeting where we bounce ideas off of one another and that's typically where our ‘shower thoughts’ transform and materialize. I also think the leadership and company culture is a huge driving factor when it comes to team collaboration. When you're given the freedom and autonomy to work on projects that you're passionate about, with coworkers who also enjoy what they do, the work speaks for itself.”

Christina Coppola

Associate Marketing Manager for Spikeball



Part 2: How Are Your Team Priorities Changing?

When we looked at responses by company size, we uncovered a more detailed picture about success factors. In-house skills and expertise are success factors primarily for marketers at small and enterprise retailers, with 49% of each of these segments reporting this way.

However, only 25% of marketers at mid-sized retailers agree that in-house skills and expertise are success factors, indicating that this segment can benefit significantly from adding training, talent, and/or external partners.

Only 25% of marketers at mid-sized retailers agree that in-house skills and expertise are success factors for their teams, indicating that this segment can benefit significantly from adding training, talent, and/or external partners.



Factors Driving Success By Company Size

In-House Skills & Expertise



Data-Driven Decisions



Strong Collaboration



Brand Recognition



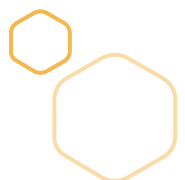
Ability to React to Market Shifts



Senior-Level Support



■ Enterprise ■ Mid-Sized ■ Small



DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

Response rate for “data-driven decisions” also stood out. Some 46% of marketers at enterprise retailers said data-driven decisions are a major factor in their success. By contrast, 25% of marketers at mid-sized retailers and 31% of those at small retailers reported data-driven decisions as a success factor. The differences may be due to the volume and access to data that enterprise retailers may have compared to their smaller counterparts.

While enterprise retailers might be ahead of small and mid-sized organizations when it comes to data-driven decision making, all-sized organizations exhibit room to continue building out their data-driven decision making capabilities. Later in the survey (page 37), we found marketing teams most often make their decisions based 50% on data and 50% on instinct.

46% of marketers for enterprise retailers report that data-driven decisions are a major factor in their success.

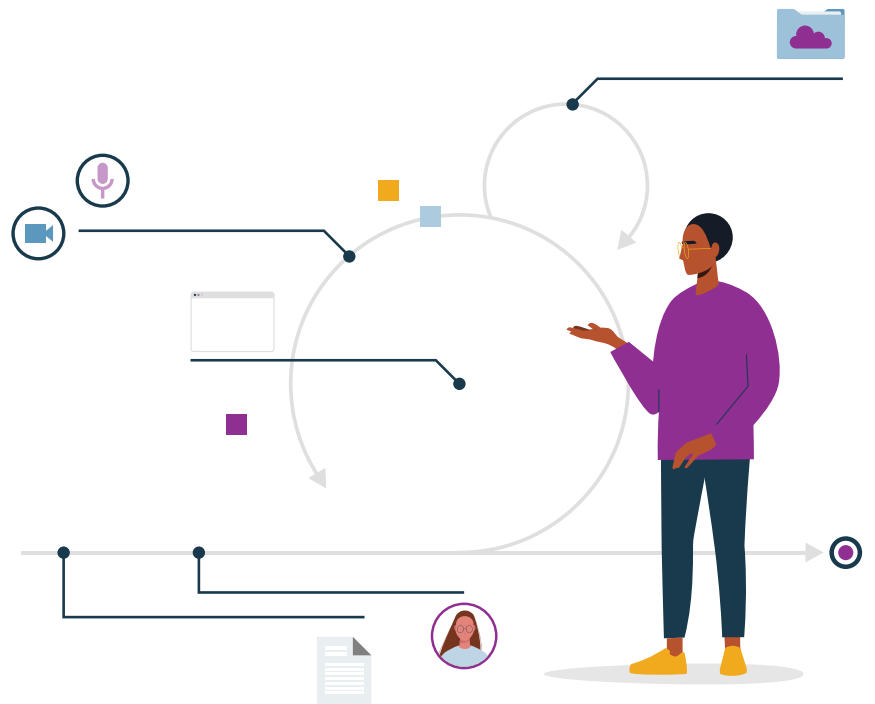


THEMES TO E-COMMERCE MARKETING TEAM SUCCESS

Marketers have spoken. There is no silver bullet to success in 2021. Rather, success requires several key ingredients.

In taking a big-picture look at our survey findings, here's how we sum up the success factors that marketers reported.

- ✓ Invest in your foundation by building solid in-house skill sets.
- ✓ Push collaboration with internal and external team members to the next level.
- ✓ Increasingly lean into data to make your marketing decisions.
- ✓ Acquire senior-level support for your marketing goals and initiatives.
- ✓ Continue building brand recognition.
- ✓ Fine tune your ability to react to market shifts.





PART 3

HOW ARE YOUR HIRING PLANS CHANGING?



RECENT IN-HOUSE HIRES

Our survey continued digging deeper into team dynamics by asking several questions about the composition of marketers' in-house and external teams. We wanted to understand how e-commerce marketing departments are changing by first benchmarking recent hires, followed by exploring future hiring plans.

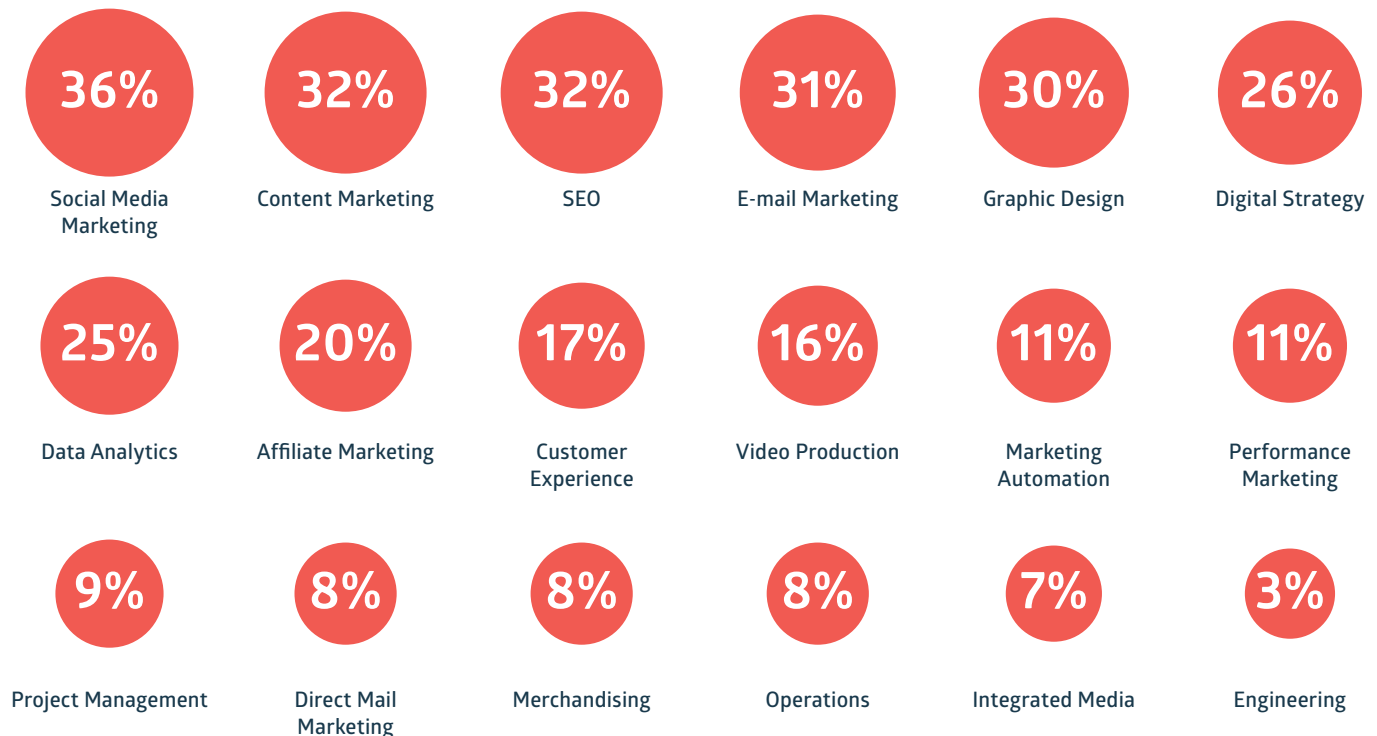
When it comes to recent hires, we found that the three most common functions that marketing teams have added include: social media marketing (36%), SEO (32%), and content marketing (32%).

Has Your Team Hired In-House Talent In The Past 12 Months?



What Functions Has Your Team Hired For Over The Last 12 Months?

Select All That Apply



SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AND SEO

The top responses to this question overlap with a previous one which asked marketers what skills or training they thought would be most valuable for their careers (page 7). Social media and SEO were top responses.

Taken together, these findings indicate that areas like social media and SEO are not fully addressed by hiring, say, just one dedicated person for the role. Rather, social media and SEO are continually expanding areas. They cross into multiple team members' responsibilities. As a result, many members of the team must understand social media and SEO and be part of a matrixed approach to supporting them.

82% of e-commerce marketing teams have hired in-house talent in the past 12 months, with social media marketing as the #1 most hired role.



Part 3: How Are Your Hiring Plans Changing?

We found a number of differences when we analyzed the data by company size. For instance, data analytics in particular was a top hire among enterprise retailers, with 41% of marketers reporting it.

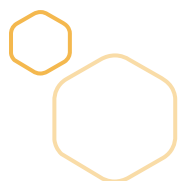
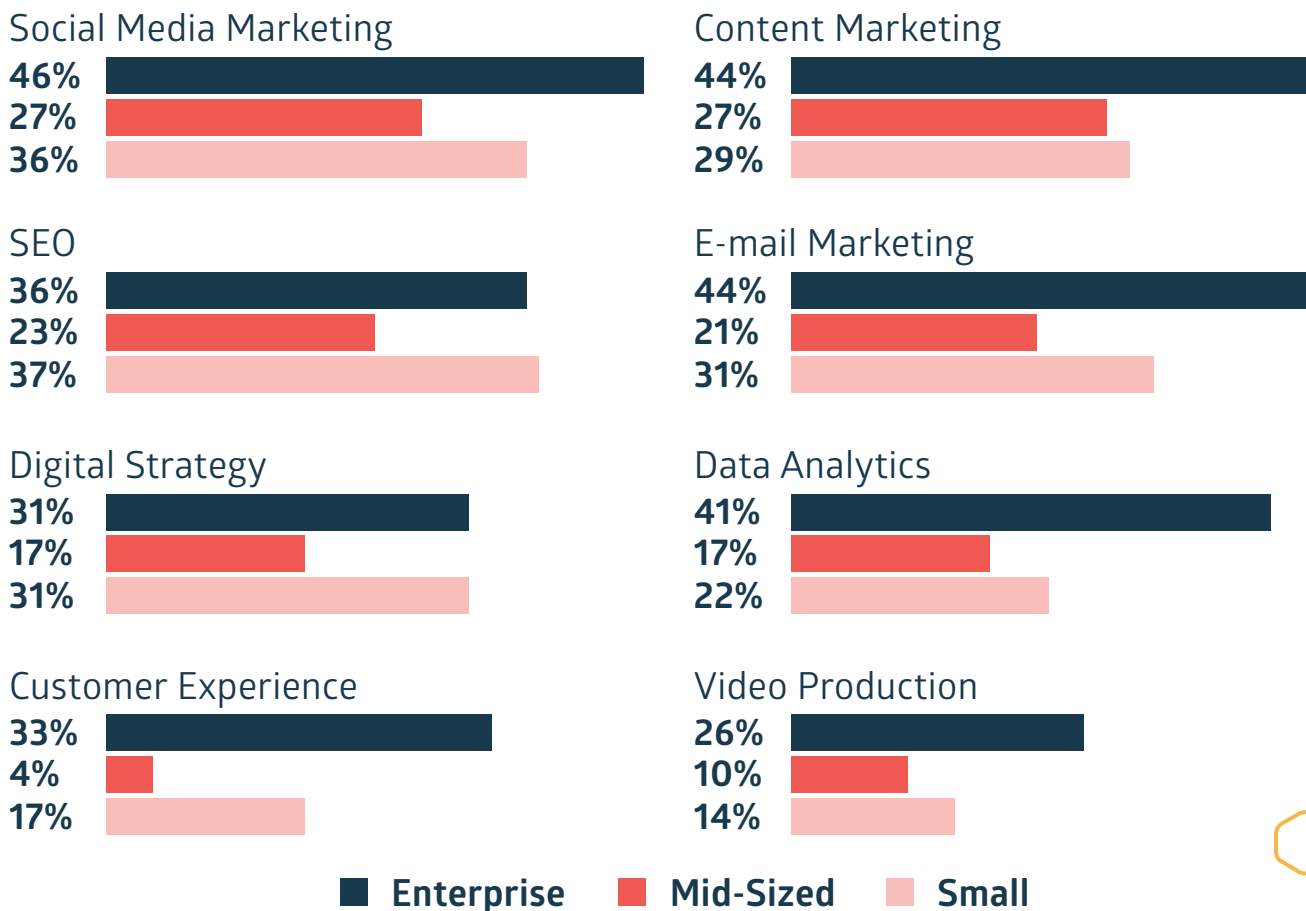
This may speak to the larger volumes of data that enterprise businesses tend to have and manage. In addition, this finding may signal that enterprise retailers feel more comfortable having a complete team of people managing data analytics and data analytics tools, rather than turning to a fully automated approach.

#1 E-commerce Marketing Function Hired In-House Over The Last 12 Months

- Enterprise
- Social Media Marketing**
- Mid-Size
- Graphic Design**
- Small
- SEO**



Functions Hired In-House Over The Last 12 Months By Company Size





FUTURE IN-HOUSE HIRES

We then looked to the future. We asked what functions marketers plan to hire in-house in the next 12 months. One of the biggest shifts was in the number of respondents who reported no new hiring plans, at 33%. By contrast, over the past 12 months, only 18% of respondents have not hired. This shift in priorities may be due to the ongoing uncertainties resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

That said, the majority of marketing teams (67%) are still planning to hire in the next 12 months, with a wide spectrum of 18 roles on their lists. The breadth of these roles reflects the myriad ways marketers are striving to better engage with their audiences.

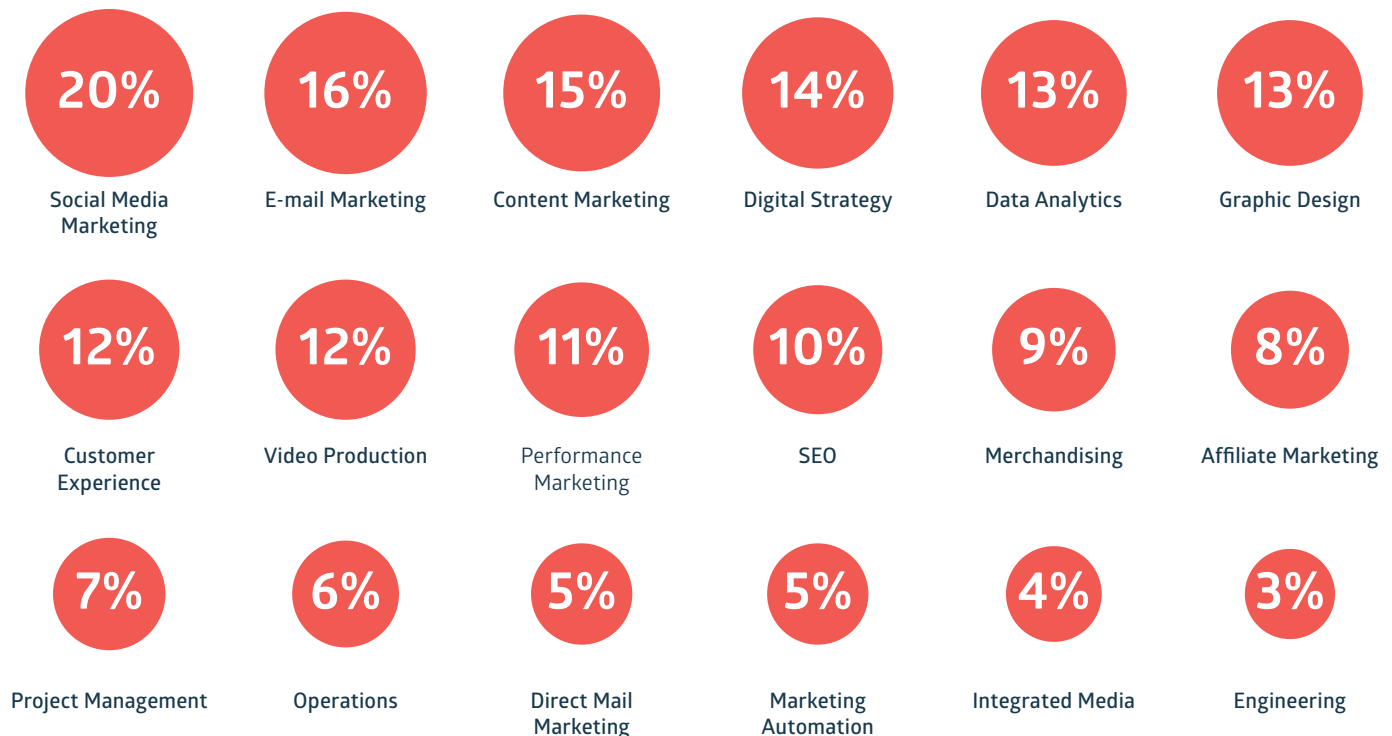
The most popular role? Social media marketing, continuing the hiring trend we've seen over the past year. Marketers in the retail industry see social media as a critical channel for their goals—a finding that was further corroborated earlier in our survey when we asked about the channels marketers wish they could spend more time with (page 19).

Does Your Team Plan To Hire In-House Talent Over The Next 12 Months?



What Functions Is Your Team Planning To Add In-House In The Next 12 Months?

Select All That Apply



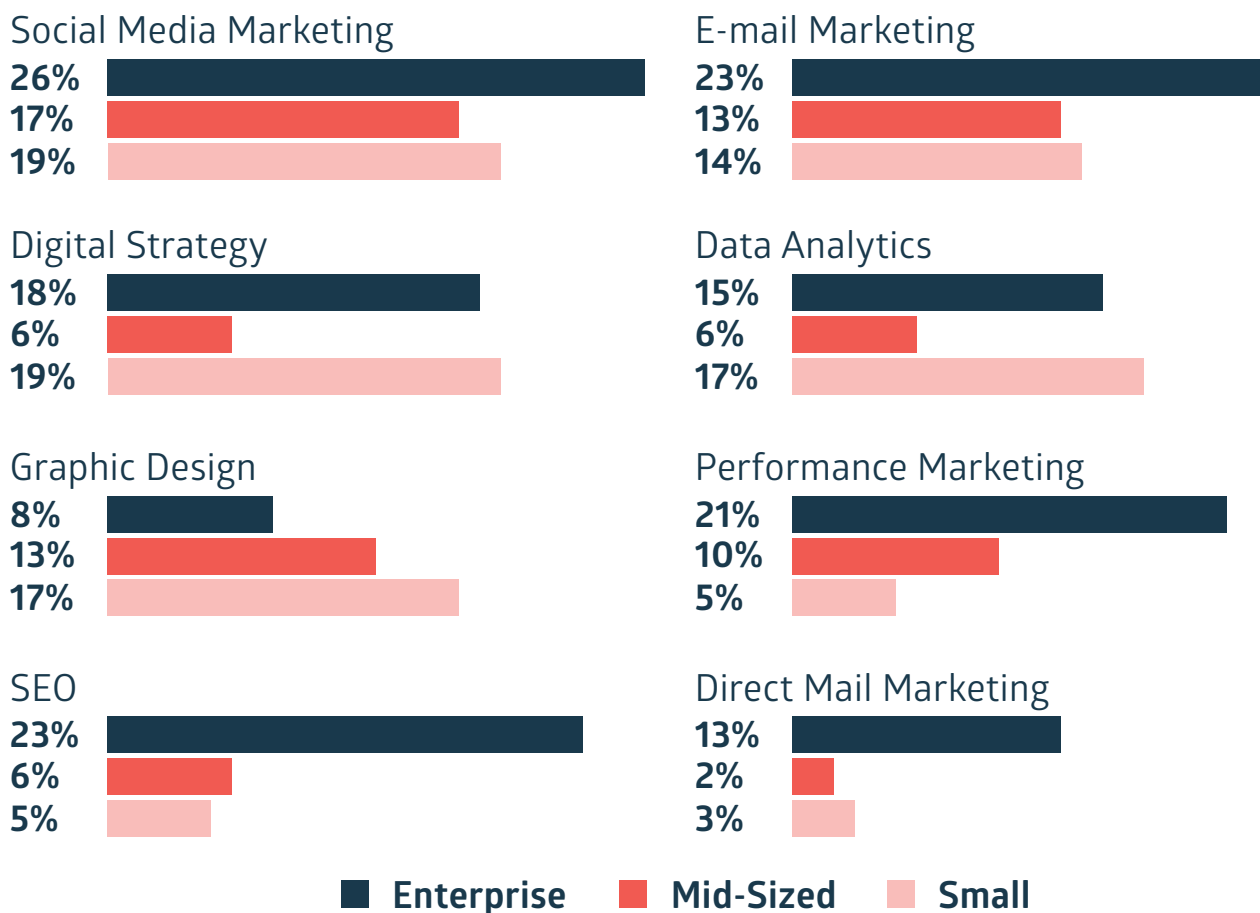
Part 3: How Are Your Hiring Plans Changing?

When we analyzed the data by company size, we found all segments are prioritizing social media marketing first, with various weights placed on other key roles. We charted some of the biggest differences here.

One standout worth noting is that 17% of respondents from small businesses indicated they plan to hire for graphic design, a slightly higher rate than those from mid-sized and enterprise businesses.

This supports a previous finding that 47% of small business respondents wish they could devote more time to creative (page 11). Creative continues to be a crucial way for small retail businesses to stand out, despite often having lower brand recognition and reach than their larger competitors.

In-House Hiring Plans For The Next 12 Months By Company Size



Zooming back out, here's a side-by-side comparison of past and future hiring across all respondents.

Some of the value on social media marketing may be accelerated by the pandemic, as consumers spend more time on social media platforms. According to a June [2020 eMarketer report](#), consumers are projected to spend an average of 82 minutes a day on social media, an increase of six minutes over the previous year.

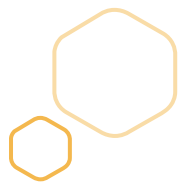
E-commerce Marketing Hires



TAKE ACTION

Determine how to focus your own skill and experience development to make yourself more marketable to employers.





FUTURE VENDOR HIRES

Up next, we wanted to understand how marketers are planning to extend their teams through vendor relationships. We found that 66% of marketers are planning to hire vendors—nearly equal to the number of marketers planning to add in-house talent (67%).

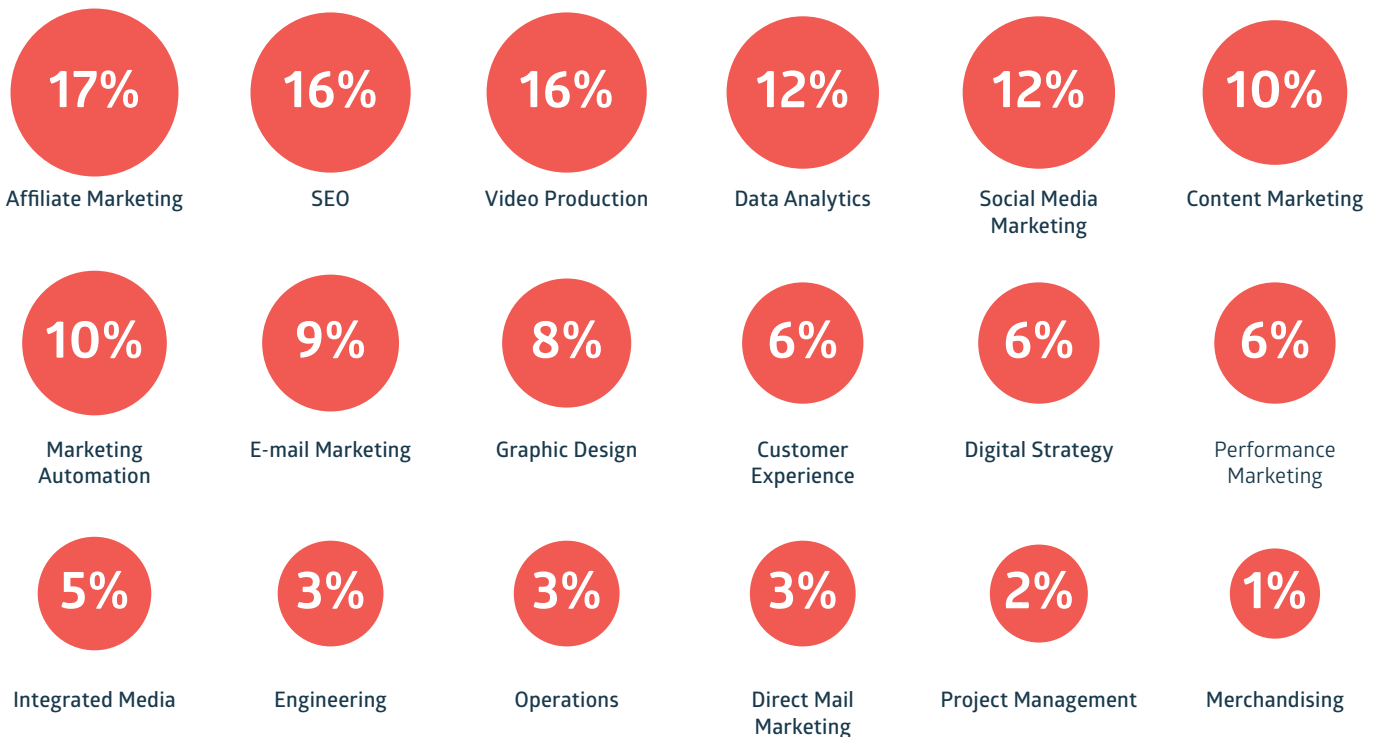
More specifically, our survey uncovered a wide swath of functions that marketers are planning to add through vendors. All 18 functions that marketers reported as in-house hires also appeared as vendor hires.

Does Your Team Plan To Hire Vendors Over The Next 12 Months?



What Functions Is Your Team Planning To Add Through Vendors In The Next 12 Months?

Select All That Apply



NEW TEAMS IN 2021

Taken together, marketers' internal and external hiring plans point to a growing industry-wide realization that double-digit e-commerce growth will not come to your business simply by maintaining your marketing status quo and passively letting consumer demand take over.

Driving growth requires marketers to think differently about how to engage their audience in 2021. Thinking differently has important implications for marketers in terms of hiring and how they spend their time, as we continue to reveal throughout this survey.

E-commerce marketers are planning to grow their internal and extended teams earnestly in 2021. 66% plan to hire vendors and 67% plan to hire in-house talent.

Top 3 Vendor Hires In 2021

By Company Size

Enterprise	Mid-Sized	Small
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Affiliate Marketing2. SEO3. Content Marketing	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Social Media Marketing2. Video Production3. Data Analytics	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Affiliate Marketing2. SEO3. Video Production

TAKE ACTION

Think differently about how to engage your audience in 2021 and the people you need to get there.





PART 4

HOW ARE YOUR PROCESSES CHANGING?



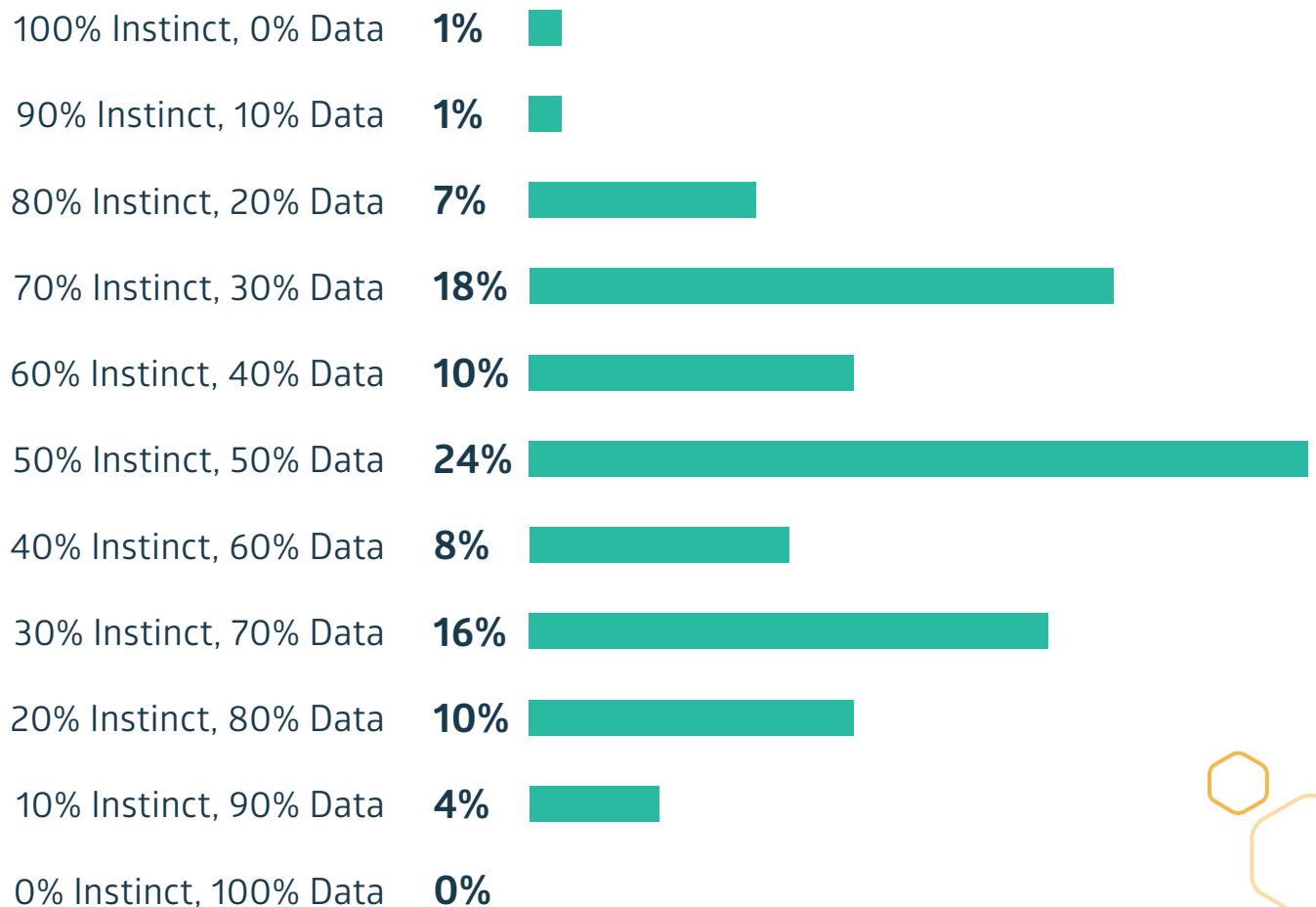
DATA VERSUS INSTINCT

The final area we studied in our survey was process. How are marketers changing their processes to better engage shoppers?

We started by asking marketers how often their team makes decisions based on data versus experience and instinct. The #1 response was 50% data and 50% instinct, with 24% of respondents reporting this way.

E-commerce marketing teams most often make their decisions based 50% on data and 50% on instinct.

How Often Does Your Team Make Marketing Decisions Based On Data Versus Experience And Instinct?



STRIKE THE BALANCE

We then looked at the data another way. We added up how many respondents reported making decisions based on data at least 60% of time, and based on instinct at least 60% of the time. Here's what we found.

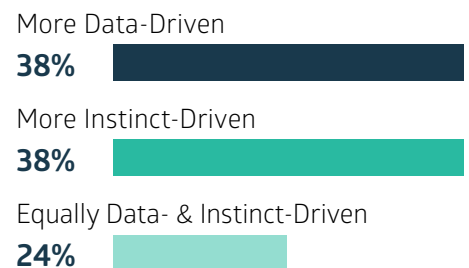


62% of e-commerce marketing teams are making half or more of their decisions based on instinct rather than data, indicating significant headroom to become more data-driven.

Even though the mantra of data-driven decision making feels ingrained in our heads, most marketers (62%) have room to become more data-driven than instinct-driven. What's more, other findings in this report indicate that marketers want to be more data-driven. Data analytics is a priority for hiring (page 31), a top skill marketers want to obtain (page 7), and a key task marketers want to spend more time on (page 9).

Ultimately, data and instinct are both integral parts of marketing decision making. The question to ask yourself is, what's the right ratio for your team and business? In our experience, we generally find a sweet spot around 70-30, favoring data. Naturally, the precise ratio may be different for your business depending on your growth stage and goals.

Are E-Commerce Marketers More Data-Driven Or Instinct-Driven?



TAKE ACTION

Become more data-driven. Learn how to [use your performance data](#) from Google text ads to inform your strategy in Google Shopping, and vice versa.



DECISION MAKING AMONG ENTERPRISE RETAILERS

Going one layer deeper, we segmented the data by job role and company size. The trends we uncovered from looking at the unsegmented data still rang true in nearly all cases, except for one.

Marketers for enterprise retailers tend to lean more heavily into data than those who work for small and mid-sized retailers. Fifty-one percent of marketers for enterprise retailers make at least 60% of their marketing decisions based on data rather than instinct.

This could be due to the enterprise's tendency to be able to collect more data and have the resources to analyze and take action on it. We can see this finding also corroborates with earlier findings in our survey (page 24) that showed 46% of marketers at enterprise retailers said data-driven decisions are a major factor in their success.



51% of marketers for enterprise retailers make at least 60% of their marketing decisions based on data rather than instinct.

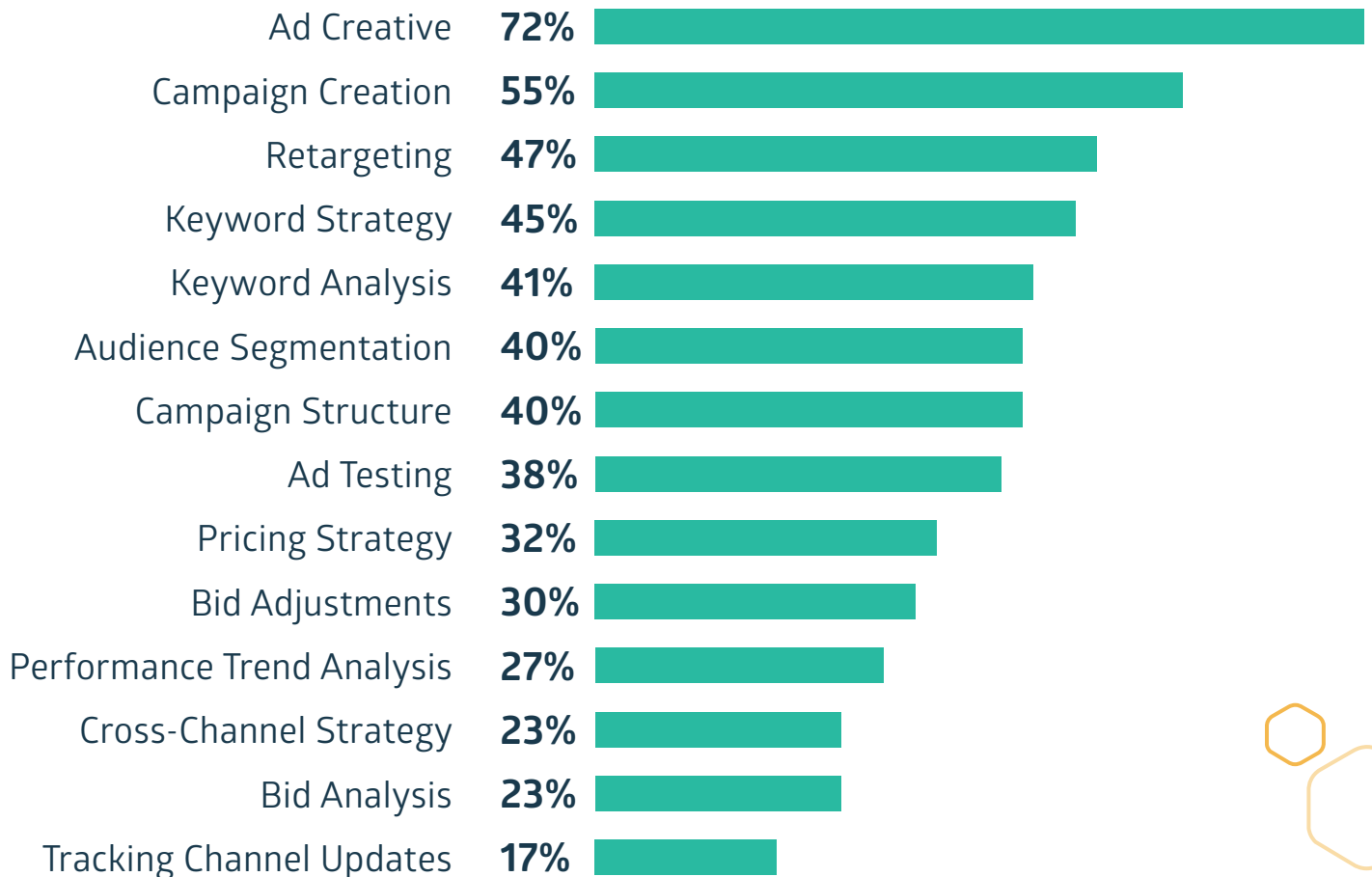


INTERNAL BANDWIDTH

Our survey examined which online advertising processes and tasks are successfully being handled, and which are falling off the plate. Ad creative gets top billing. E-commerce marketers may be able to prioritize ad creative in-house because it relies heavily on assets that tend to originate in-house, like product imagery.

When It Comes To Digital Ad Platforms (i.e., Google Ads, Facebook Advertising, And Amazon Advertising), What Tasks Can Your In-House Team Realistically Accomplish?

Select All That Apply



Part 4: How Are Your Processes Changing?

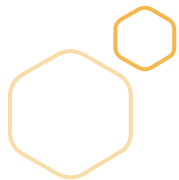
Conversely, we examined the data to identify which tasks tend to suffer when left to in-house resources. See the list at the right.

These are some of the most time-consuming tasks to drive positive advertising performance. Yet just because they are time-consuming does not mean marketers want to ignore them. Rather, marketers conveyed the importance of these tasks in other areas of our survey, indicating that if they could find a way to do them, they would.

For instance, 45% of respondents reported they wish they had more time for data analysis (page 9), which aligns with the lack of time for bid analysis. Thirty-three percent of marketers wish they had more time for multichannel strategy, which aligns with the lack of time for cross-channel strategy.

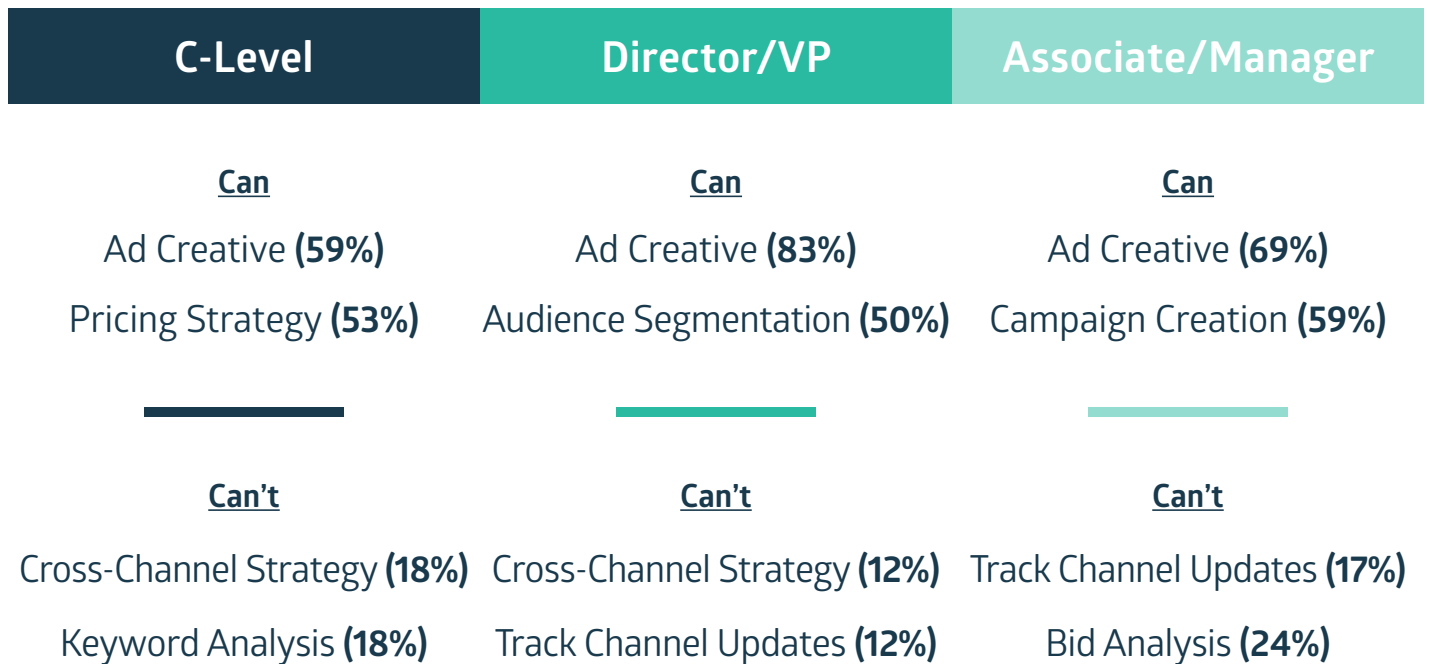
Top 5 Tasks E-Commerce Marketers Don't Have Time For When It Comes To Digital Ads

1. Tracking Channel Updates
2. Cross-Channel Strategy
3. Bid Analysis
4. Performance Trend Analysis
5. Bid Adjustments



WHEN TIME IS AND ISN'T ON MARKETERS' SIDES

When we segmented the data by job role, we uncovered some differences in bandwidth. Here's a look at which tasks marketers said they can and can't accomplish.



These insights may drive self-reflection. For instance, ask yourself, does this data affirm who on your team should be spending time on which particular tasks? Does this data reveal a mismatch of job role to task? Is someone on your team spending too much time on a certain task, to the detriment of other important tasks?

TAKE ACTION

Use the findings in this report to justify additional support through internal or external resources.



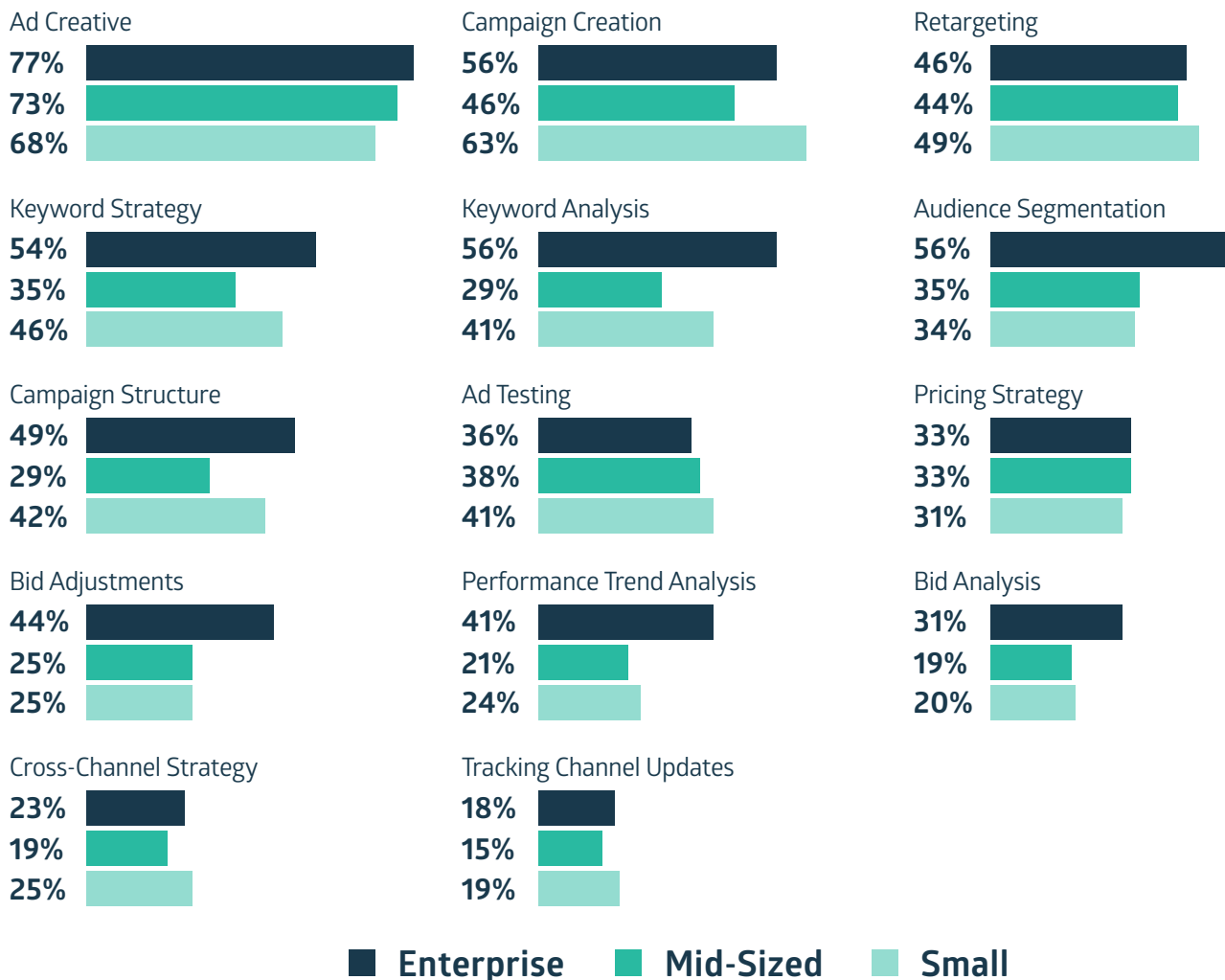
Part 4: How Are Your Processes Changing?

Our findings indicate that marketers for enterprise retailers tend to be able to handle more tasks in-house than their small and mid-sized counterparts. They scored highest in 10 of the 15 tasks we asked about. This is not surprising, since enterprise retailers have more resources and people to support more activities.

By contrast, marketers for mid-sized retailers showed a tendency to be able to handle fewer tasks in-house compared to marketers for small and enterprise retailers. They scored the lowest in 11 of the 15 tasks we asked about. This may be due to the complexities that often come when companies have achieved a mid-market size and are continuing to grow and transition into a larger organization. For instance, these companies may be expanding initiatives into new areas, making it difficult to support all the tasks involved in successful performance marketing.

Marketing teams for mid-sized retailers tend to have the most constrained bandwidth internally compared to marketing teams for small and enterprise retailers.

Tasks Marketers Can Accomplish In-House By Company Size



AUTOMATION

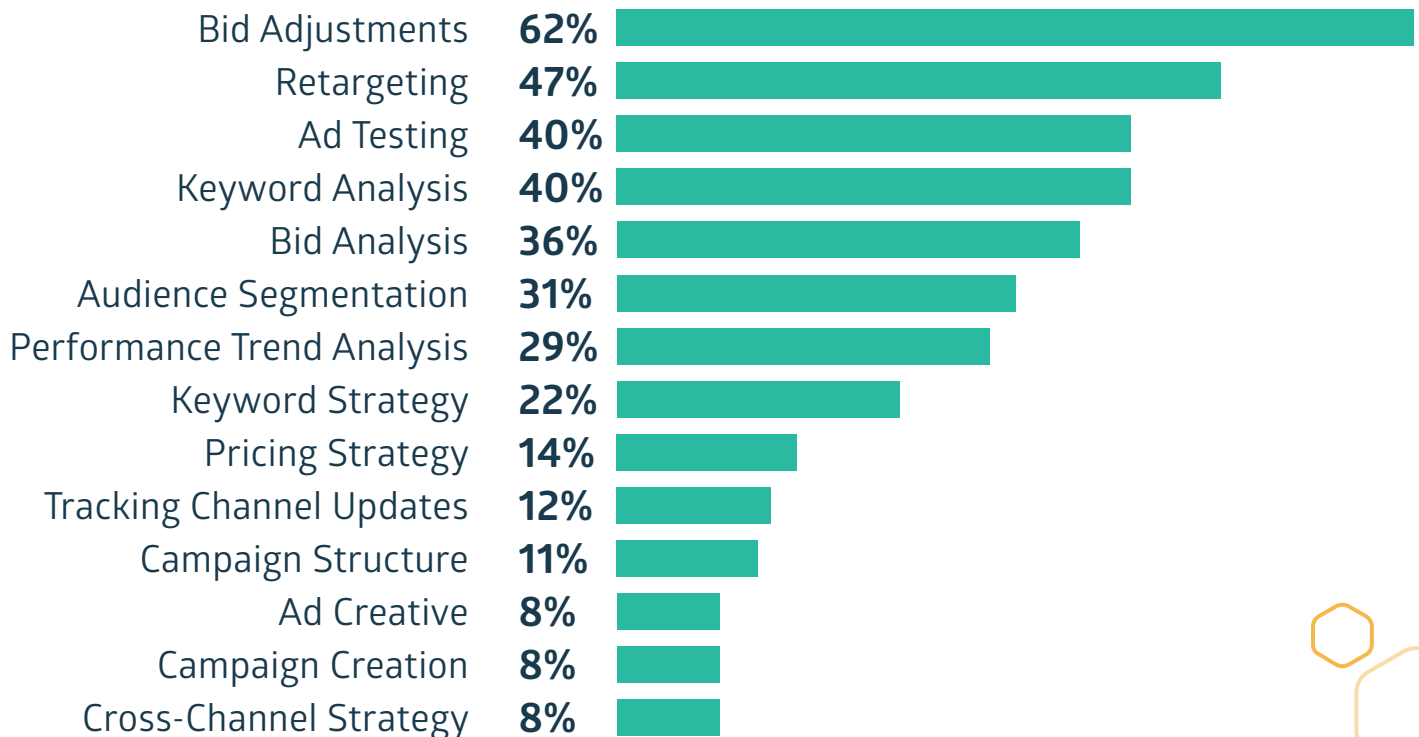
E-commerce marketers resoundingly want to automate bid adjustments, with 62% of respondents answering this way. This finding aligns with data we uncovered earlier in the survey, which pointed out that only 30% of marketers have time for bid adjustments (page 40).

Top Performance Marketing Tasks To Automate

1. Bid Adjustments
2. Retargeting
3. Keyword Analysis
4. Ad Testing
5. Bid Analysis

What Type of Performance Marketing Tasks Do You Believe Should Be Automated?

Select All That Apply



PAIRING AUTOMATION WITH HUMAN EXPERTISE

We then looked at which tasks scored low to gain more context around the role of automation in marketers' eyes. Our findings show that marketers are not keen to automate strategic tasks, like cross-channel strategy, keyword strategy, and pricing strategy. Similar thinking applies to highly creative tasks, like ad creative.

Our takeaway: Marketers want to use automation to solve data-intensive and time-consuming pain points. But automation can't live in a set-it-and-forget-it silo. Marketers recognize the value of pairing automation with human experience and know-how—which is perhaps also why our survey found a strong emphasis on both data and instinct (page 37).



While 62% of e-commerce marketers want to automate bid adjustments for keywords and products, only 8% want to automate cross-channel strategy.



TAKE ACTION

Check out [6 examples](#) of retailers who have figured out the right tasks to automate.



Part 4: How Are Your Processes Changing?

When we segmented the data further, we found bid adjustments remained the #1 answer for all job roles and company sizes. Looking at other tasks, you can see some differences of opinion by job role, perhaps depending on experience and how close individuals are to certain tasks.

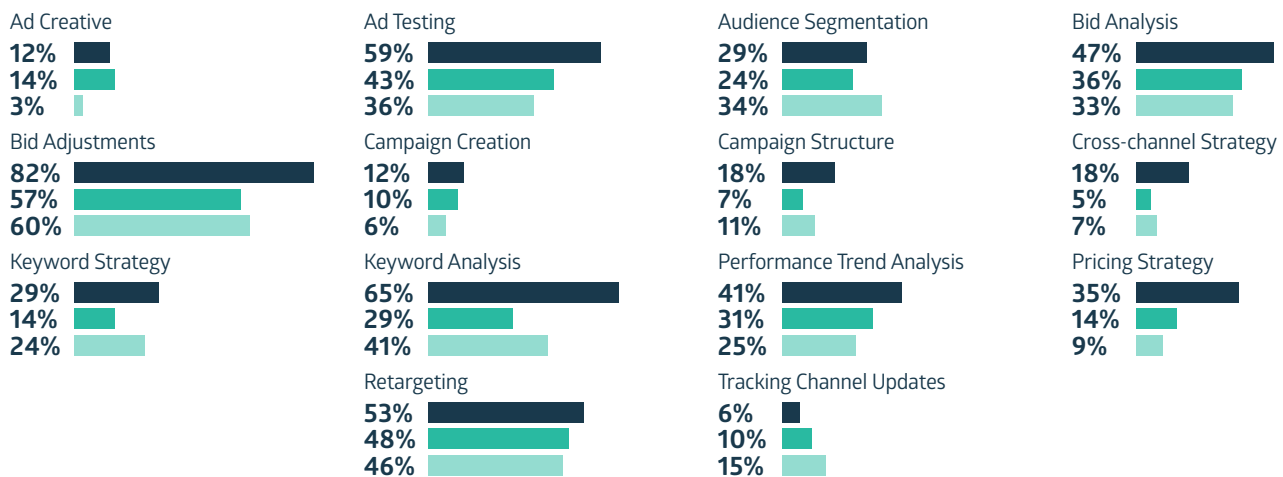
For instance, C-level marketers are much more keen on automation in general. This may relate to their emphasis on driving scale and reducing costs, as well as their vision that more tasks will be automated in the future.

For associates and managers, their focus in the future won't be in executing these time-consuming marketing tasks, but rather in identifying opportunities where they can build automation into human-led strategy. Value will lie in understanding the data that supports those ideas and applying the automation to execute strategy and deliver high performance.

Tasks That Marketers Want To Automate

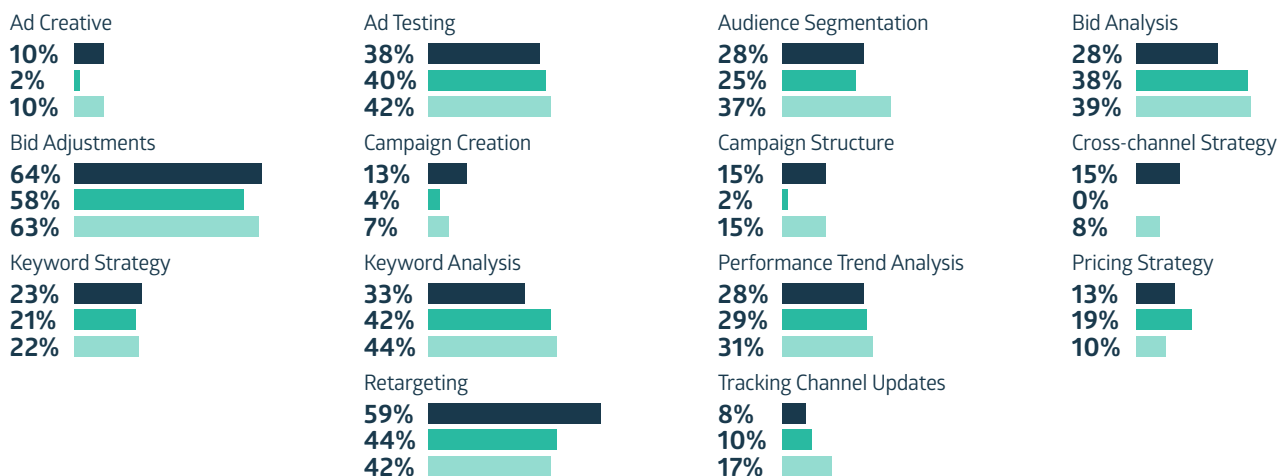
By Job Role

■ C-Level ■ Director/VP ■ Associate/Manager



By Company Size

■ Enterprise ■ Mid-Sized ■ Small





PART 5

WHAT'S YOUR NEXT MOVE?

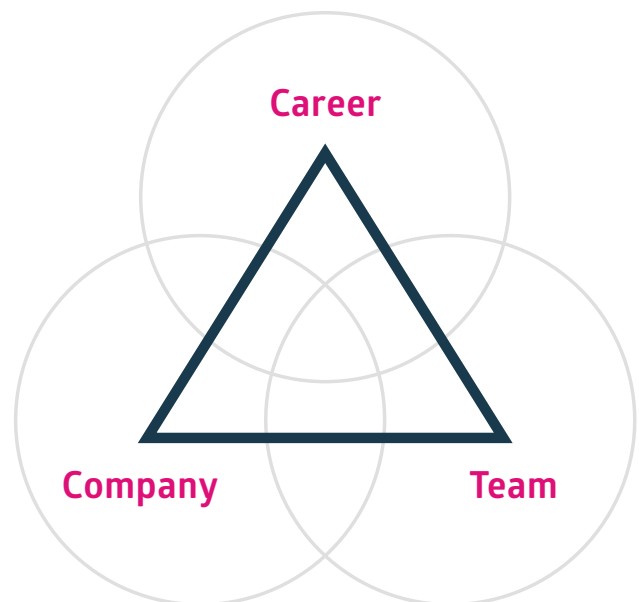


CAREER AND TEAM DEVELOPMENT

This research sheds light on different ideas depending on whether you are an individual contributor or a people manager and team leader. Here are some ways we suggest you turn this research into actionable takeaways to further develop your career and your team. **Use this research to:**

- ✓ **Learn about sources of career growth.**
How does that inspire you?
- ✓ **Understand how your peers are thinking about their marketing goals.**
What does it tell you about your team's goals?
- ✓ **Quantify industry challenges.**
Is your team on par, ahead, or behind on overcoming these challenges? What will help you finally conquer your biggest challenge?
- ✓ **Gain insight into new success factors.**
What practices can you imbue in yourself and your team?
- ✓ **Look ahead to hiring trends.**
How do they impact your hiring plans?
- ✓ **Gauge vendor partnerships.**
How are you recalibrating your extended team for the future of work?
- ✓ **Consider how marketers are building their internal and external teams.**
How can you secure buy-in to expand your teams?
- ✓ **See how data-driven your peers are.**
How do you rate yourself? Are you satisfied with that rating? What do you want to do to change it?

- ✓ **Identify how your peers are and are not leveraging automation.**
Where do you stand? How can you use automation in smarter ways?
- ✓ **Uncover where different tasks fall in priority for marketing teams.**
Is that a source of competitive gain for you?
- ✓ **Observe how different job levels responded to our survey.**
If you're a manager, how can you better optimize team resources? If you're an individual contributor, how can you better support your fellow teammates and manager?
- ✓ **Notice how marketers at different company sizes responded to our survey.** What insights can you apply to your company to help it grow?



MEET THE TEAM

The 2021 E-commerce Marketer Survey was developed and analyzed by our team of performance marketing experts. Learn more about our contributors.

Mike Farrell

Sr. Director, Integrated Digital Strategy



Mike is an expert in digital marketing, with specializations in e-commerce, Google Shopping, and paid search for large retailers. He stays close to the shifting retail landscape, advising marketers in the context of their business goals and the industry at large.



Sandie Shin

Director, Customer Strategy

Sandie has worked on a broad range of digital projects in her career, including brand awareness and direct response campaigns. Her love for marketing, data, and people provides maximum value to Sidecar's clients, helping them become profitable and scale with longterm, sustainable results.

Phil Turicik

Director, Enterprise Customer Strategy



Phil is fluent in developing intricate marketing campaigns across the Google, Facebook, and Bing ecosystems. He works with large retailers to drive revenue and ROI targets in the context of a competitive retail landscape.



Mike Perekupka

Director, Product Marketing

Mike specializes in data, technology, and retail. He is an expert in statistics and mathematics, and guides retail marketers in strategies and best practices for data-driven decision making.

MEET THE TEAM

Ellen Harvey

Manager,
Content Marketing



Ellen is an experienced B2B journalist who has covered emerging media technologies for an executive audience. Drawing on this experience, she crafts actionable content for retail marketers looking to get an edge on online shopping channels.



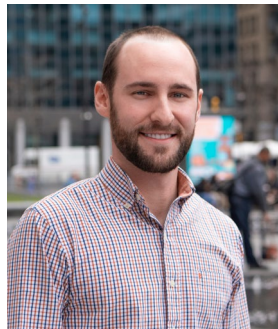
Janelle Kozyra

Director,
Content Marketing

Janelle is a career-long digital marketing professional. She is an early practitioner of the content marketing discipline, with specialization in brand communications and storytelling. She oversees Sidecar's content marketing team and covers trends impacting retail marketing.

Tim Dolan

Associate,
Content Marketing



Tim brings his digital marketing background in the B2C space to assist on multiple marketing initiatives at Sidecar. A lover of data and storytelling, he sheds light on emerging trends and aims to help marketers make informed e-commerce decisions.

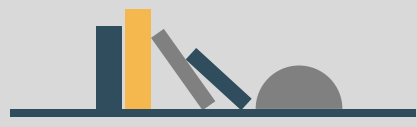


Steve Miller

Associate Creative
Director



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