

The 2025 B2B Marketing Edge

How Data-Confident
Marketers Are
Accelerating Growth

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Today's top B2B marketers aren't just doing more, they're doing it better.

Meet the marketers creating this edge—our Growth Gurus and Data Heroes.

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They've built confidence in their data, tightened their focus, and learned to move faster without sacrificing impact. In this fourth annual report from Anteriad and Ascend2, we analyze the strategies of over 450 B2B marketing leaders across North America, Europe, and APAC to uncover what's fueling performance. The edge is real, and it belongs to those who know how to use their data to drive results.

These are the B2B marketers who are turning data confidence into real-world results. They're launching campaigns faster, mastering emerging tools like AI and intent data, and outperforming their peers across pipeline and revenue goals. This report uncovers what makes them different—and what you can learn from their approach.





Key takeaways

- ✓ **Marketing isn't just changing—marketers are too.**

79% of B2B marketers have taken on new responsibilities in the last year. They are leveraging AI, reading industry research and hiring for or developing needed skills to stay on top of expectations associated with their growing role.

- ✓ **Data confidence is a competitive advantage.**

Data confidence and revenue growth are closely linked. Marketers who trust the data they use are 3x more likely to see revenue growth. This group also sees more desirable outcomes in pipeline growth, optimization of ROI, and time-to-market.

- ✓ **Intent data is an untapped opportunity.**

Only 39% of marketers currently use intent data for targeting, yet marketers that have seen significant revenue growth use it 62% more than their peers.

- ✓ **Marketers at revenue growth companies move faster.**

The marketers we call Growth Gurus—those that have seen significant revenue growth in the past year—are 3x more likely than others to launch campaigns in under 15 days (21% vs 7%).

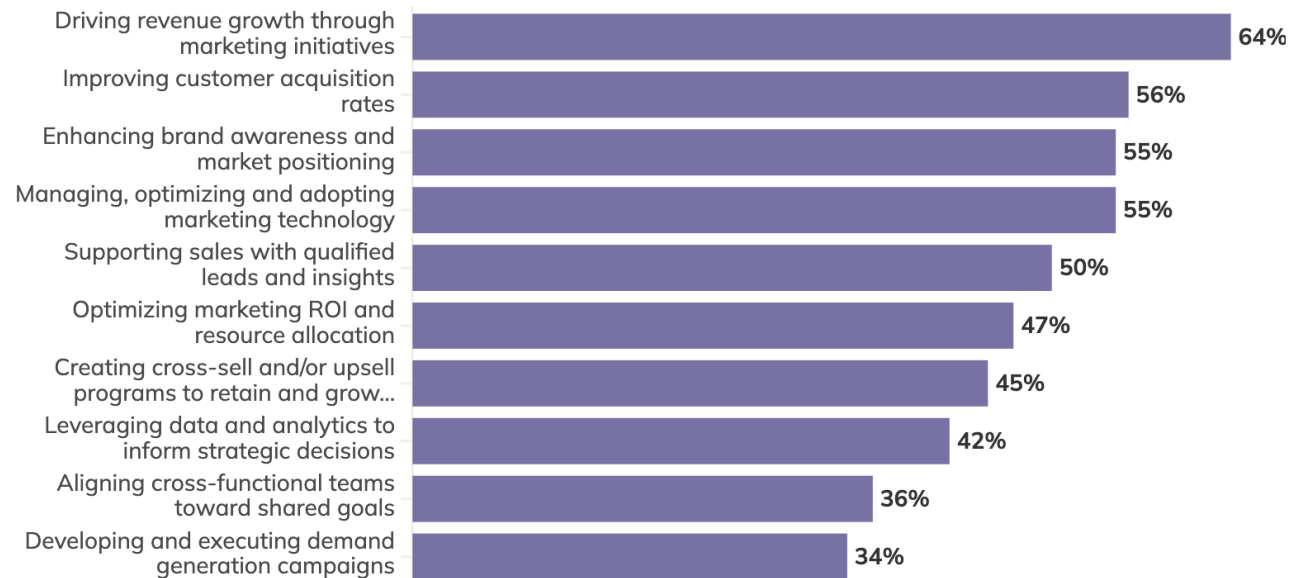
Marketers are evolving

79% of B2B marketers have taken on new responsibilities in the last year. Marketers are quickly adapting and evolving to keep pace with the current marketing landscape and meet buyer expectations.

Even with the rapid growth expected of the modern B2B marketer, our survey respondents are generally positive about the future success of their marketing efforts, with 97% reporting a somewhat or very positive outlook. And of that group, 59% have an extremely positive outlook on the success of their current efforts. Where there's pressure to stretch their abilities and adapt to constant changes, B2B marketers welcome and rise to the challenge. They have the data they need and know how to use it to drive results. B2B marketers are contributing to organizational success across in many ways. Marketers wear many hats, but we also see specialization. Only two thirds said they are focused on driving revenue growth, while just over half focus on brand awareness and positioning, for example.

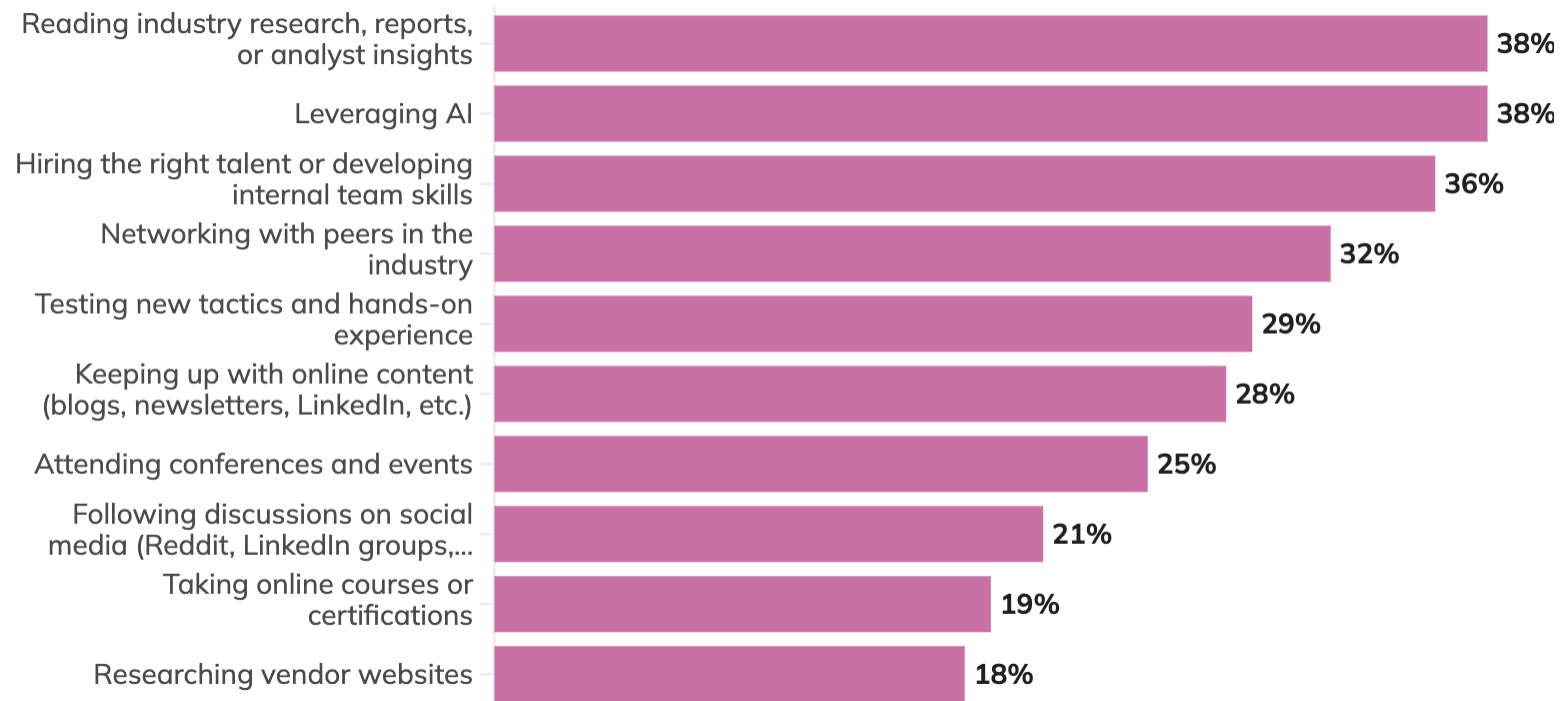
The roles and tools of the modern marketer

In your current role, how do you directly contribute to your organization's success?



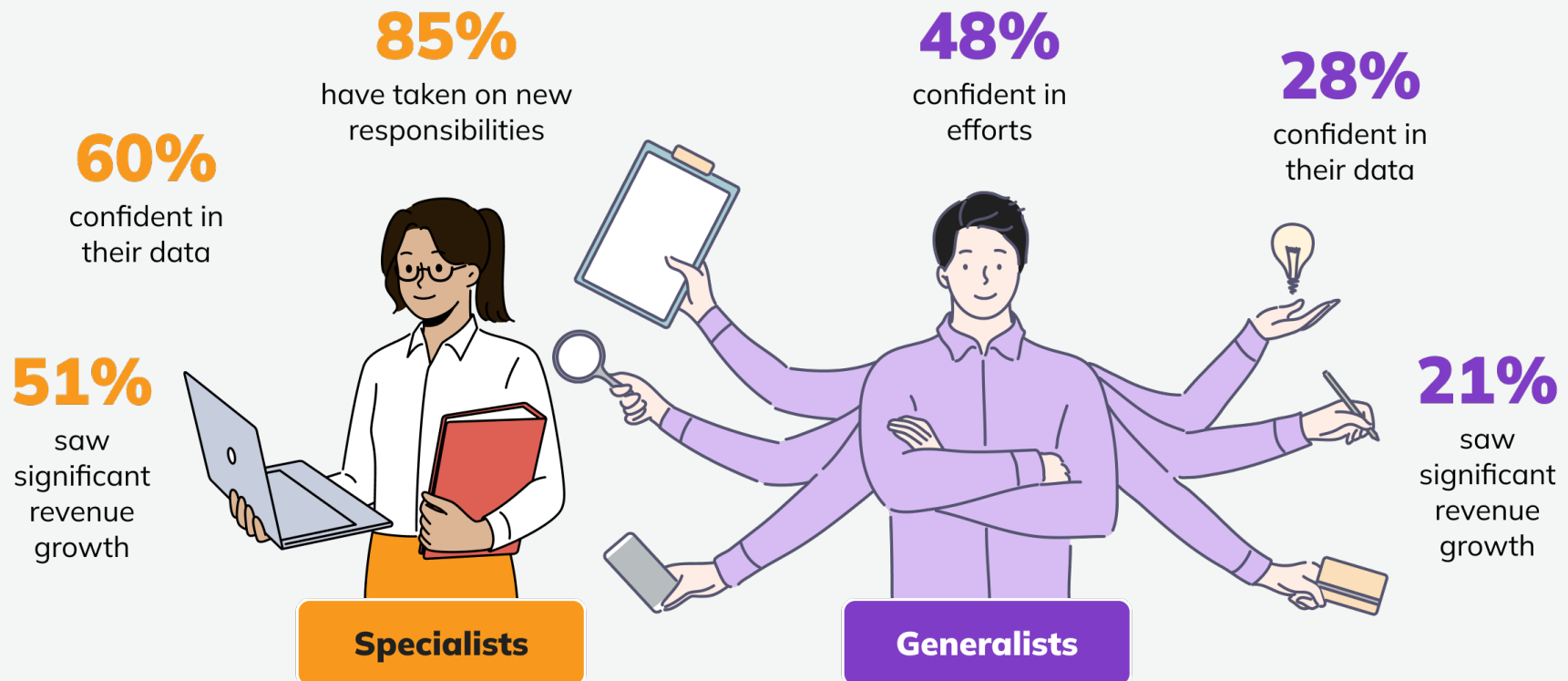
How marketers stay sharp in an evolving role

In a year marked by new responsibilities, marketers look to a variety of sources to stay on top of their evolving roles. They are consuming industry research, networking with peers, and of course leveraging AI.



Specialists vs. Generalists

B2B marketers are expected to wear many hats, but the most successful marketers are wearing very specific hats. Four in ten marketers identify as specialists—focused deeply on their area of expertise. And they're thriving, with 51% reporting significant revenue growth last year compared to 21% of generalists.



Specialists vs. Generalists: Breaking them down.

Specialists

85% of specialists have taken on new responsibilities this year, and they report greater confidence in their efforts (74% vs. 48%) and are more likely to hit pipeline goals than marketing generalists. Specialists are more advanced in their use of AI, intent data, and personalization. 60% say they're confident in their data compared to just 28% of generalists. They're also leaning into zero- and first-party data more often—building a future-focused strategy.

Generalists

This group is spread thin. Six in ten generalist marketers are juggling broader roles, facing more execution challenges and reporting more budget constraints than their specialist peers (39% vs. 28%).

Self-identified specialists aren't from bigger companies, buried in specific functional teams. Instead, they are from similarly sized companies as generalists but are more likely to be senior level marketers that consider themselves focused on a specific goal, namely driving revenue through marketing initiatives and improving customer acquisition rates. They are nearly twice as likely to have achieved pipeline growth goals, much more likely to consider their data to be reliable and lean into brand building more than generalists.

Marketers likely consider themselves specialists because they're empowered, focused and have what they need to achieve their goals.

A growing group of Data Heroes

Mastering data is at the heart of strategic agility. Marketers who have confidence in their data are 3X more likely to see revenue growth—because they're able to act quickly and decisively, without second-guessing their insights.

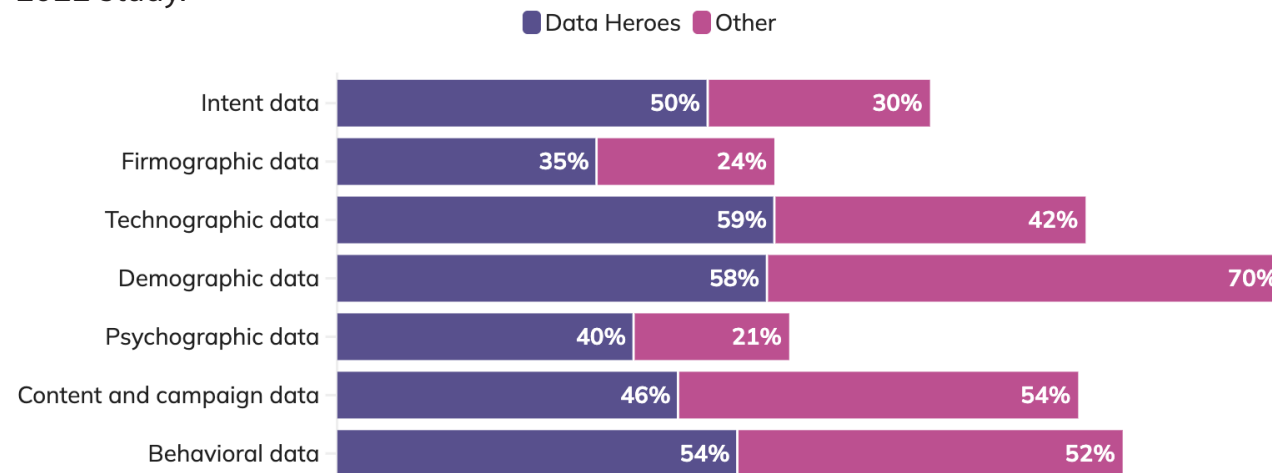
The good news is that confidence in data is climbing. 44% of B2B marketers are now “Data Heroes.” Data Heroes feel highly confident in the data they use to convert audiences—up from just 27% in our 2022 study.

How do they differ?

Data Heroes are more likely to use a wide variety of data, particularly intent data.

Data Heroes are more likely to identify as specialists and are willing put in the work needed to make the most of their data and continue to improve. They are striving for improvement, citing low data quality as their most critical challenge in leveraging data effectively more than their non-Data Hero counterparts! They are also much more likely to (correctly) note that data privacy and regulatory compliance affects their job responsibilities.

Data Heroes reap the rewards from their focus on data. 64% have significantly exceeded their goals compared to only 19% of other marketers and the vast majority have a very positive outlook on the success of their current marketing efforts.



Want to be a Data Hero?

Start here.



Diversify your data stack

Don't stop at demographic and firmographic. Add depth with intent, technographic, and psychographic data. This gives you a sharper, more complete view of your buyers so your strategy hits with precision.



Act fast with the data you trust

When your data is solid, second-guessing disappears. Build the confidence to move quickly: launch campaigns faster, test more often, and adapt in real-time.



Make data quality your priority

Even great strategy can't fix bad data. Build regular hygiene checks into your workflow, stay ahead of compliance, and work with a trusted partner to enrich your data. Confidence comes from knowing what you're working with is right.

Pro Tip: Start small.

Audit your current data mix. What are you using—and what's missing? Fill the gaps, refine continuously, and you'll be on your way to Hero status.

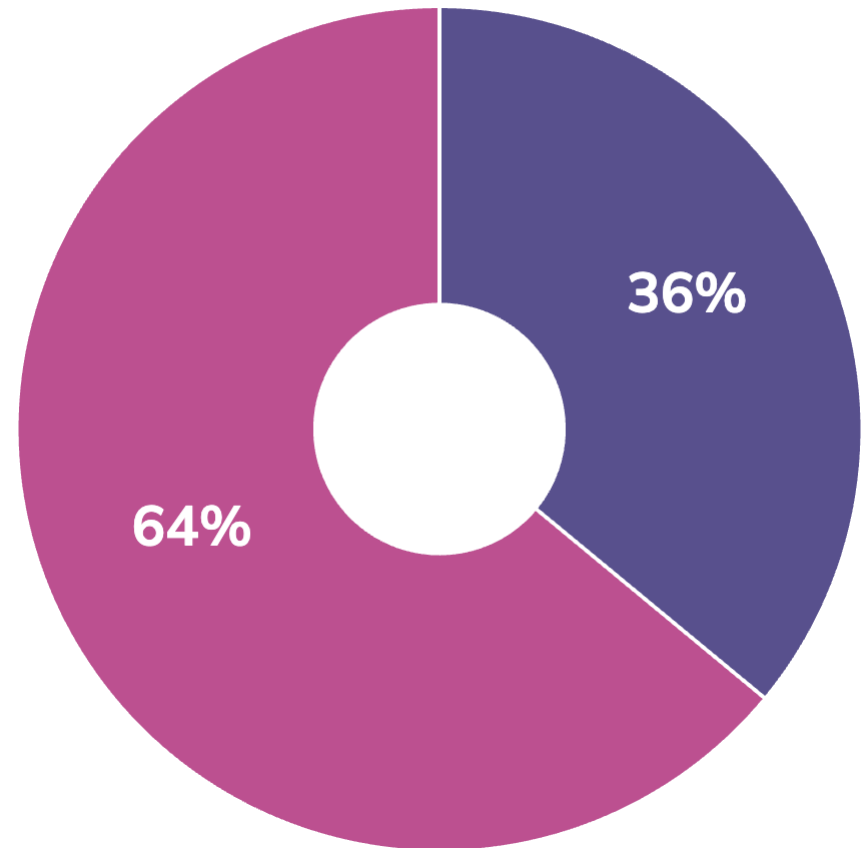
Growth Gurus

Many Data Heroes are also Growth Gurus, having driven a significant increase in revenue in the last year. Not only are Growth Gurus confident about using data, they are more apt to get a campaign to market in less than 15 days, use AI more effectively, and have a more positive outlook than their peers.



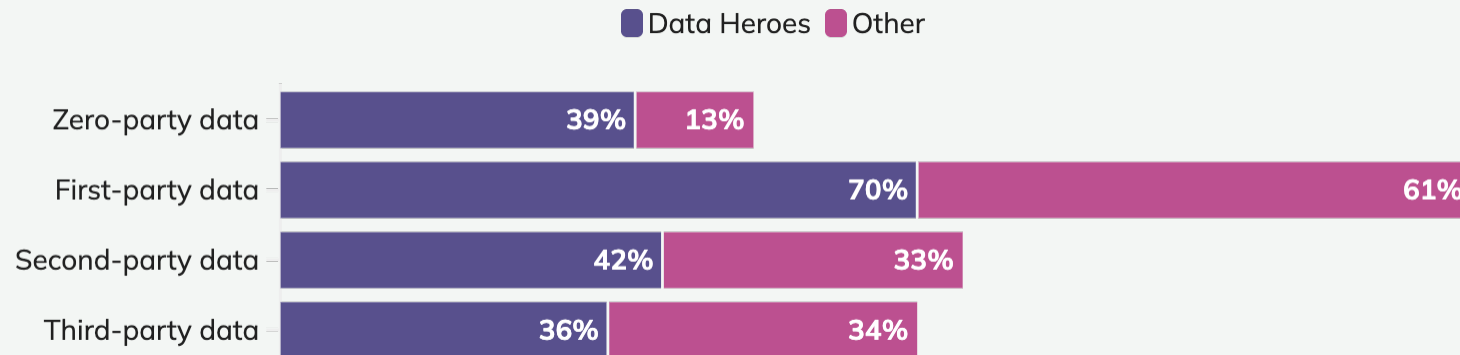
Revenue in the last year

■ Growth Gurus ■ All others



All in on first-party data

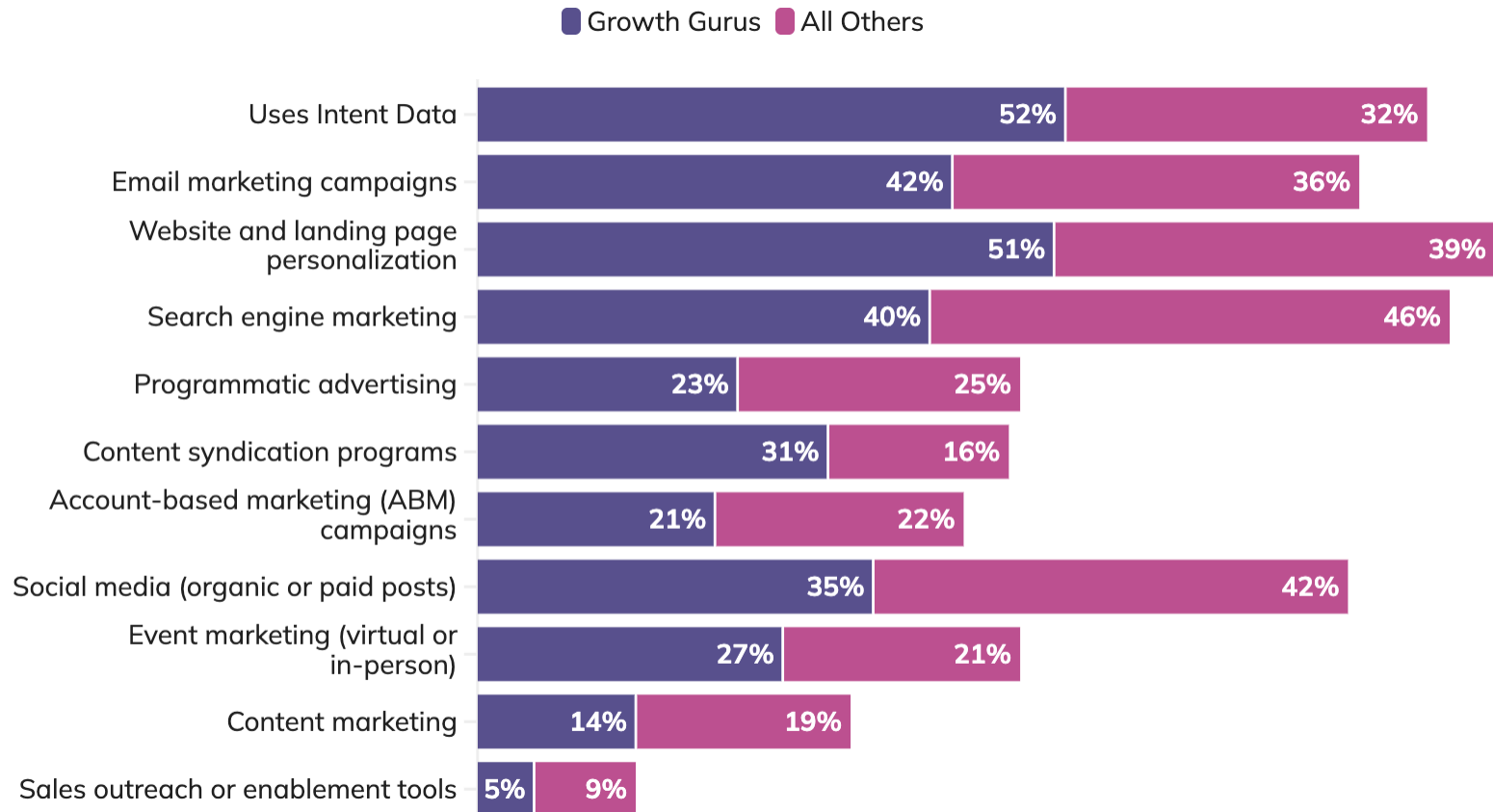
Which of the following are you increasing the use of in the coming year?



Nearly two-thirds of marketers plan to increase their use of first-party data in the coming year and Growth Gurus lead the pack. They are also significantly more likely to be focused on “zero-party” data which they can collect on their own properties. Second-party and third-party data remain essential, but fewer marketers plan to increase their use this year, signaling they are already using these data types effectively. With nearly one-quarter of B2Bs increasing zero-party data use, there is growing interest in more transparent data collection strategies. Marketers are using more opt-in engagement strategies, likely to support data compliance efforts and ensure high quality data from engaged contacts.

The strategies fueling growth

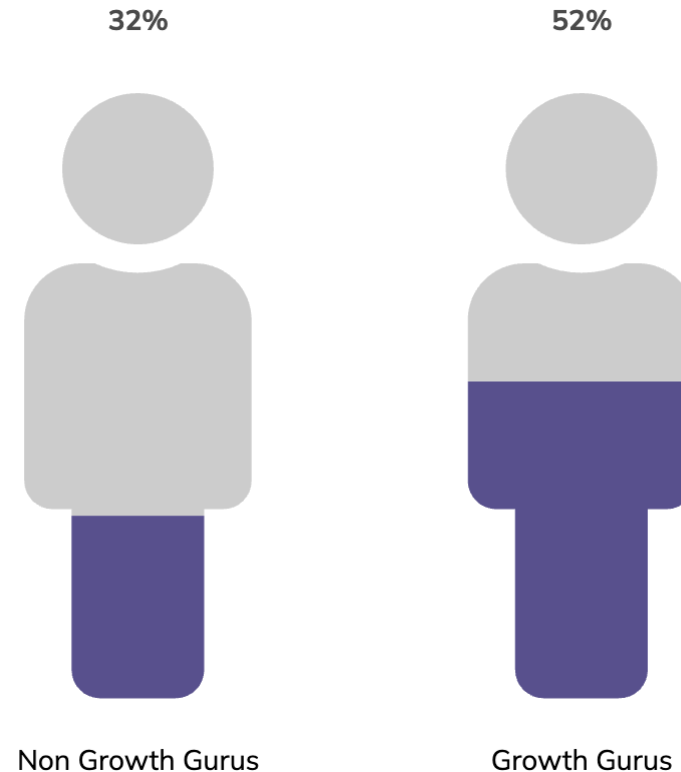
Growth Gurus are scaling across multiple channels and tactics. They are more likely to leverage website personalization, email, and programmatic advertising to maximize their impact while other marketers prioritize search and social. Growth Gurus are also twice as likely to use content syndication.



Intent data: An untapped opportunity

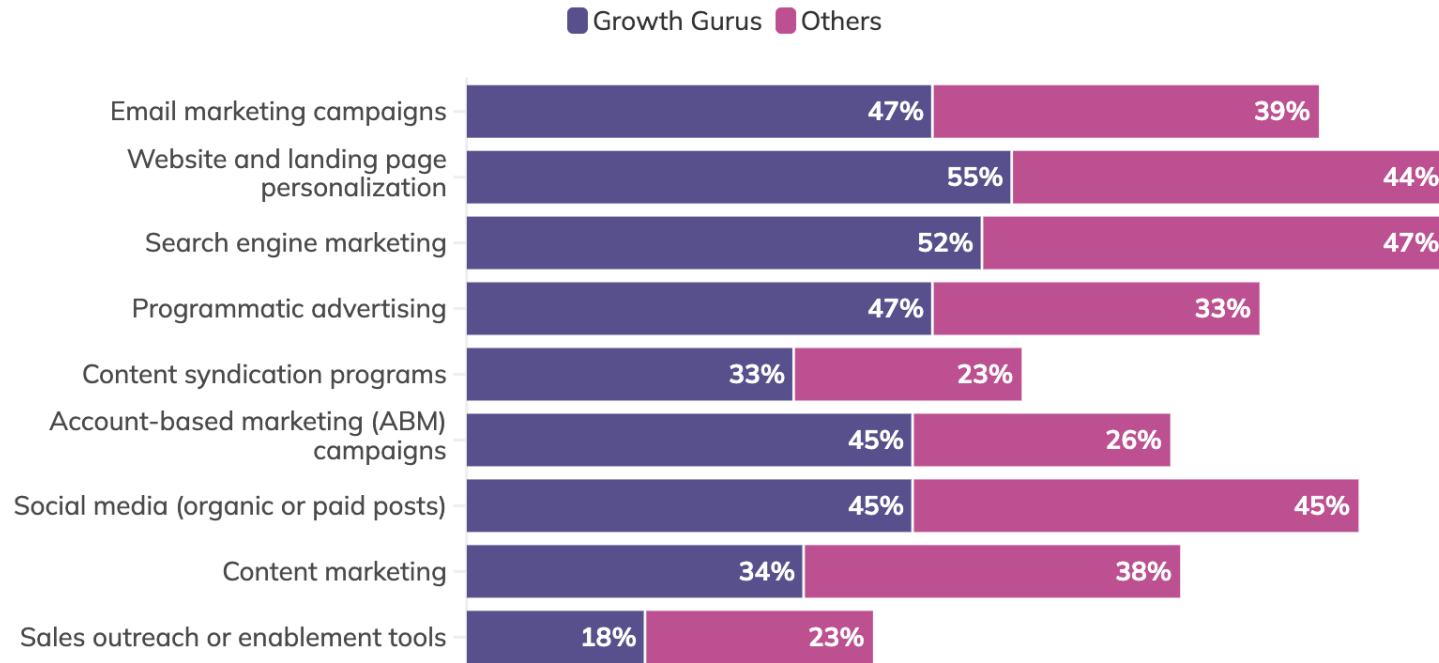
Our high performers—Growth Gurus and Data Heroes (two groups that overlap significantly, by 71%)—show significantly higher intent data usage. Both groups are more likely to be using it across most channels. They see intent working in their programs and they trust it will continue to drive growth.

Intent data users aren't limiting themselves to one or two channels. They're applying intent data across channels and both groups are most likely to apply intent data on their website and for search marketing. Growth Gurus in particular are much more likely than other marketers to be using intent data to fuel email, website, search, ABM and more.



A closer look at intent data

Across which of the following channels are you leveraging intent data?

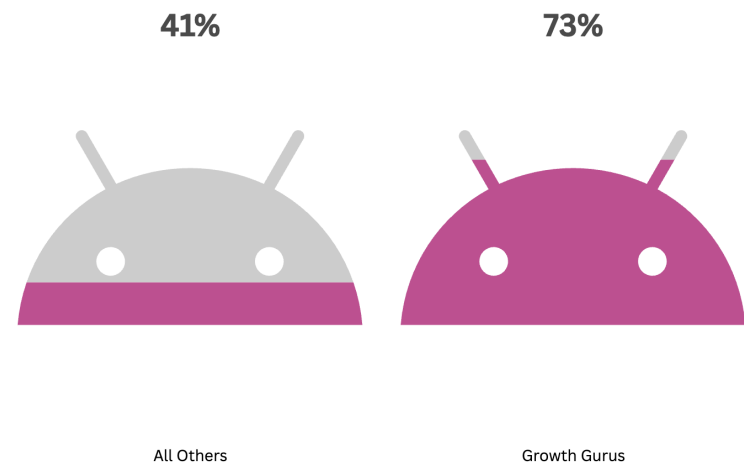


Intent data: An untapped opportunity

Marketers use AI to move faster and measure smarter. From personalizing campaigns at scale, to delivering custom nurture emails based on intent, to analyzing large amounts of performance data and suggesting optimizations to improve, the applications for AI in marketing are endless. But, to effectively use AI, marketers need high-quality data. Marketers seeing the biggest gains are those with strong data foundations. Among Growth Gurus, 73% report time savings and efficiency gains from AI, compared to 41% of others—using it to scale, personalize, and test more efficiently.

AI is also helping marketers grow. Over half of enterprise marketers say it improves both efficiency and professional development. Younger marketers feel this most: 55% of Gen Z and Millennials say AI saves time, and 57% say it helps them grow, compared to 44% and 40% of older peers.

Marketers who trust their data—and know how to apply it—are turning AI into a performance multiplier.



Pro Tip: Want to unlock the real power of AI? Start with your data.

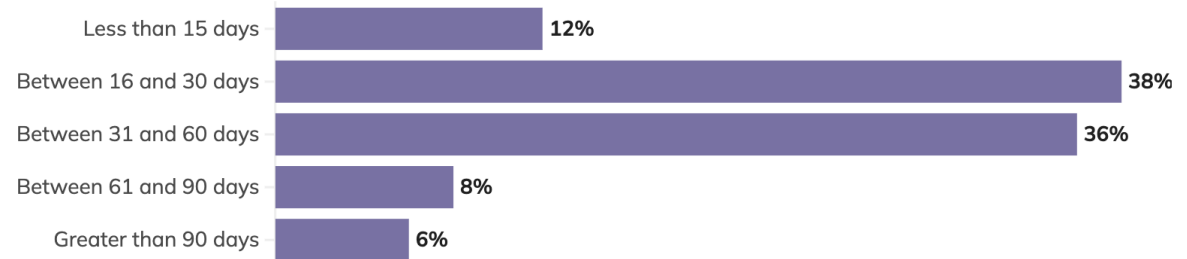
Make sure it's clean, complete, and ready to work for you. That means investing in ongoing data hygiene—and teaming up with a partner you trust to keep it sharp, compliant, and conversion-ready.

Speed is a competitive advantage: why time-to-market matters

74% of B2B marketers launch campaigns within 16-60 days.

This is the industry standard: balancing speed with strategic planning.

Growth Gurus have figured out how to get their campaigns to market faster. This group is 3x more likely than others to be launching campaigns in less than 15 days. The ability to execute rapidly gives these companies an advantage.



Marketers who can launch a campaign
in less than 15 days in average

Growth Gurus are 3x more likely than others to launch campaigns in less than 15 days.



Speed to market

Fast execution is a hallmark of high-growth marketing organizations. B2B marketers who can launch campaigns quickly grow their pipeline, allowing them to generate leads more efficiently and convert prospects before competitors. They're able to move quickly because they have the right data.

Growth Gurus are much more likely to use a variety of data, including intent data, building strong intent-driven strategies that help them make campaign decisions and target effectively. They know their data strategies are working. They're 2.4x more likely to say they are using the right data and can prove it in their pipeline. This confidence lets them take the guesswork out of their go-to-market strategy and accelerate their results.

Getting into market fast means these companies also have more room for iteration to improve performance. They can learn and adjust in the same time takes their peers to launch an initial campaign.

The fastest-moving marketers aren't just acting on instinct, they're using AI to boost precision and efficiency. Over half of enterprise B2B marketers report time savings from AI. But while it's helping drive efficiency, AI is still nascent: 27% of marketers say its challenges outweigh the benefits, and many are still figuring out how to use it effectively.

As expectations rise, marketers are looking at investing in efficiency through technology. When asked where they'd invest extra resources this year, the top pick was clear: AI, automation, or martech tools.

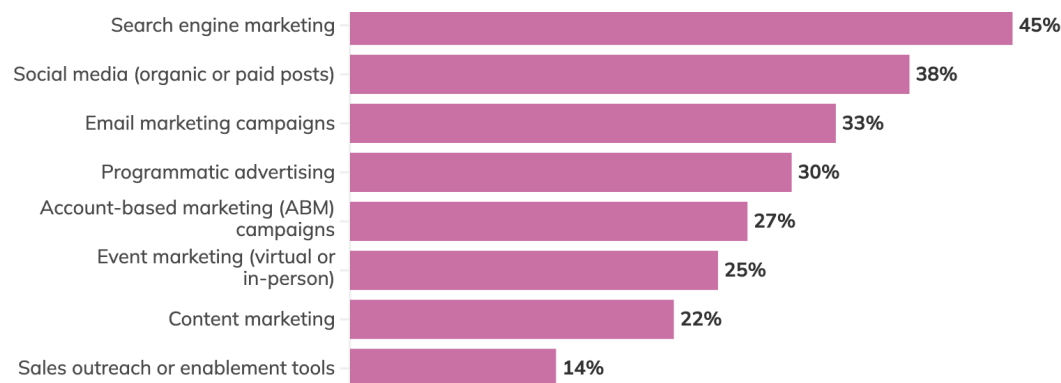
Outsourcing fuels growth

It's nearly impossible to do everything yourself and do it all well. That's why almost all B2B marketers use external expertise on at least one channel. Marketers most frequently outsource search engine marketing and social media, while website personalization, email marketing, and programmatic advertising are also outsourced by about one-third of those surveyed.

Growth Gurus are significantly more likely to outsource or partner with a vendor across all areas listed. The most notable gaps include programmatic advertising (1.4x more likely) and ABM campaigns (1.6x more likely).

They're also 1.6x more likely to use content syndication, recognizing its value in driving reach, scale, and qualified leads. This signals a broader mindset: Growth Gurus don't just do more—they partner smarter.

Do you outsource or partner with a vendor for any of the following?



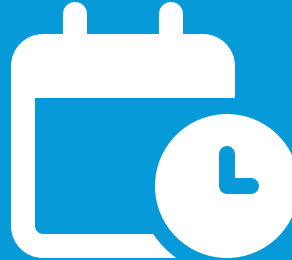
Become a Growth Guru:

3 steps to accelerate impact



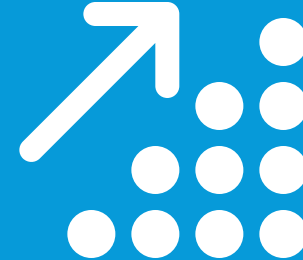
Focus where it counts

Growth Gurus aren't generalists. They narrow in on what moves the needle—like campaign performance, pipeline impact, and customer acquisition. Get clear on your core goals and align your resources accordingly.



Move fast and iterate

21% of Growth Gurus launch campaigns in under 15 days. Their secret? Streamlined workflows, decisive action, and the ability to learn and adapt quickly. Done is better than perfect when you're optimizing in real time.



Partner for scale

They know they can't do it all alone—and don't try to. Growth Gurus are 1.6x more likely to use content syndication and regularly outsource ABM, programmatic, and more. The right partners give you speed, reach, and focus.

Pro Tip: Audit your current GTM process.

Where are the bottlenecks? What's slowing you down?

Automate where you can and bring in trusted partners where it matters. Agility isn't just a mindset, it's a multiplier!

Next Steps: Evolve your role and elevate your impact

Whether you're developing deep expertise in a specialty or balancing multiple functions, your impact on the business has never been greater. And with growing expectations, this is your opportunity to double down on the strategies, tactics, and tools that are delivering real results for your peers.

Even with expanding responsibilities, leaning into a specialty can sharpen your edge. Position yourself for success by testing often and building trust in your data. Stay ahead by tapping into the same resources your peers say are most valuable in career development: industry research, AI, and internal team development.

Your role is changing. Let your strategy evolve with it—and let these next steps help you turn that momentum into measurable impact.





Grow your data confidence.

High-quality data is the key to revenue growth. Audit your data and look for any gaps. Work on your first-party data strategy and find a trusted data partner to enrich your data. Once you know you have the data you need, work with a partner on a data hygiene strategy to regularly audit and clean your data. This step isn't a simple check box, but rather an ongoing process. Fold it into your day-to-day and see the positive impact it makes on your performance.

Next, layer on other data types. Layering data will help you target with precision and reach the right audience segments. If you aren't already, consider using intent data. These signals help you focus on in-market prospects, so you aren't wasting time and resources chasing the wrong accounts.



Testing 1,2,3...

If you don't have a line for testing in your budget, it's time to add it. See how you can shift funds to dedicate to testing new tactics and strategies. It doesn't have to be a huge investment at first, but you can be confident knowing that the money will be well spent to give you insights to make data-driven decisions going forward. When you're running your tests, think about how you can use the insights to shorten your time to market. Test, iterate, review, repeat and get ready for growth.



Turn to the experts.

As we saw in this report, being a specialist is often more effective than trying to do it all. Enlisting a champion to be on your side, providing expert advisory and execution for your data and analytics strategy, campaigns, and pipeline programs, is the most effective way to shorten the path from insight to action, and move from goals to results.

Methodology

Ascend2 benchmarks the performance of business strategies and the tactics and technology that drives them. Anteriad partnered with Ascend2 to survey 466 marketing decision-makers, senior management and above, located across North America, Europe, and APAC. These marketers represent B2B organizations with 250 or more employees. The survey was fielded in February 2025.



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