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Social Marketing Leaders Are In Critical Need Of Integrated Data And Agile Technology

Investments In Social Marketing Technology And Data Integration Fuel Customer Growth And Engagement Amid A Shifting Digital And Social Landscape

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FORRESTER OPPORTUNITY SNAPSHOT: A CUSTOM STUDY COMMISSIONED BY EMPLIFI | NOVEMBER 2022

Adapt To Engage: Leaders Must Remain Flexible And Data-Obsessed To Succeed

To fuel a powerful and results-driven marketing strategy, it is critical for modern marketing leaders to adapt to a constantly shifting digital and social media landscape. Changing customer demands, macroeconomic pressure, and the lack of an integrated platform to host customer data are challenging marketers to evolve and engage consumers with complex new social media channels and formats.

To succeed in meeting these challenges on their road to mapping the full customer journey, leaders are growing their teams with skilled professionals and investing in social marketing platforms and technology capabilities to increase agility and efficiency. The ultimate goal? Access to insights and cohesive customer analytics that contribute to engaging content.

Key Findings

Efficiency and customer satisfaction drive near-term strategy. Operational efficiency (83%) and improving customer satisfaction (CSAT) scores (82%) are top near-term strategic goals.

Shifting customer demands are the top challenge. Seventy-three percent of marketing leaders surveyed say that changing customer demands has been the most challenging market factor impacting their success.

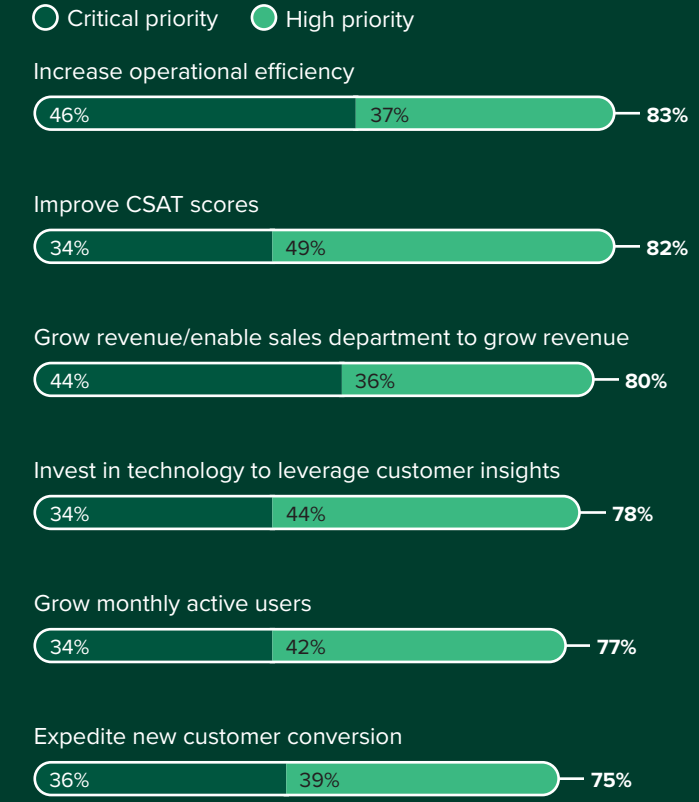
Leaders need integration, agility, and alignment. Integrating customer data (57%), increasing agility (47%), and aligning the goals of departments (45%) are outcomes of the ideal social marketing technology.

For Marketers, Efficiency And Customer Satisfaction Are Top-Line Strategic Goals

Eighty-three percent of surveyed marketing leaders prioritize operational efficiency — the benefit of recruiting skilled marketers and using agile technology — as their top near-term strategic objective. This is underscored by a critical focus on improving and growing their relationship with customers. Improving CSAT scores is a critical or high-priority strategic objective for 82% of respondents.

CSAT scores — a barometer for how satisfied and loyal a social customer base is — are the building blocks for a more powerful social marketing strategy. In addition, marketing leaders recognize the need to invest in technology that will help them leverage customer insights to fuel informed social content and campaigns. The foundation of all this is a growing customer base: More than three out of four respondents (77%) are strategically focused on growing monthly active users.

“How much priority is your organization placing on the following strategic goals within the next 12 months?”



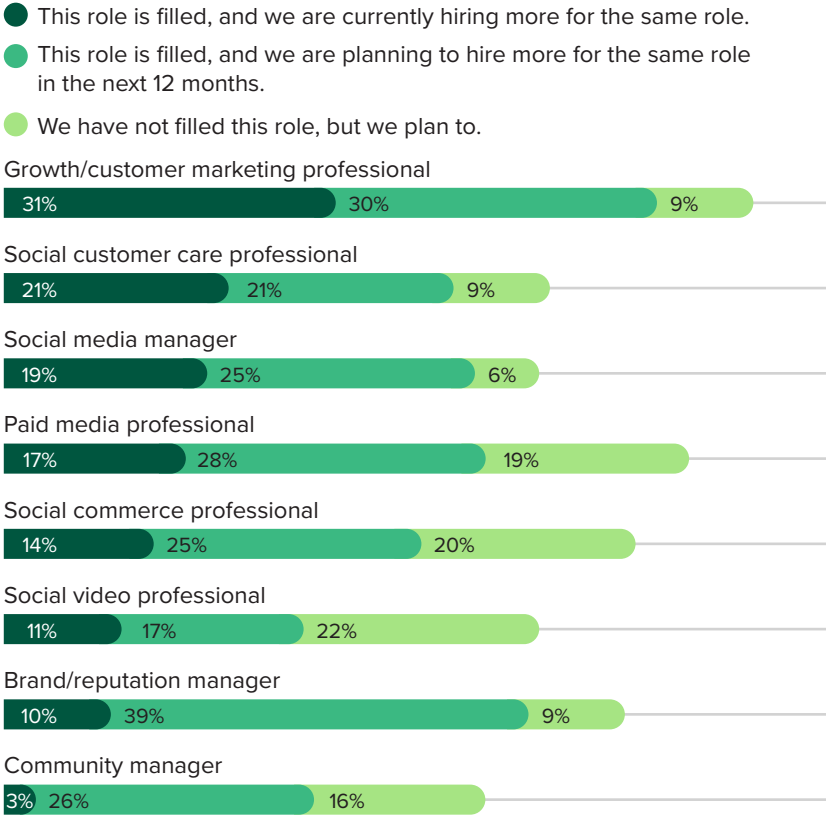
Base: 154 North American marketing professionals in CX, marketing strategy, paid media, or social media marketing
Note: Showing top 6 responses; total percentages may not equal separate values due to rounding.
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Emplifi, September 2022

Near-Term Hiring Goals Spotlight Social Media Strategy

Marketing leaders are invested in recruiting skilled employees to support their strategic vision. Forrester learned that new customer growth is a key pillar of their mission and measure of success. It's also a significant near-term focus for recruiting. According to Forrester's research, growth and customer marketing professionals are by far the most actively demanded and recruited roles by marketing leadership.

Firms are also actively recruiting for social media marketing roles, but a higher percentage of paid media, social commerce, and social video professional roles have not yet been filled, indicating that they could be newer (but growing) department functions. Brand/reputation managers represent a function that is set to expand within the next 12 months, highlighting leaders' focus on curating their companies' mission and vision in 2023.

"Which of the following roles are you currently hiring for/hoping to hire for in the next 12 months?"



Base: 154 North American marketing professionals in CX, marketing strategy, paid media, or social media marketing
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Emplifi, September 2022

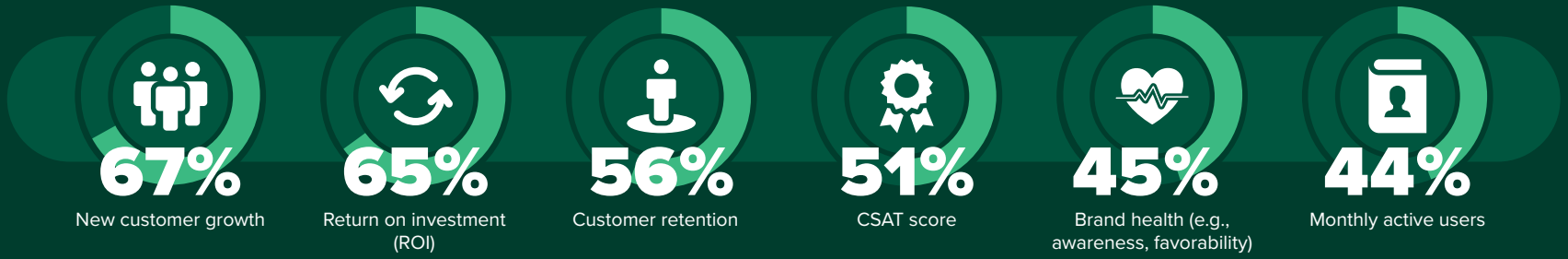
Customer Growth And Satisfaction Dictate Marketing Success

To realize their goals and map the full customer journey, marketing leaders are aligning their department's success metrics with strategic priorities. Overall, new customer growth was ranked the most relevant success metric for their team. A powerful and agile social content strategy fuels a growing customer base, and marketing leaders recognize the need to monitor this success metric to adapt their strategy to a changing media landscape.

Customer retention and CSAT scores are also among the top-ranked measures of team success. Like new customer growth, CSAT improvement is a near-term strategic priority. Adding new customers is important, but satisfying them is the key to building a loyal customer base.

"The customer is why we're here ... it's important to satisfy their needs first and foremost."
Brand/retail management VP, US

"How does your marketing team measure its success?"



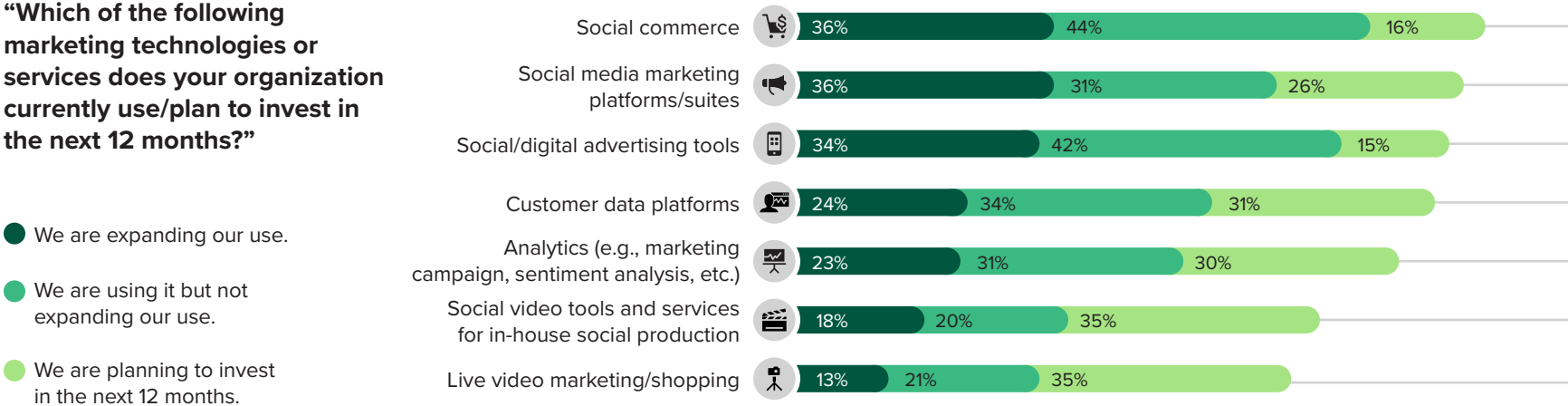
Base: 154 North American marketing professionals in CX, marketing strategy, paid media, or social media marketing
Note: Showing top 6 responses
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Emplifi, September 2022

Investment In Social Media Marketing Technology Is Expanding

Marketing leaders are allocating their current investments toward platforms that enable social media marketing. Four out of five respondents are using or expanding investments in social commerce tech. Similarly, 76% are prioritizing social and/or digital advertising tools, while 66% are investing in social media marketing platforms. These investments show how CMOs, marketing VPs, and directors use tech budgets to strengthen social media marketing agility and reach.

Within the next year, respondents plan to increase investments in more specific analytics; content; and CX-driven tools like web content management, advocacy tools, social video, and live video marketing and/or shopping. These investment priorities reflect how marketers are building the architecture of the full customer journey.

"Which of the following marketing technologies or services does your organization currently use/plan to invest in the next 12 months?"



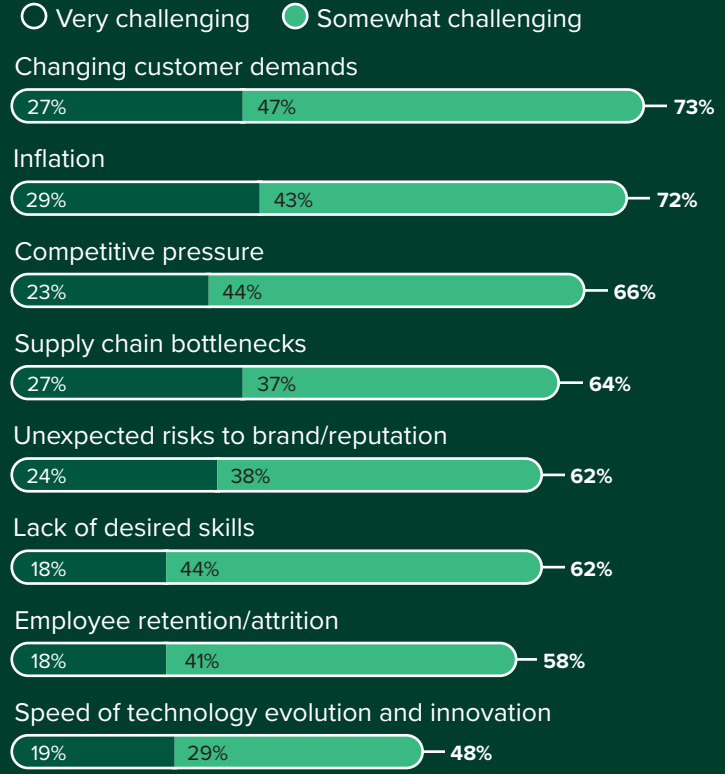
Base: 154 North American marketing professionals in CX, marketing strategy, paid media, or social media marketing
Note: Showing top 7 responses
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Emplifi, September 2022

A Changing Customer Landscape Complicates The Roadmap To Success

Learning about the greatest market impacts that leaders are challenged with allows us to contextualize their strategy to overcome those challenges. We can glean meaningful insights from the macro environment, and how it impacts leaders.

There are a host of general external pressures placed on modern organizations, such as inflation, competition, and security risks, but the most challenging external force for modern marketing leaders has been a constantly shifting landscape of customer demands. Amidst new channels, content formats, and ever-changing technology, customers' expectations are shifting, and marketing leaders need to be agile and equipped with actionable customer insights to meet customers' demands.

"Over the past 12 months, how challenging has each of the following market factors been to the success of your business?"



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Lack Of Organizational Alignment And Tech Agility Underpin Internal Challenges

Firms need to set internal expectations and align on how they are using customer data to remain agile. However, establishing a single view of the customer is challenging. Leaders lack the right technology to integrate and align customer insights — inhibiting their ability to deliver exceptional care, content, and a consistent experience across the full customer journey.

Barriers to market agility present another key challenge. Many leaders report their firms lack a marketing technology stack to support the growth and agility that the current market environment demands. Marketing teams also don't have enough content to support increasing channels and customer touchpoints. Leaders lack the scale and content to support a host of new channels and touchpoints that perpetuate rising customer expectations. Having the right technology to support their growth and agility is vital to adapting to the current landscape.

"What are the biggest challenges you are facing as you plan your marketing strategy for 2023?"

1. We have trouble integrating/consolidating customer data to create a single view of the customer. **45%**
2. There are unrealistic expectations for marketing to support projects beyond our scope. **42%**
3. We lack the scale of content needed to support a diverse number of channels and touchpoints. **36%**
4. We lack the right marketing technologies for business growth and market agility. **36%**

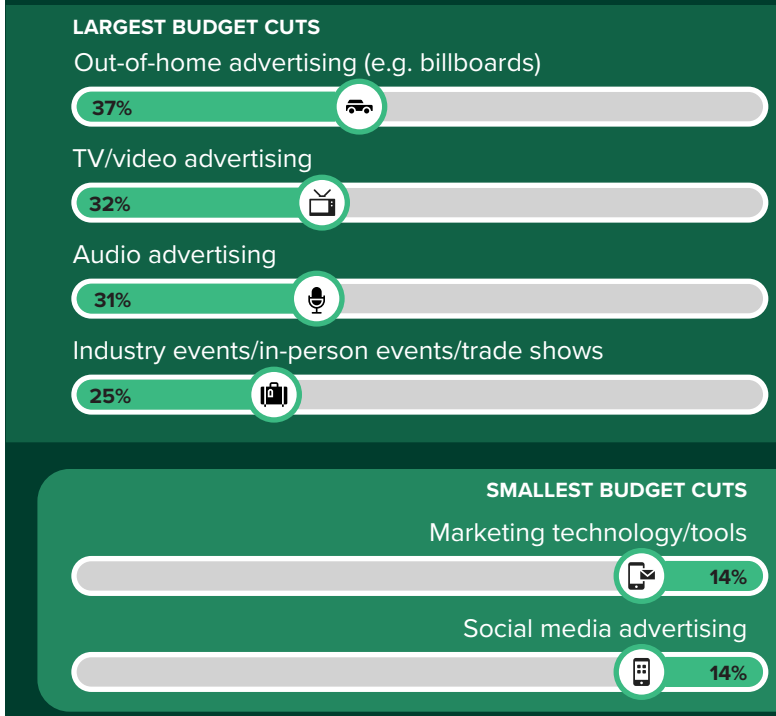
Base: 154 North American marketing professionals in CX, marketing strategy, paid media, or social media marketing
Note: Showing top 4 responses
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Emplifi, September 2022

Traditional Advertising Budgets Are Being Cut In Favor Of Digital And Social Marketing

The impact of the macroeconomic environment on inflationary costs has made budget cuts a sobering reality for organizations. In this study, Forrester set out to uncover how modern marketing leaders are reacting to the market and where they are choosing to sacrifice resources to preserve their most critical functions or assets.

The study shows that recent budget cuts have not affected funds allocated to digital and social marketing efforts as marketers preserve what they see as the critical pillars of their strategy. Consequently, marketing leaders are choosing to scale back on traditional forms of advertising (e.g., billboards, TV, video) and physical events. Interestingly, roughly one in five respondents has no plans to trim their budget at all.

"In what areas have you/are you planning to trim your marketing budget within the next 12 months?"



19% of respondents aren't planning on trimming their marketing budget.

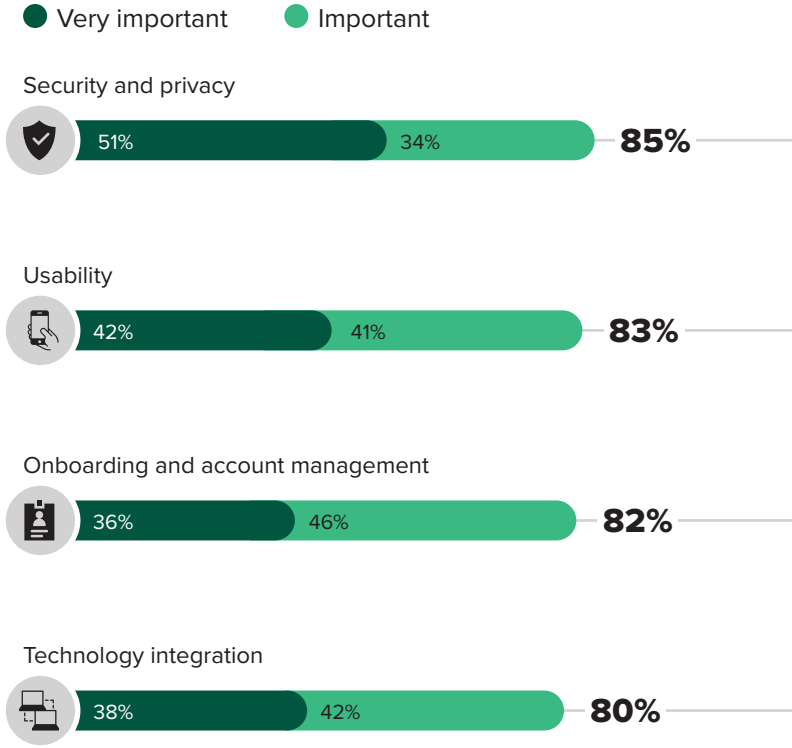
Base: 154 North American marketing professionals in CX, marketing strategy, paid media, or social media marketing
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Emplifi, September 2022

Marketing Cloud Platforms Must Be Intuitive, Integrated, And Agile

Social cloud platforms (or social suites) help marketing leaders centralize various social media capabilities across content research, publishing, listening, analytics, and influencer marketing. So for marketing leaders with strategic responsibility over a broad spectrum of social media and digital marketing efforts, these platforms are critical tools to grow and satisfy their customer base. But what capabilities do leaders look for in an ideal platform?

Our research found that, in addition to security capabilities, 80% or more of marketing leaders place a high priority on usability, onboarding, and technology integration. They seek an intuitive and efficient hub that is integrated, secure, and centralized from which they can manage customer data.

"When choosing the ideal social marketing cloud platform, how important are each of the following capabilities?"



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Social Cloud Platforms Enable A Holistic Customer Journey

Establishing a single view of the customer requires the alignment and integration of data from one or multiple technology platforms to create an accurate and holistic picture across marketing departments and teams. This is the number one most important outcome that marketing CMOs, VPs, and directors look for in a social cloud platform. In addition to an integrated and data-rich solution to improve customer profiles, they also prioritize an agile and efficient platform that lets them pivot and ramp up campaigns quickly and intuitively.

Ultimately, to elevate their organizations' digital and social presence and succeed in delivering on the full customer journey, marketing leaders recognize the need to galvanize customer data through a powerful, integrated, and efficient social cloud platform.

"What are the most significant benefits you would expect to realize from your ideal social marketing cloud platform?"

1. Integrating/consolidating customer data to create a "single view of the customer" **57%**
2. Saving time and increasing agility with an out-of-the-box solution that allows us to quickly connect and engage with audiences wherever they are **47%**
3. Aligning the goals and objectives of our departments (marketing, customer experience, sales, etc.) **45%**
4. Gaining the customer data required to develop engaging campaigns/programs based on their needs **45%**

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Conclusion

In an era of changing customer expectations and a fast-moving social media landscape, access to integrated and agile data is critical for marketers to deliver the quality of social media content needed to succeed. As marketing leaders evaluate their strategic roadmap, they should keep in mind the following findings from this study:

- **The ideal platform enables a single view of the customer.** Respondents want a platform that leverages customer data for their content strategy, but interdisciplinary alignment is the first step. An integrated hub of resources allows teams to share data across business units for consistent and agile social media campaigns.
- **Don't underestimate investing in people.** In addition to technology, marketing leaders are recruiting for customer growth, brand/reputation, and social roles. Skilled and engaged employees are an important part of a holistically effective marketing team.

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John Lloyd,
Market Impact Consultant

Contributing Research:

Forrester's B2C Marketing research group

Methodology

This Opportunity Snapshot was commissioned by Emplifi. To create this profile, Forrester Consulting supplemented this research with custom survey questions asked of 154 North American CMOs, marketing VPs, and directors responsible for CX, marketing strategy, paid media, and/or social media marketing. The custom survey began in August 2022 and was completed in September 2022.

ABOUT FORRESTER CONSULTING

Forrester provides independent and objective research-based consulting to help leaders deliver key transformation outcomes. Fueled by our customer-obsessed research, Forrester's seasoned consultants partner with leaders to execute on their priorities using a unique engagement model that tailors to diverse needs and ensures lasting impact. For more information, visit forrester.com/consulting.

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Demographics

GEOGRAPHY	
Canada	**51%**
United States	**49%**

COMPANY SIZE	
1,000 to 1,999 employees	**42%**
2,000 to 4,999 employees	**25%**
5,000 to 19,999 employees	**23%**
20,000 or more employees	**11%**

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

RESPONDENT POSITION	
CMO	**35%**
Vice president	**31%**
Director	**34%**

DEPARTMENT	
Marketing/advertising	**45%**
Customer data	**16%**
Social media	**14%**
Brand/retail management	**14%**
Social commerce	**12%**


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