

Digital transformation. Check.

Marketing execs focus
on what's next.



A lot happened in 2020

Ready or not, marketing execs were catapulted into digital. They had to find new ways to reach customers and conduct business—all with drastically reduced budgets and shaky resources. But they proved they could do it. Even better, in our survey, 71 percent of marketing execs said digital is working.

Now what?

After spending so many years focused on transformation, now that we've arrived, what's next? How will marketing execs lead in this new landscape? What new goals are they setting? Will organizations continue to invest in digital, or will they revert back to the old way of doing things? One North took the initiative to find out.

In conjunction with YouGov, we set out to learn how marketing execs are reexamining their strategies, recalibrating their resources, reevaluating investments and recharting their future course. We also aimed to further understand how the business and competitive landscapes have changed over the last 18 months, and what projections look like for the next 24 months.



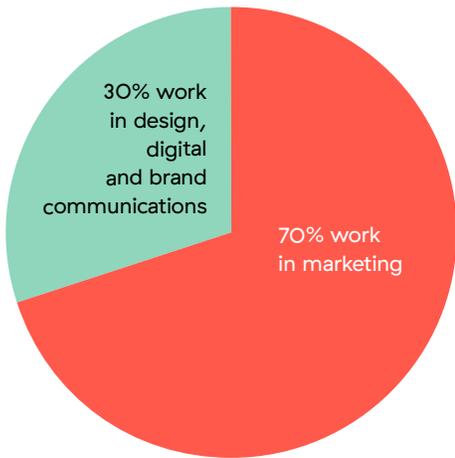
What's ahead

Our survey revealed things are looking up (like budgets). Check it out.

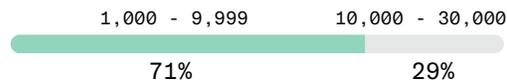
Our methodology

- ▶ Online survey
- ▶ Fielded July 2021
- ▶ 201 US marketing & digital execs responded

Respondent profile



Organization size



Revenue



81%

of respondents have final decision-making authority for both digital tools and digital marketing hires.



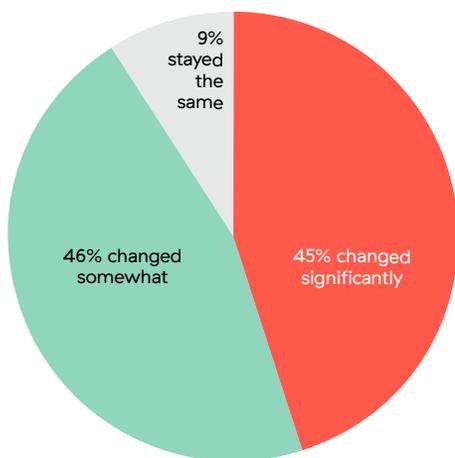
There's a lot to be excited about

Our research shows not only did marketers survive the pandemic, they thrived. Today, marketers are in a strong position for the future. Here's why.

Marketers proved they could change.

In our survey, 91 percent of marketing execs made drastic strategy shifts in 2021—enabling them to find new ways to reach customers (53 percent), implement new tools & technology (50 percent), and shift more toward digital marketing (48 percent). And, four in five execs predict more change ahead to focus on priorities such as personalized ads and mobile marketing.

Current marketing strategies compared to 2020



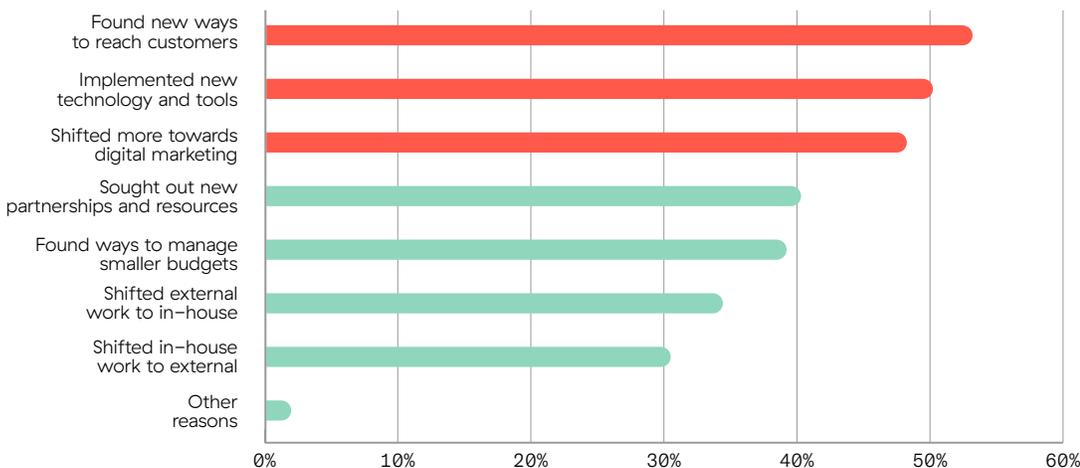
91%

of marketing execs changed strategies compared to 2020. 4 out of 5 expect it to change in the next 24 months.

Over the next 24 months, marketing strategy will...



Ways in which strategies have changed





Budgets are back

Marketing budgets were eviscerated in 2020. The good news: over half of the respondents in our survey saw budgets increase in 2021. And the trend continues, as two in three marketing execs surveyed expect another increase in 2022.

Digital marketing budget

Compared to 2020, 2021 budgets...



Compared to 2021, 2022 budgets ...



● Decreased significantly ● Decreased slightly ● Stayed the same ● Increased slightly ● Increased significantly

> 50%

of the respondents in our survey saw budgets increase in 2021.

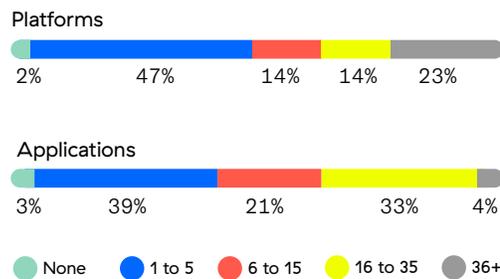


Technology happiness

On average, marketers reported using 31 different platforms and applications—and they're happy with them. Seventy-one percent said their overall digital technology is working well, notably advertising & promotion and data.

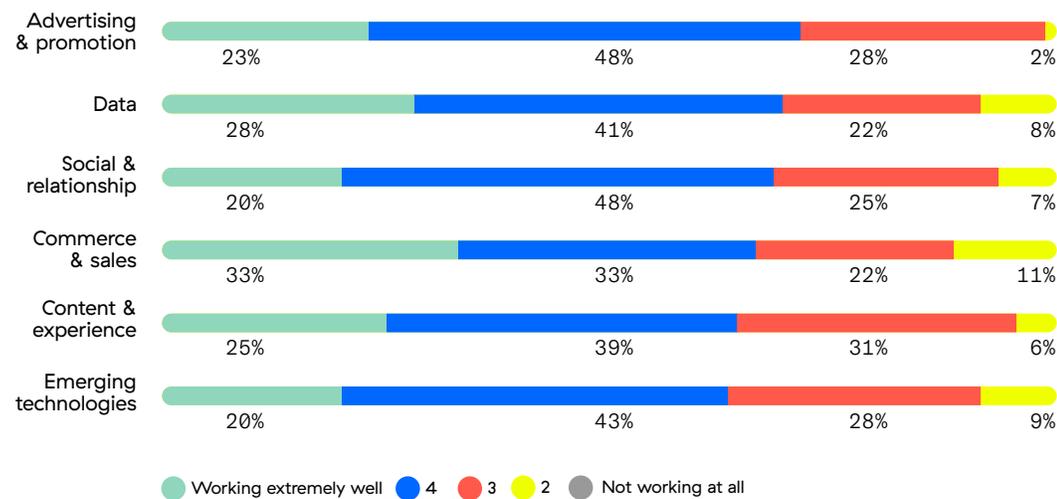
“For years, companies worried about their tech stack,” says Ryan Horner, Managing Director of Technology, One North. “But CMOs had to put their technology to the test—and it’s working.”

Number of digital marketing tools used



71% of execs report digital technology is working well.

How well digital technology is working





Growing synergy between sales & marketing

Ninety-five percent of marketing execs believe digital sales have impacted marketing strategies. And 91 percent said it impacted the marketing budget.

“People are beginning to see the value in having digital sales and marketing work together—as it should be,” says Ryan Schulz, Managing Director, Agency Development, One North. “It’s a lot easier to attribute sales with digital, versus traditional tactics like billboards. That’s the power of digital.”

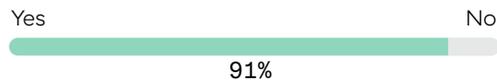
Impact increased digital sales had on marketing strategies



95%

of marketing execs believe digital sales have impacted marketing strategies.

Did the growing impact of digital selling increase your organization’s 2021 marketing budget?



“People are beginning to see the value in having digital sales and marketing work together—as it should be.”

— Ryan Schulz, One North

In the past year, the sales team brought...



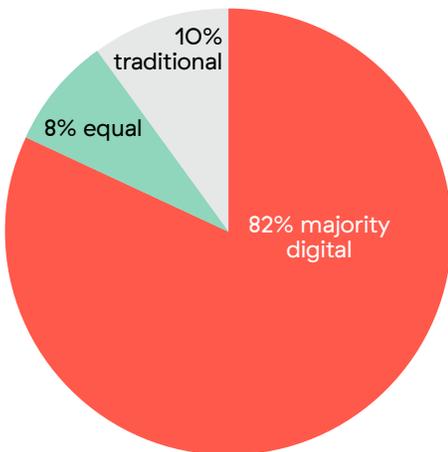


Hunger for more digital

Accelerating the pace of digital transformation is a primary business goal for two in five companies and a new goal for one in five companies.

“Everything is digital now, and we need to move forward with that assumption. There’s no talking about digital marketing. It’s just marketing. There’s no talk about digital transformation; it’s just about driving innovation,” says Kalev Peekna, Chief Strategist, One North.

Current Marketing Mix



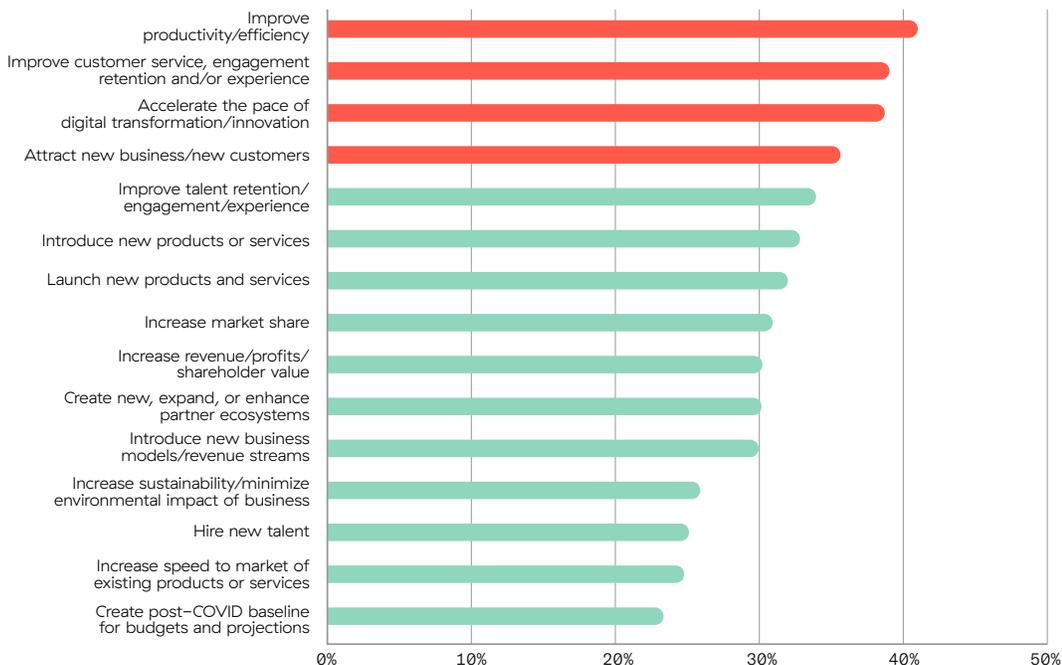
Given current goals and marketing strategies, the organization...



41%

of executives need more than the reported marketing mix of two thirds digital.

Primary business goals for 2021



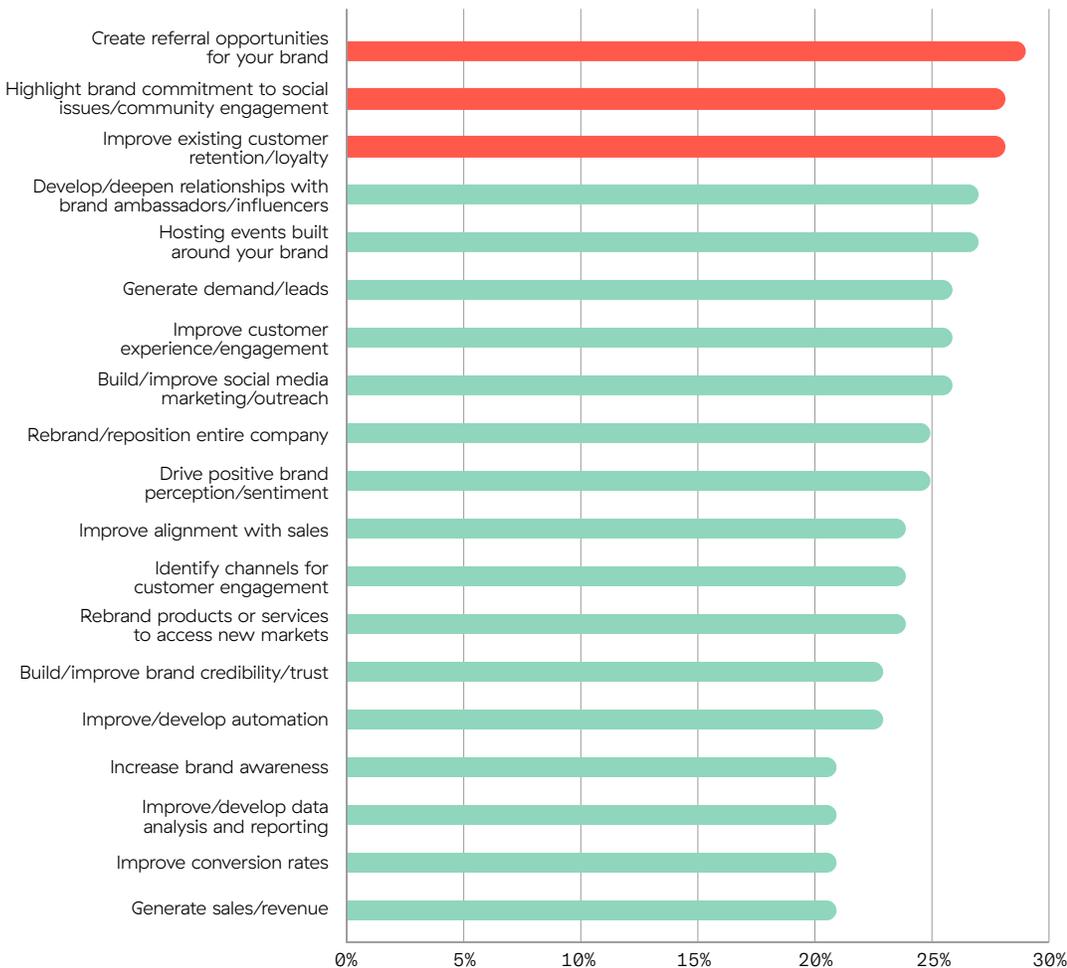


Brand is seeing a resurgence

In our survey, the top three new marketing goals reported were brand-focused, including:



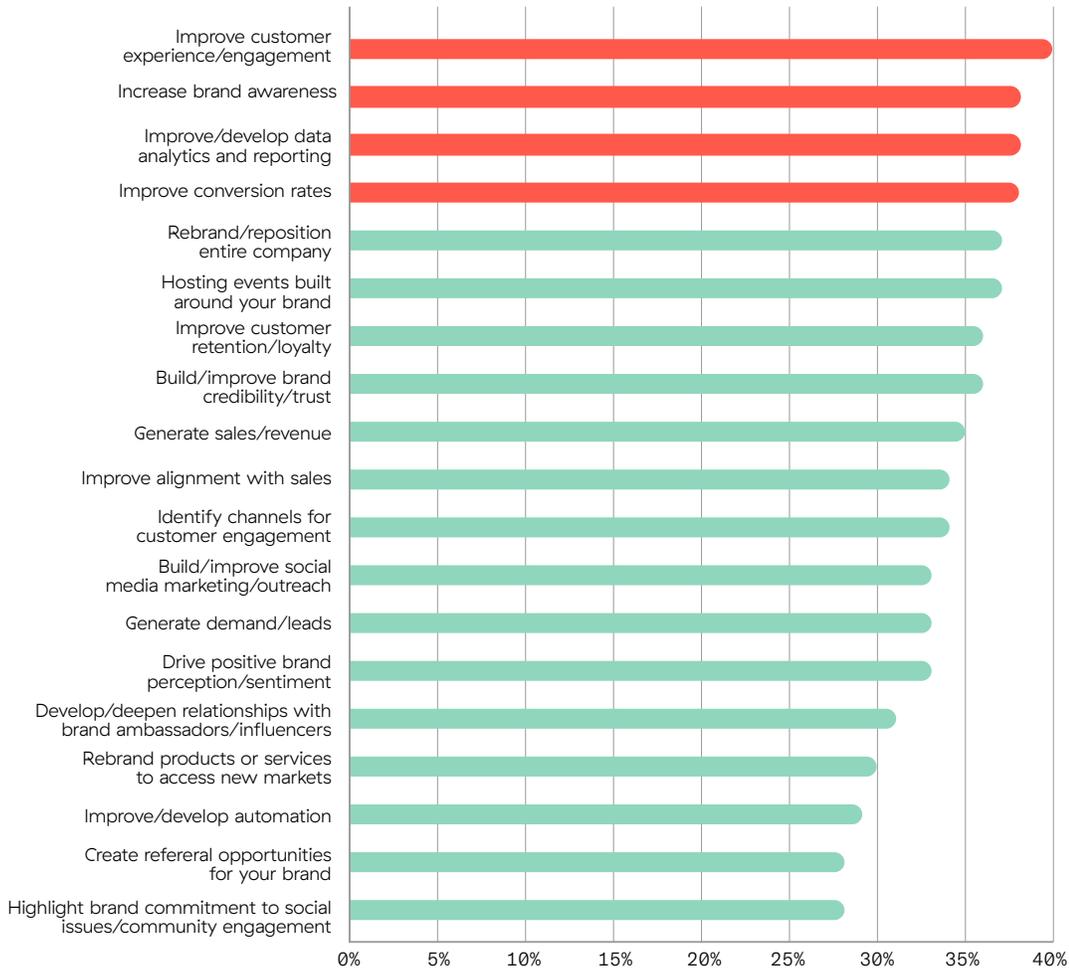
Marketing goals new to 2021





The top marketing goals increasing in priority were also brand-focused: improving customer experience & engagement (40 percent) and increasing brand awareness (38 percent). Other goals increasing in priority included improving data analytics and improving conversion rates.

Marketing goals increasing in priority



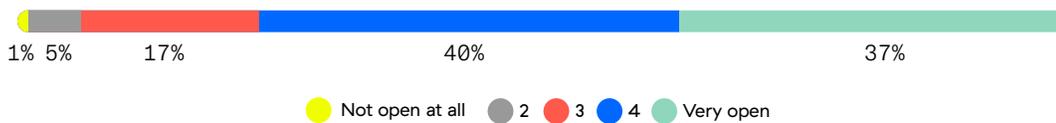


Openness to change

Three in four marketing execs reported working for organizations that are open to change. However, when faced with opposition, top barriers cited were budget, culture, ROI and lack of clear vision.

“Individuals feel open to change, but as an organization or group, we aren’t always good at it,” says Peekna. “There’s a tension between being open to change and being able to do it.”

Organizational openness to change

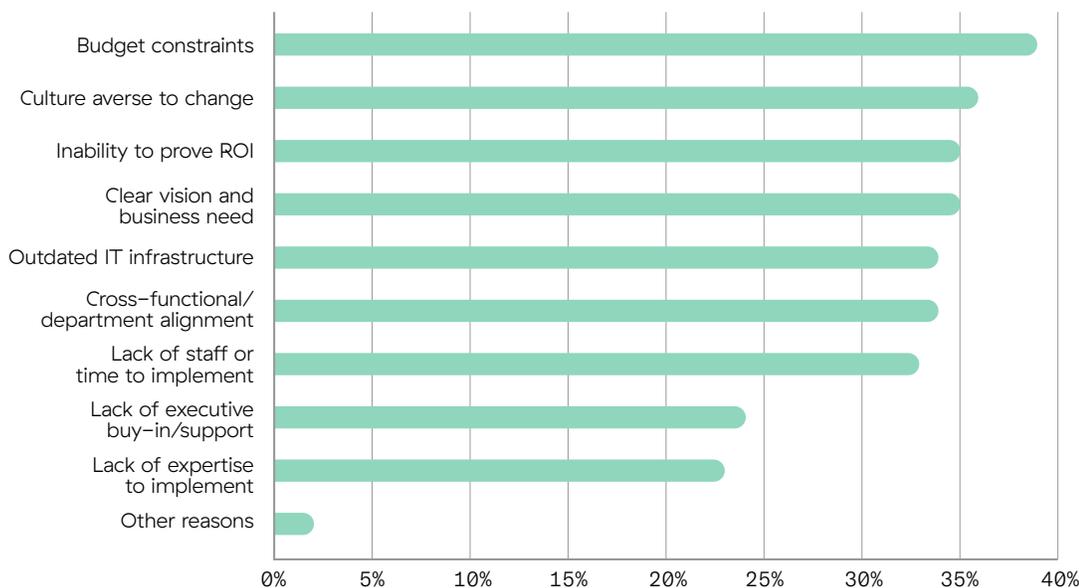


“Everything is digital now, and we need to move forward with that assumption. There’s no talking about digital marketing. It’s just marketing. There’s no talk about digital transformation; it’s just about driving innovation.”

—Kalev Peekna, One North

77% of marketing leaders say their organizations are open to change.

Barriers to change



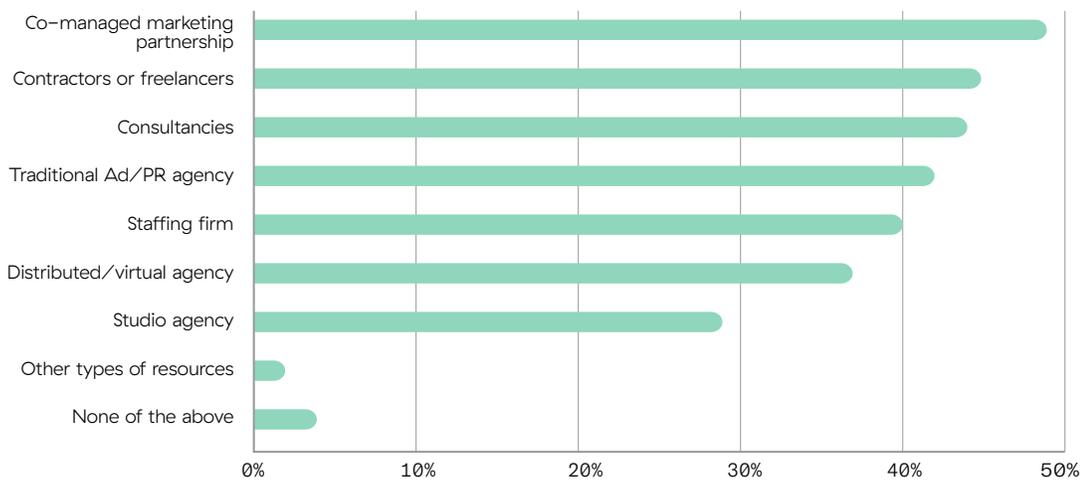


External resources to the rescue

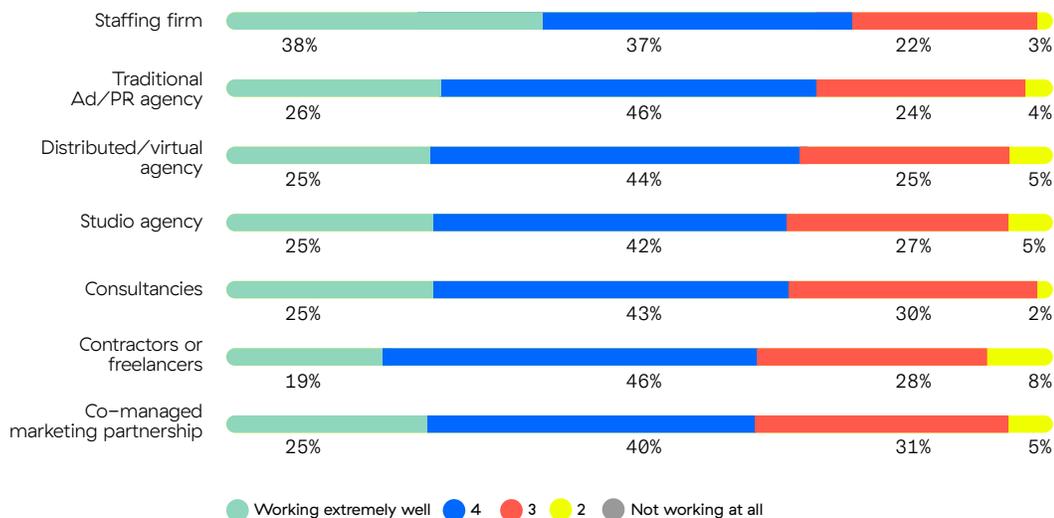
Marketers in our survey are relying on outside resources to meet strategies and goals. And they're having success with them, particularly with agencies and staffing firms. The top external resources utilized were co-managed marketing partnerships with a staffing company, contractors & freelancers, and consultants.

“Although it’s good to rely on outside partners, it’s important to match the right resources to your needs,” says Jennifer Frost, Managing Director of Marketing, One North. “Leading organizations aren’t just going to the same pool of talent. Instead, they are building a portfolio of options that help them achieve their goals.”

Types of external resources used



How well digital external resources are working





4 takeaways for marketers

Digital is here to stay. Here are four things for marketers to consider as they push ahead.

1 Keep the momentum going.

In 2020, the sky was falling. Today, budgets are back, digital is working and marketing execs are ready for more. There's a lot of positivity out there. And it's a great time for marketing execs to continue to inspire change within their organizations.

2 Digital is here—now it's time to make the experience better.

Last year was about experimentation, and customers were willing to try a lot of new things. This year, they will have a higher bar.

- ▶ **Ask:** What is the experience you want to create? Or is this the experience you wanted?
- ▶ **Research:** Make sure you understand the current state of your CX, and how people feel about it from end to end.
- ▶ **Elevate:** Develop tighter journeys, smarter personas, focused messaging and clearer actions.

3 Lead with intention and inspiration.

During the pandemic, marketers didn't have time to be intentional. Now, with new goals and more change ahead, execs need to use this time to be strategic and intentional. Having a multi-disciplinary strategy in place will help cultivate buy-in and build excitement.

"The danger for marketers: If you can't lead your company with intention and inspiration, there will be a whiplash to return to what people know and go backwards in time," says Peekna.

4 Consider an outside perspective.

Marketers are open to change, but still may face the same internal political issues. Outside consultants can play the role as the spark. One North partners with organizations to help:

- ▶ **Inspire change:** We help illuminate what's possible and foster excitement to help clients fall in love with the future.
- ▶ **Develop strategy:** Our multi-disciplinary team—designers, strategists, technologists—ensures all viewpoints are represented, at the onset. "Everything's interconnected, so your strategy should be," says Peekna.
- ▶ **Meet resource challenges:** In addition to providing the capabilities of a full-service agency, we also support staffing needs with resources from our parent company, TEKsystems.



About One North

One North is a full-service digital agency creating experiences that perform, evolve and inspire. Unlike traditional agencies, we stitch together a deep level of expertise across disciplines so that we can do the work of multiple teams. With capabilities in brand and communications, digital experience, technology and infrastructure, and optimization and insights, our designers, strategists and technologists can take on any challenge. We deliver the human element to digital so that your big ideas come to life. One North is a TEKsystems company. Discover more at [OneNorth.com](https://www.onenorth.com).

About TEKsystems & TEKsystems Global Services

We're TEKsystems. We accelerate business transformation for our customers. We bring real-world expertise to solve complex technology, business and talent challenges—across the globe. We're a team of 80,000 strong, working with over 6,000 customers, including 80% of the Fortune 500 across North America, Europe and Asia, who partner with us for our scale, full-stack capabilities and speed. We're strategic thinkers, hands-on collaborators, helping customers capitalize on change. We're building tomorrow by delivering business outcomes and driving positive impacts in our global communities. TEKsystems is an Allegis Group company. Learn more at [TEKsystems.com](https://www.teksystems.com).