

CONTENT MARKETING TRENDS 2015

Benchmarks From The Agency Perspective

Agencies tend to lead the charge in marketing trends. This research reveals the inside priorities of agencies related to content marketing. Learn how agency professionals plan to overcome new obstacles to achieving important content marketing objectives based on their broad-range of client experience.



Marketing Automation Strategy Benchmarks for Small & Medium Business MarketCrest Presents Ascend2 Research Conducted in Partnership with SharpSpring

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution - NonCommercial 3.0 Unported License.

You may adapt, copy, distribute and transmit this work. However, you must attribute the work as produced by Ascend2



MarketCrest Presents Ascend2 Research
Conducted in Partnership with SharpSpring

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the research	4
Most-important content marketing objectives	5
Rating the success of content marketing	6
Most-challenging obstacles to success	7
How budgets are changing	8
Most-effective types of content used	9
Most-difficult types of content to create	10
Resources used for creating content	11
Content effectiveness versus degree of difficulty	12
Most-useful metrics for measuring performance	13
Research methodology and demographics	15
About the research partners	16

About the Research

Budget constraints and content creation are challenging new obstacles to agency client success. As a result, these two issues will likely effect your own small business. How do agency professionals plan to overcome these new obstacles to achieving important content marketing objectives?

To find out, SharpSpring and Ascend2 fielded the Content Marketing Trends Survey and completed interviews with 290 marketing professionals; 74 of whom work for agencies that provide marketing solutions to other organizations.

The charts in this edition of the study, titled *Content Marketing Trends 2015 Benchmarks from the Agency Perspective*, represent the broad range of client experience agencies provide.



All the best,
Scott Berry, Managing Director



Generating quality leads for clients is the most-important content marketing objective for agencies.

What are the MOST IMPORTANT OBJECTIVES of a content marketing strategy?

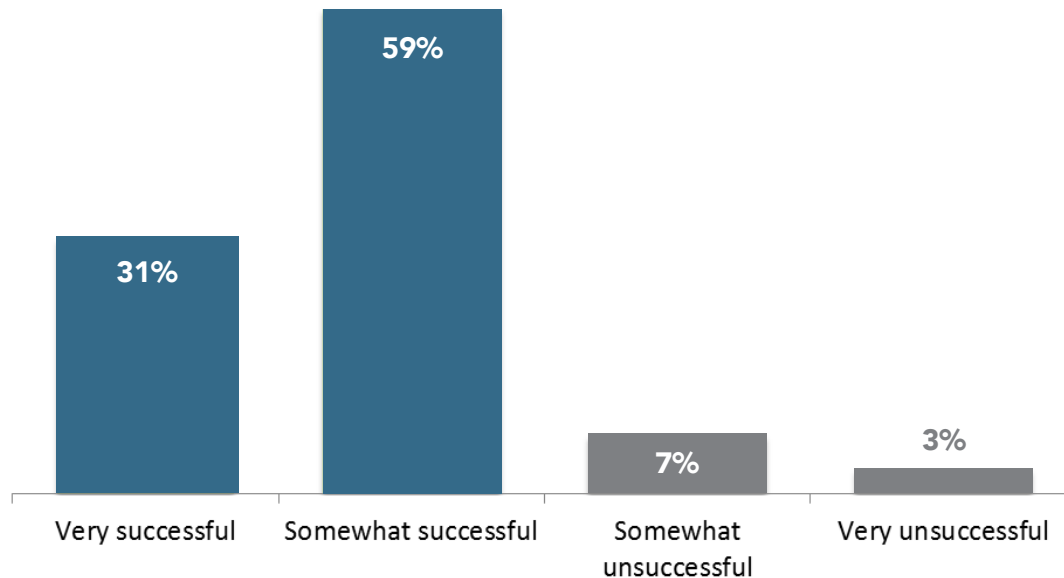


SPRING FORWARD

Quality leads fuel the entire sales process. Without leads, the whole sales process grinds to a halt. Marketing automation helps you generate more leads, and identify the anonymous traffic you already have.

90% of marketing agencies rate content marketing as successful.

How do you RATE THE SUCCESS of content marketing to achieve important objectives?

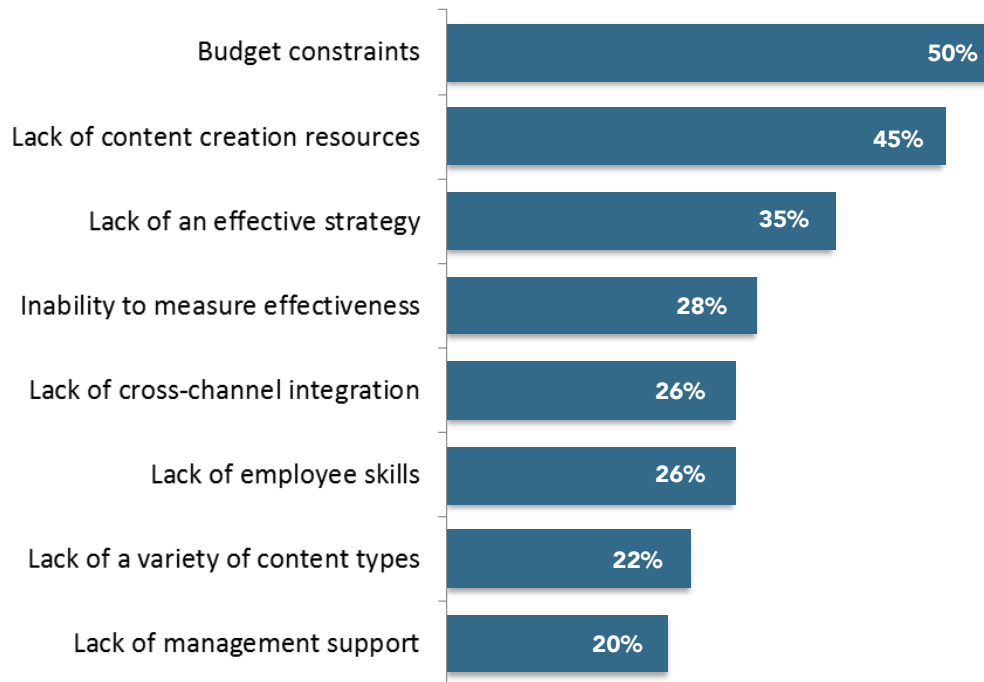


SPRING FORWARD

Measuring the success of marketing initiatives is notoriously difficult. Marketing automation changes that, by identifying exactly which campaign generated each lead. See the full ROI for each campaign, and know what works and what doesn't.

Budget and resource constraints are the biggest obstacles to content marketing success.

What are the MOST CHALLENGING OBSTACLES to content marketing success?

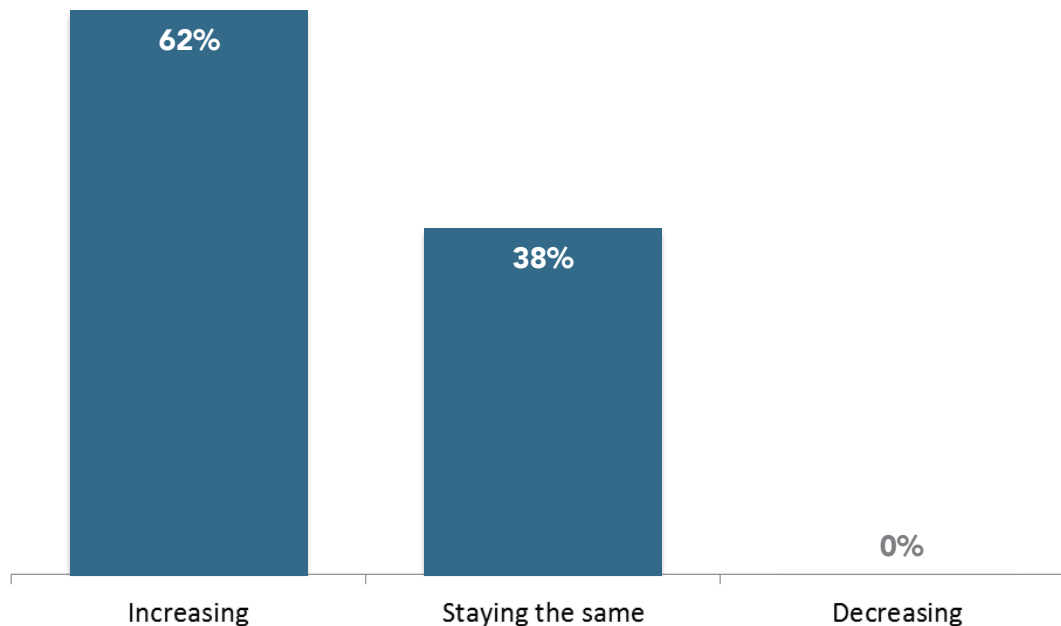


SPRING FORWARD

Content can be expensive and difficult to create, so it's crucial to get all the mileage out of it you can. Offering it as gated content and breaking off pieces to use as part of Nurturing campaigns are two ways you can make content work harder. With marketing automation, you'll know the right people are getting the right content at the right time.

Agency clients are spending more than ever on content marketing.

How are content marketing *BUDGETS CHANGING*?

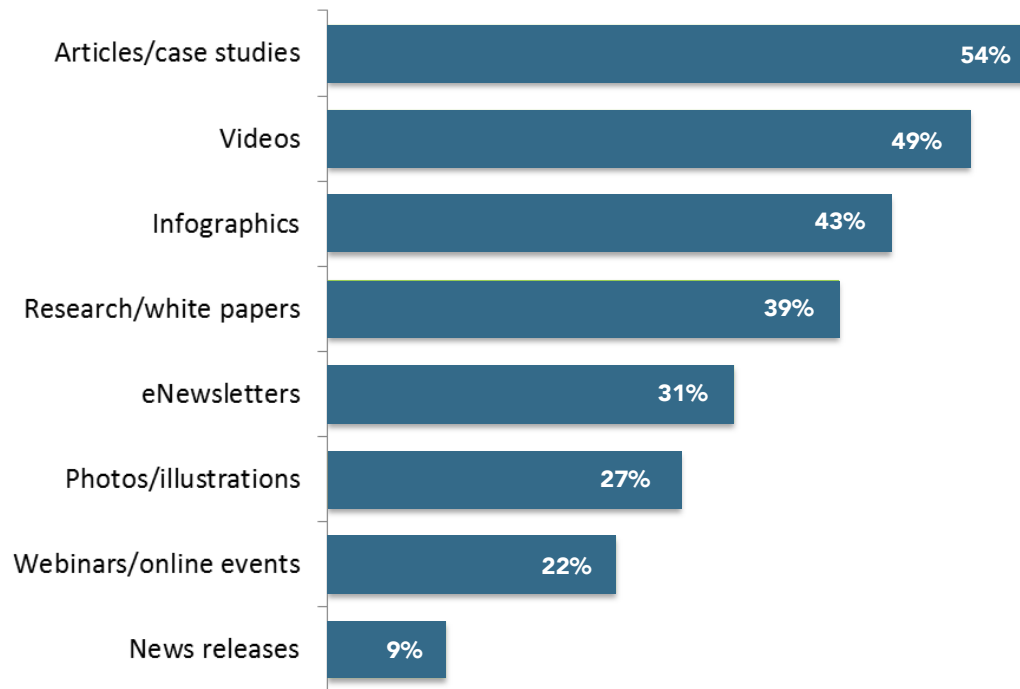


SPRING FORWARD

As clients shell out more for content marketing, it's more important than ever that they see results. Agencies have to be able to prove that they're using client money well and that they're driving revenue with those dollars. Come to the table armed with the full picture of how many leads and sales each campaign produced. Double down on what works, cut loose what doesn't.

Heavy-hitting content like case studies and videos lead the pack as the most-effective forms of content.

What are the MOST EFFECTIVE types of content used?

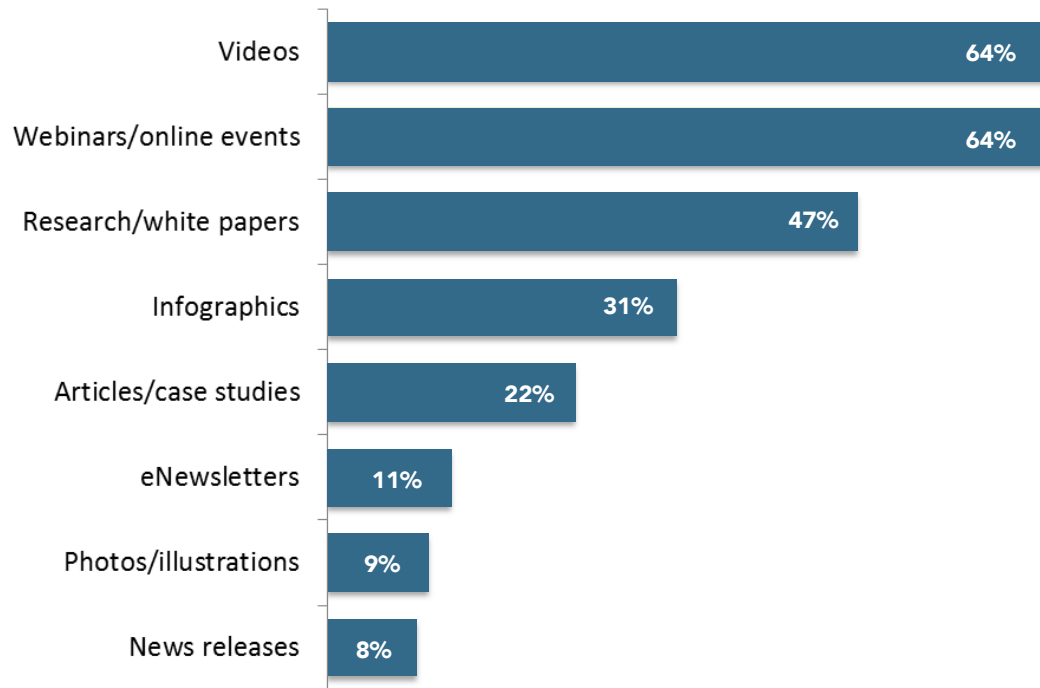


SPRING FORWARD

Sending prospects case studies is an extremely powerful way to demonstrate the value of your products and services. Agencies and clients use these in drip campaigns to engage prospects and help push them down the sales funnel. Videos offer a briefer engaging way to show off that you have what they want.

Videos and webinars are the most difficult content for agencies to create.

What are the MOST DIFFICULT types of content to create?

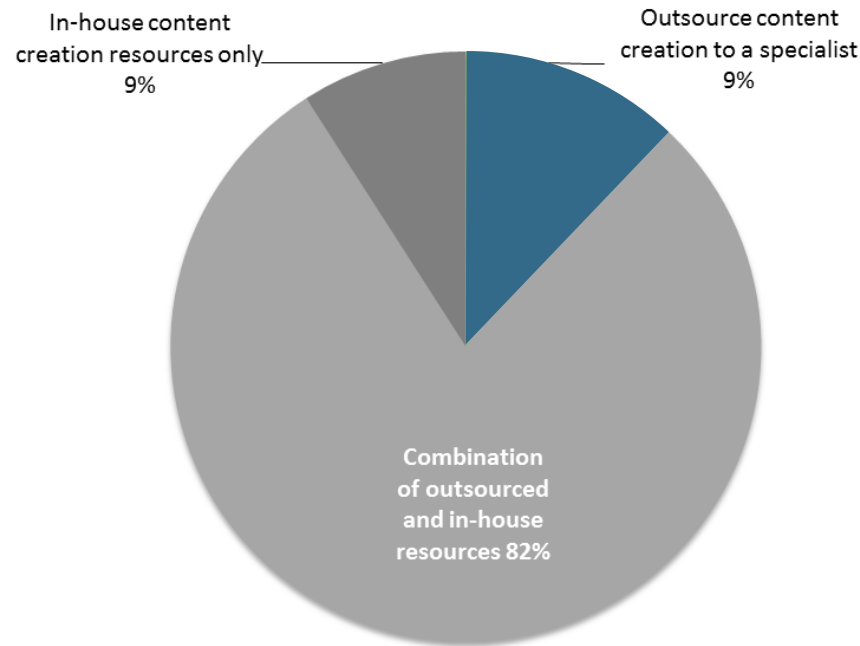


SPRING FORWARD

It's important for all content to get delivered where and when it will make the biggest difference, but it's even more important when that content is difficult to create. It takes a lot of resources to produce content that works, so make sure that it's driving leads, boosting engagement, and closing sales.

Almost all agencies recommend outsourcing some or all of content creation.

What are the MOST EFFECTIVE RESOURCES for creating content?

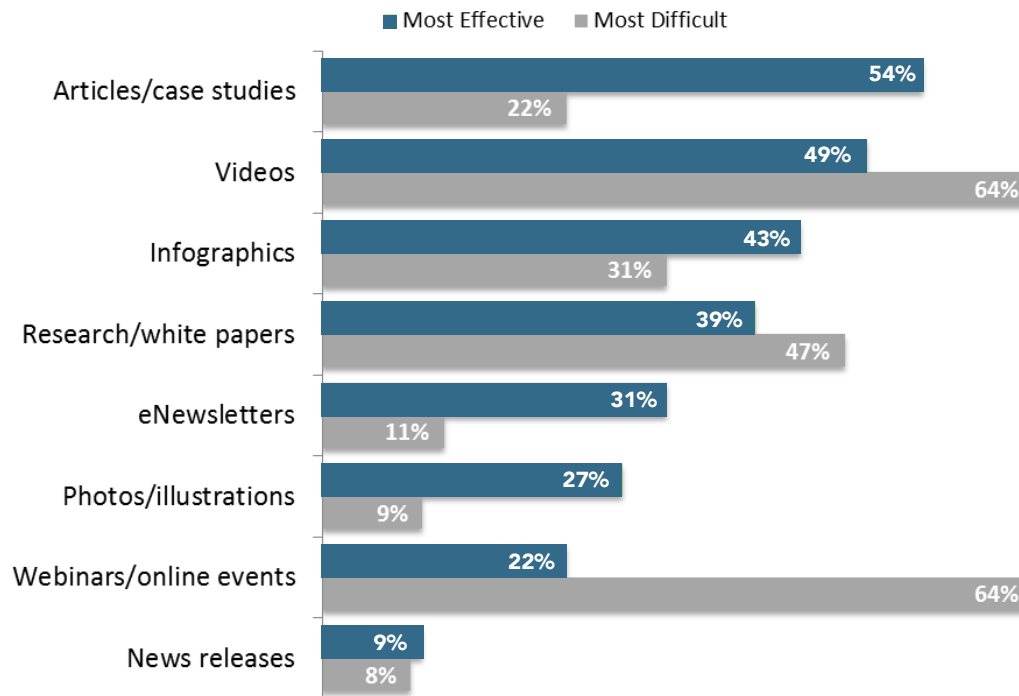


SPRING FORWARD

The key to delivering results is leveraging yourself and your agency the right way. Many agencies are now using outside content-creation resources to free up their time for the parts that only they can provide. When you aren't so busy designing content, you can spend more time designing campaigns and strategies, and your clients will see the difference.

An effective content marketing strategy is a balancing act between results and budget.

Most effective types of content versus most difficult to create.

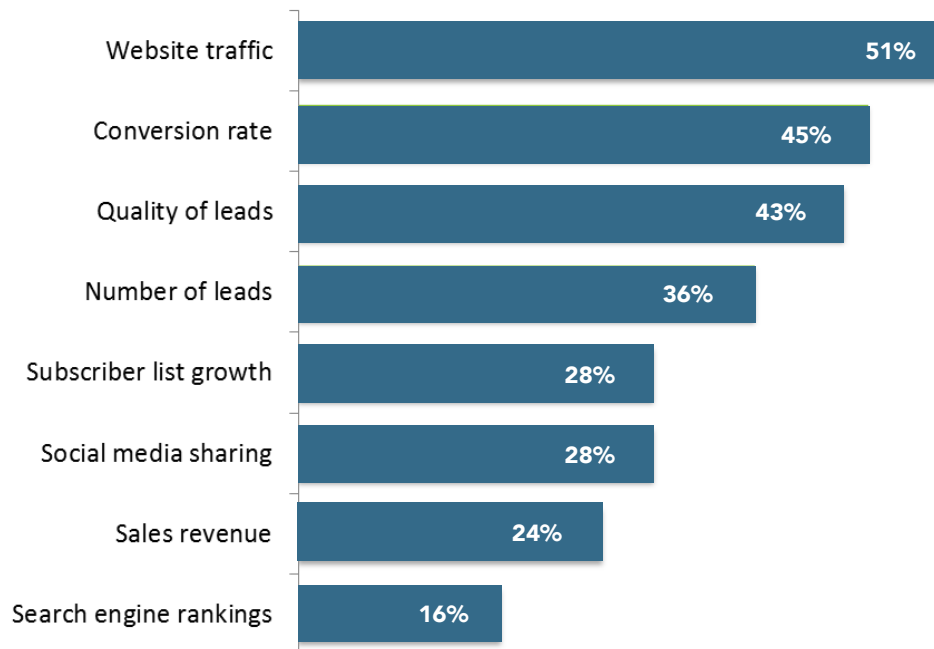


SPRING FORWARD

In an ideal world, you could use as much of every type of content as you want, but obstacles like time and budget mean we have to make smart decisions about what to work on. Instead of guessing at which content is paying off, use marketing automation to see exactly how well content is performing, so you can generate more results from the same time and money.

The best indicators of content marketing success are traffic volume, conversion rates, and lead quality of that traffic.

What are the MOST USEFUL METRICS for measuring content marketing performance?



SPRING FORWARD

At the most basic level, content marketing has two main goals. First, generate more leads. Second, convert those leads into sales. That means the best way to gauge success is by looking at the three main pieces involved: leads, conversion, and sales.

Research Methodology And Survey Demographics

Ascend2 benchmarks the performance of popular digital marketing strategies and practices using a standardized questionnaire, research methodology and 3-Minute Survey format. Findings are examined in a quantitative context by experienced analysts and reported objectively.

This survey was conducted online from a panel of more than 50,000 US and international marketing, sales and business professionals. The following is a breakout of the demographics represented in this report:

Primary Marketing/Sales Channel

- B2B (Business-to-Business) 80%
- B2C (Business-to-Consumer) 20%

Number of Employees

- More than 500 4%
- 50 to 500 14%
- Fewer than 50 82%

Role in the Agency

- CEO / COO / CMO / CSO etc 58%
- Marketing VP / Director / Manager 23%
- Sales VP / Director / Manager 7%
- Marketing or Sales Staff 9%
- Other 3%

About The Research Partners



Helping Organizations Compete & Grow- Real world marketing and sales services to help your business reach, attract and win valuable clients.

Learn more at www.MarketCrest.com



Simple Marketing Automation for Agencies- Powerful, affordable marketing tools that help you automate workflows, drive more leads and convert them to sales.

Learn more at www.SharpSpring.com



Research-Based Demand Generation for Marketing Solution Providers- Marketing software firms and marketing agencies partner with Ascend2 to reliably generate new business opportunities.

Learn more at www.Ascend2.com