

16<sup>TH</sup> EDITION

# 2023 B2B marketing mix report

DATA-DRIVEN INSIGHTS FOR  
YOUR MARKETING PLAN

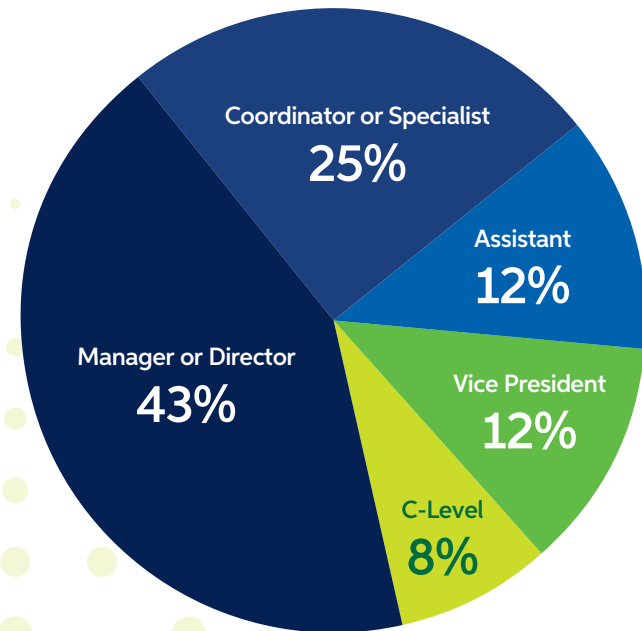
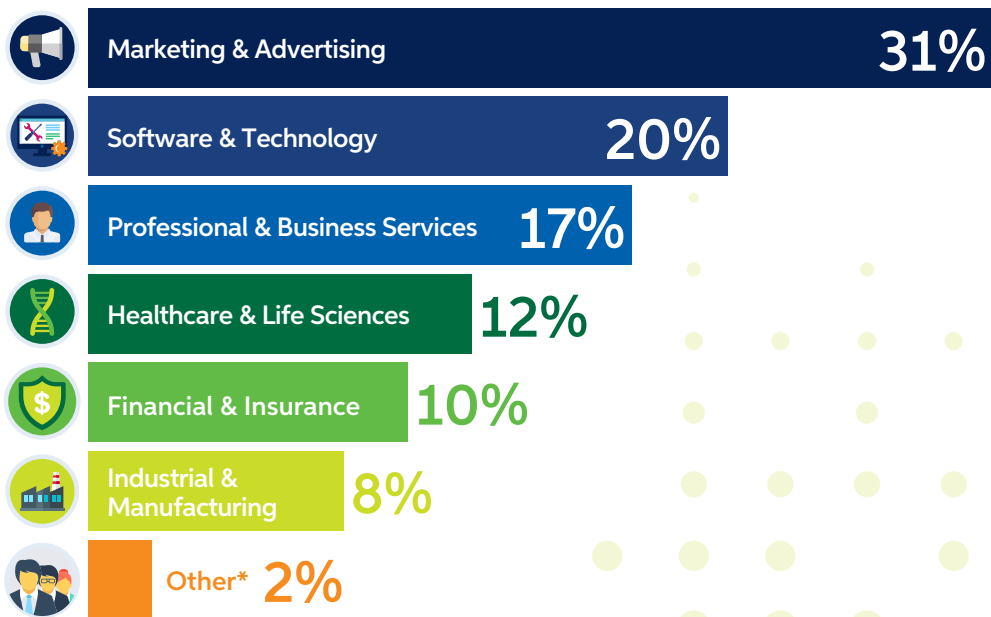


This is the sixteenth edition of Sagefrog Marketing Group’s annual B2B Marketing Mix Report, a resource that has become a valuable year-end tool for modern B2B marketers.

The insights you’ll find in this report summarize the results of our recent B2B Marketing Mix Survey, which seeks to gather the opinions and experiences of professionals across several B2B industries, including healthcare, technology, industrial, and business services. This year, we received over 900 responses from B2B marketing professionals and transformed their contributions into digestible data that reveals the top marketing trends and tactics to watch in the year ahead. With information from this report in hand, marketers will be better equipped to make an informed investment as they plan new budgets and marketing programs.

We hope this year’s forecasts and findings help you approach 2023 with greater confidence in your marketing strategy.

## who we surveyed



Respondents had the option to choose multiple industries as applicable to their field

\*Non-profit, Transportation, Market Research, & Education

# outsourced marketing gains popularity

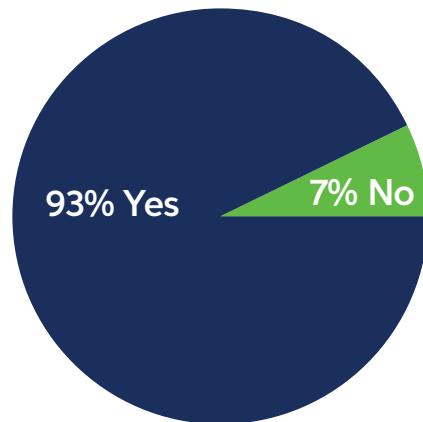
In-house marketing takes the lead this year, while outsourced marketing is on the rise.



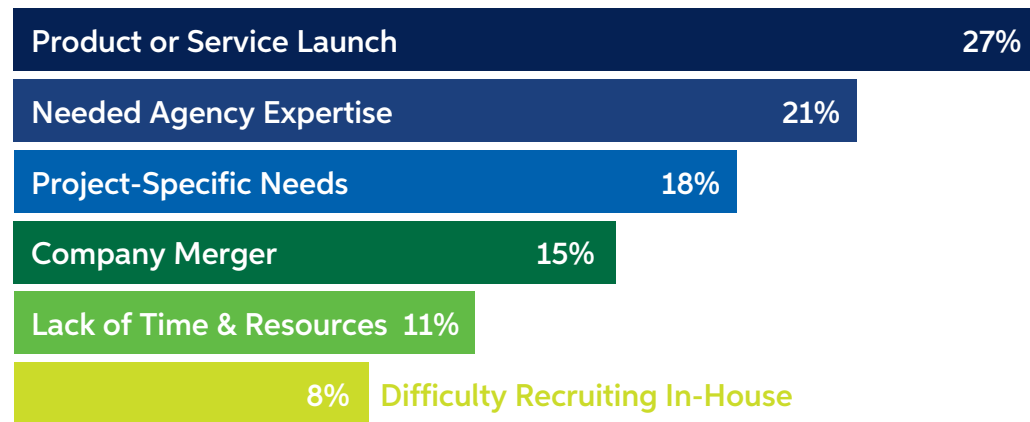
Marketers are seeing increased success with outsourced marketing efforts. It's no wonder that outsourced marketing is gaining in popularity when it provides companies with professionals to help build their brand, generate leads, and drive sales. While many companies outsource marketing for a specific purpose like a new product launch or fully integrated campaigns, the numbers indicate that most companies that outsource felt their efforts were effective.

Overall, we're seeing more B2B companies starting to work with marketing agencies to maximize their marketing efforts and ROI. The majority use a hybrid model combining some in-house work and some outsourced work, but the trend toward increased outsourced marketing remains.

The majority of those who outsource their marketing find it effective.



Of those who outsource their marketing, most do so because of a new product or service launch.

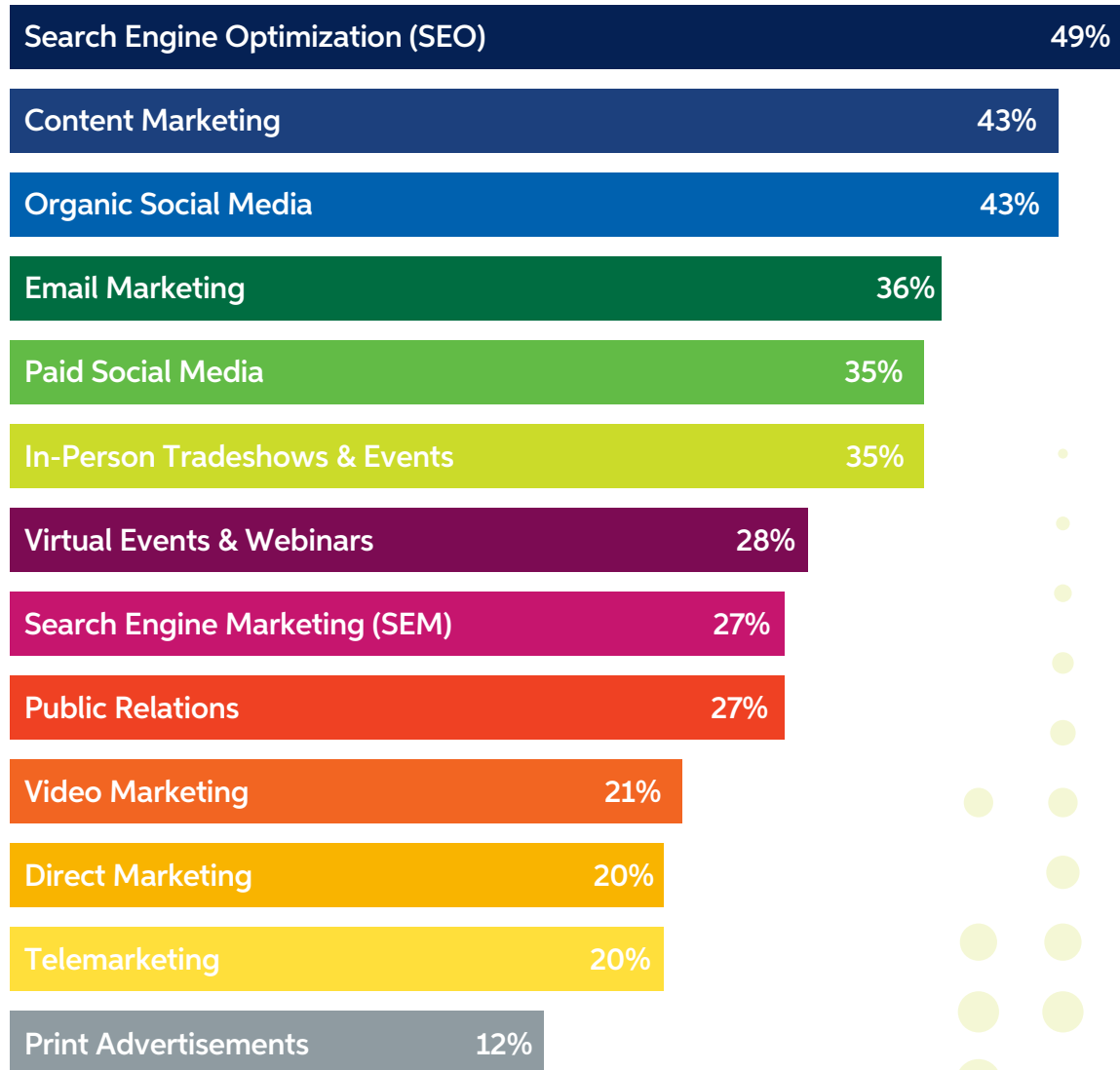


# most implemented marketing tactics in 2022

The best way to anticipate 2023 marketing results is to look at how 2022 wrapped up. Overall, we saw marketers test a variety of different tactics, and the results were closer than ever before.

SEO remains a top marketing tactic with nearly 50% of B2B companies implementing it in their marketing strategy. Email marketing remains a priority, but its use as a tactic has significantly decreased compared to last year. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, virtual events and webinars are on the decline, possibly because these events are now being held in person.

Marketers are adapting to the changing times in the tactics they prioritize and implement. Stop-gaps that arose out of necessity during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic are being left behind, and the general trend toward a wider range of information-centric marketing tools is slowly taking hold.



# top marketing objectives for 2023

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It comes as no surprise that revenue and conversions are a top priority, as increased revenue is the ultimate end goal for sales and marketing teams. But what's interesting is that client retention seems to be more important than other marketing objectives for 2023. There's reason to believe this is influenced by lower client retention rates seen throughout 2022.

Last year, brand awareness and lead generation were top of mind for B2B marketers. While both are inevitably essential marketing objectives, it appears they are now taking a back seat to revenue, conversions, and retention next year.

- 1 Revenue & Conversions
- 2 Client Retention
- 3 Website Traffic
- 4 Brand Awareness
- 5 Lead Generation

“ We know firsthand how important client satisfaction and client retention are. It's absolutely critical for companies to **prioritize existing customers** in their marketing efforts while also attracting new ones. At the end of the day, **marketing is always evolving**, and at Sagefrog we continuously look out for important trends for our clients now and in the future. ”

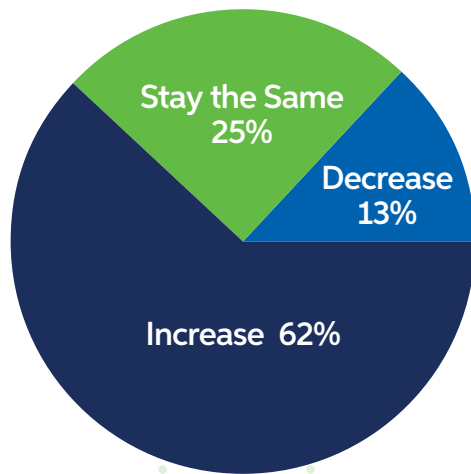
Mark Schmukler, CEO & Co-founder at Sagefrog

# marketing budgets continue to grow

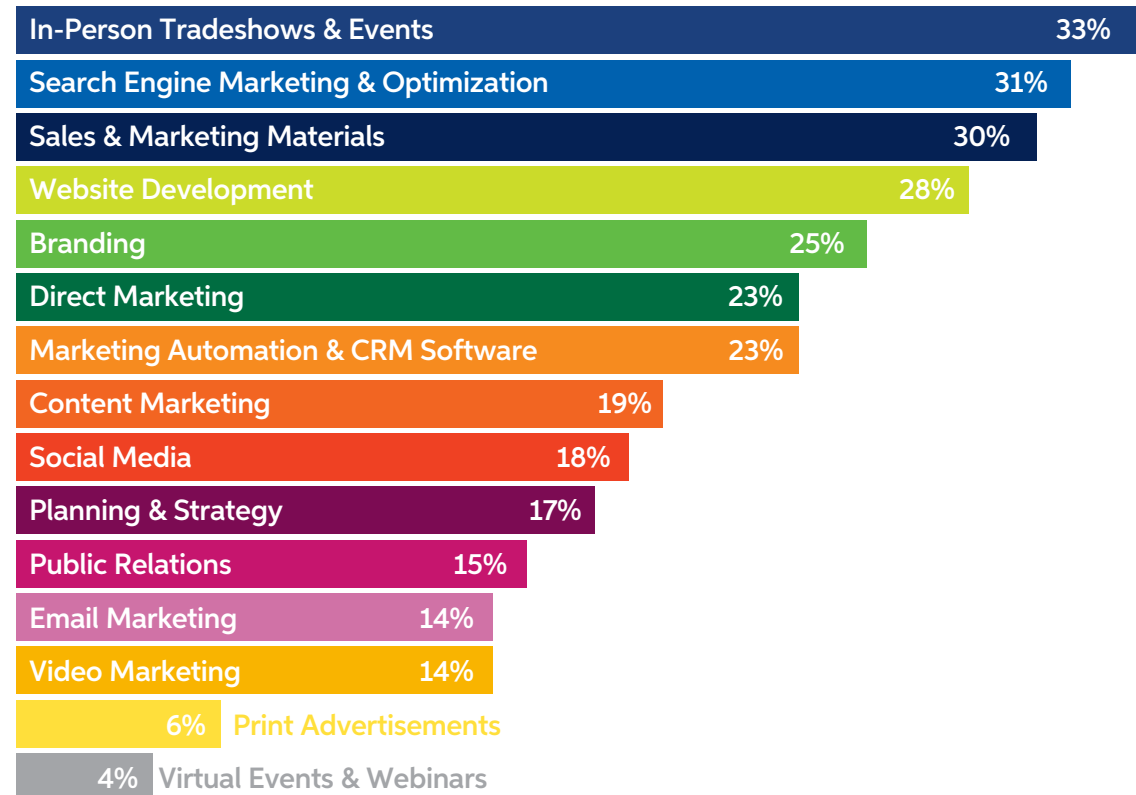
For the past four years, marketing budgets have been on the rise. In 2022, marketers spent 33% of their budget on in-person tradeshows and events, which was a big change from the year prior. Sales and marketing materials were also a top area of spend, while twice as many marketers dedicated their budget to strategy and planning tactics, direct marketing, and video marketing.

There is a significant decrease in spend on social media compared to last year. However, this doesn't reflect the overall increase in social media use we're seeing for B2B companies. It appears these trends suggest a return to physical marketing events and an increase in online marketing tactics; while that includes social media, it's clear that things like website development and SEO are higher priorities.

## Marketing Budget Changes for 2023



## Top Areas of Marketing Spend

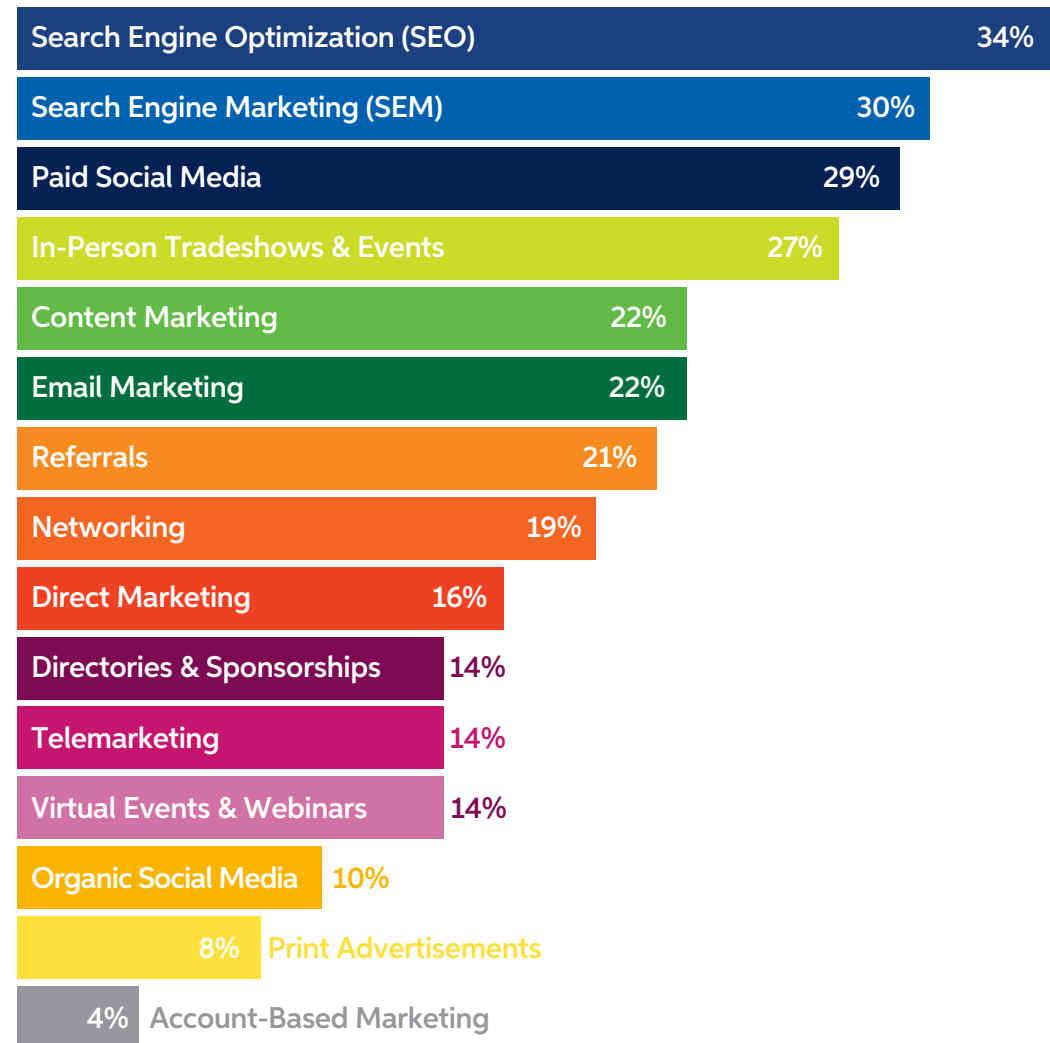


# seo, sem & paid social are bringing in leads

The most qualified leads that marketers received in 2022 came from a combination of SEO, SEM, and paid social. These digital marketing tactics appear to be the most successful, as more traditional methods of lead generation are on the decline. Referrals are no longer a significant source of leads this year when compared to their top spot last year.

We're also seeing evidence that tradeshows and events are making a comeback, with in-person events more viable this year than during the height of the pandemic.

## Top Sources of Sales & Marketing Leads



# what you need to know about social

Social media is one of the most important tools in your B2B marketing strategy. Virtually every B2B company uses it, and the majority of your customers frequent it as well. That being said, the specific social media platforms you're using will affect the success of your marketing plan.

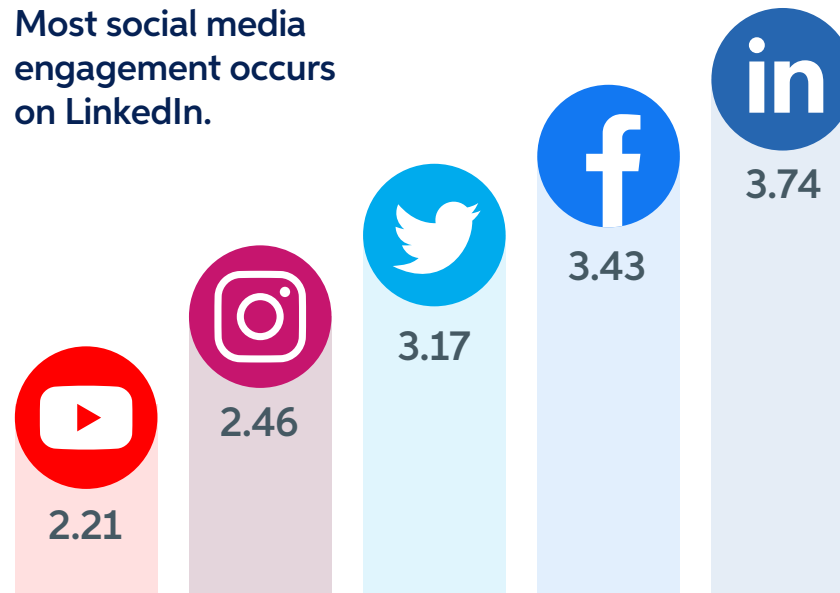
LinkedIn remains the top social platform for B2B companies, with Facebook and Twitter following close behind. Interestingly, Twitter was in the top spot last year and looked to be making a comeback, but ultimately didn't manage to hold its place in first. Instagram may not be a priority for B2B marketers, but you should consider leveraging this platform to showcase a fun company culture for recruiting purposes.

When you connect with potential buyers on social, use your content to draw them in and start building a relationship at the top of the funnel. Social media can be a great way to find where your target buyers are already engaging online.

## Does your company have social media pages?



## Most social media engagement occurs on LinkedIn.





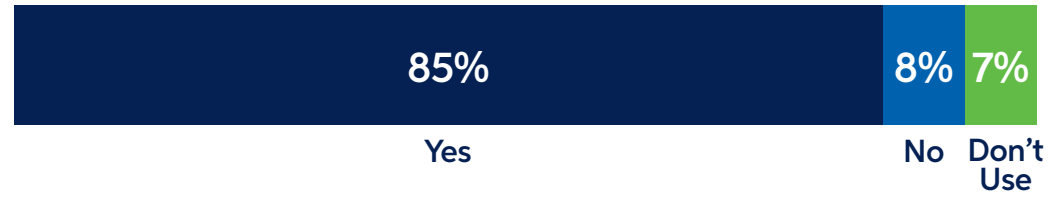
# paid social is essential for b2b marketers

In today's world, organic social media is no longer effective on its own—especially for B2B marketers. If you're investing time in planning social media content organically, then you need to start investing in paid social. Paid social media is an effective and affordable way to increase brand awareness and extend your reach to ideal prospects.

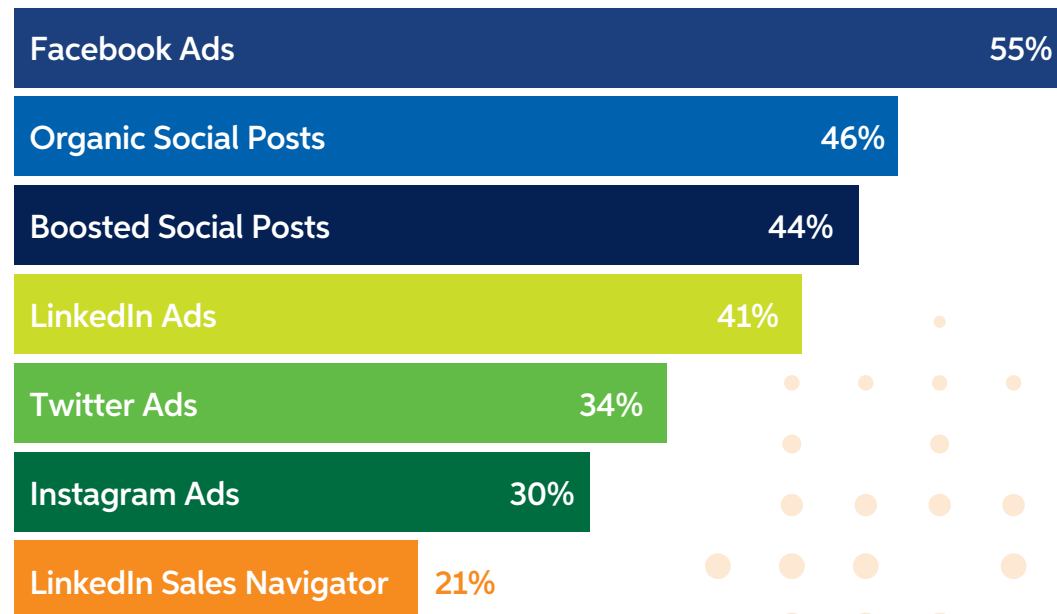
To create an effective paid social strategy, you need to understand your audience. Learn which platforms they engage with the most and put your resources there. You're paying for this content to reach your audience, so ensure your message is seen frequently enough to encourage action.

From what we've gathered, a combination of organic and paid social tactics is the recipe for success. There are several ways you can integrate these strategies that will ultimately produce the highest ROI. Consider boosting top-performing organic content to extend its reach or optimize your posts using data from A/B testing ads on social to discover which elements lead to the best results.

## Most companies see results from paid social media efforts.



## Most Used Social Media Marketing Tactics

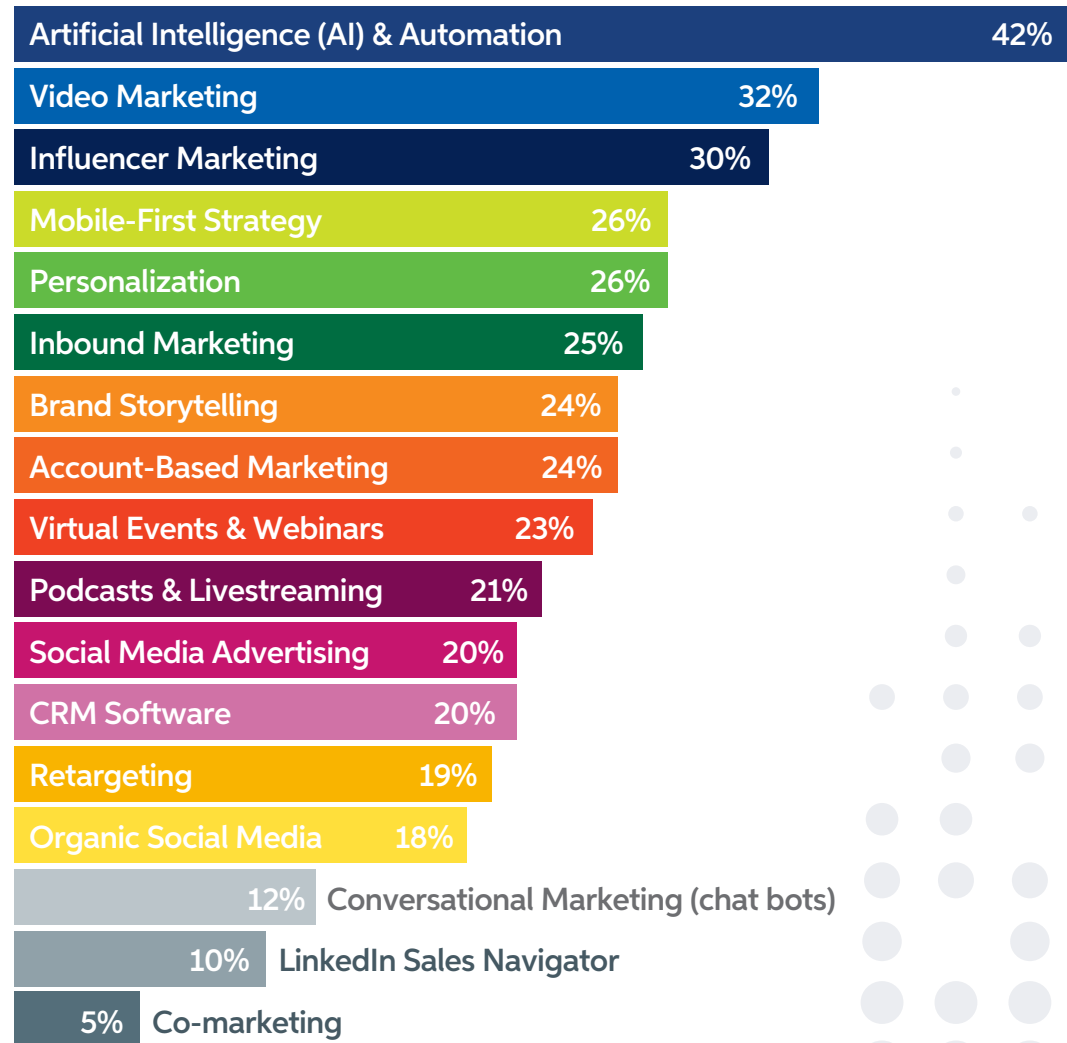


# looking towards the future of b2b marketing

Comparing shifts in marketing strategies from 2022 to 2023 shows us what changes we can expect to see in B2B marketing. The most dramatic change looks to be in artificial intelligence (AI) and automation; 42% of marketers plan to experiment with those techniques this year. Video marketing and influencer marketing stay strong as new strategies B2B professionals are looking to explore in 2023. The biggest question with both methods is how marketers will be able to use them effectively in the year ahead.

Another trend we're seeing is toward a mobile-first strategy. Every year the number of people using mobile devices (over desktops or tablets) climbs higher and higher, and it's changing how we design marketing materials. Everything from copywriting and design shifts to accommodate the smaller screens of mobile devices, like using shortened email subject lines and spacing layouts differently depending on where the fold falls on mobile. If you haven't considered a mobile-first strategy for your B2B brand yet, make sure you do in 2023.

## New Sales & Marketing Strategies for 2023



# top takeaways from this year's report

- Focus on building **stronger relationships** to retain clients
- Make room in your budget for **in-person conferences** and events
- Utilize **SEO and SEM** to increase lead generation
- Incorporate paid and non-paid **social media tactics** in your strategy
- Experiment with **AI and automation** to stay ahead of the competition

# about sagefrog marketing group

Sagefrog is a top-ranked B2B marketing agency and award-winning Best Place to Work<sup>®</sup>, with specialties in healthcare, technology, industrial, and business services. We accelerate client success through branding and integrated marketing delivered through proven programs, business acumen, and fast quality. Our services include branding and strategy, websites and digital, content and inbound, and traditional marketing.

Contact us to put the insights from this report into action for your company.

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