

2022/2023



# The annual B2B marketing effectiveness barometer

Over 800 B2B marketers surveyed across  
the US, UK, Germany and Australia

# Our annual survey on the trends and state of B2B marketing

## Despite the economic clouds, the majority of marketers are resolute and hopeful

We surveyed over 800 B2B marketers across the US, UK, Germany and Australia.

We wanted to know:

- the role of marketing in their organisation
- how they are responding to the recession
- what they saw as the secrets to success.

And what we found was... surprising.

## Foreword

Although the news may be full of economic doom and gloom, B2B marketers are feeling positive.

The results show a growing strategic remit for B2B marketers, shine a light on the anatomy of an effective B2B marketer and show a return to long-term thinking after a lurch towards short-termism in the pandemic.

Furthermore, they hint at many of the big trends to come – including a growing focus on customer marketing and more emphasis on test and learn approaches.

We hope you find it an insightful and optimistic read, and may the findings of next year's report continue that trend.



**David van Schaick**  
CMO

## Five key takeaways

1

### **The anatomy of B2B leaders**

Leaders believe in investing in creativity, differentiation and a mutually strong relationships with sales.

2

### **Recession reaction**

The advice from experts is to hold your nerve and keep investing in marketing, and it appears B2B marketers are taking note.

3

### **The role of marketing**

B2B marketing is maturing into a commercial function, accountable for growth.

4

### **The long and the short**

Investment in long-term goals has bounced back from a lurch towards short-termism during the pandemic.

5

### **Risk taking, test and learn**

There's a growing emphasis on a test and learn mentality.

# A note about the survey

## We aim to shine a light on those leading the way in B2B marketing

One of the ways we do that is to separate out the 'leaders' in our responses from the rest. In this case, leaders are respondents who identified as having outperformed their competition over the last two years. They are also twice as likely to have seen double-digit growth in the last two years.

There are limitations to any survey asking respondents to self-identify, so we've structured our research to build on the existing evidence about B2B effectiveness.

For example, research from the IPA has for a long time suggested that B2B brands should invest more than 40% of their budget in long-term brand building. Our research:

- Tracks whether B2B marketers are following this advice,
- How that's changing over time,
- And whether there is a correlation between those that invest more longer term and those that claim stronger growth and competitive performance.

And there is: 50% of leaders invest more than 40% of their budget in long-term goals, compared to 38% of the rest.

In this way we start to build up a picture of the anatomy of successful B2B marketing.

## Respondent demographic summary

Country of residence	UK	US	AUS	GER	(Total 803)
	<b>303</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	
Role	<b>13%</b>		Business owner		
	<b>19%</b>		Director position		
	<b>22%</b>		C-suite executive position		
	<b>46%</b>		Manager position		
Company size # of employees	<b>4%</b>		< 50		
	<b>9%</b>		51–250		
	<b>11%</b>		251–500		
	<b>28%</b>		501–1000		
	<b>33%</b>		1001–5000		
	<b>15%</b>		> 5001		

# The anatomy of B2B leaders

Leaders dare to be creative and cultivate  
a healthy relationship with sales

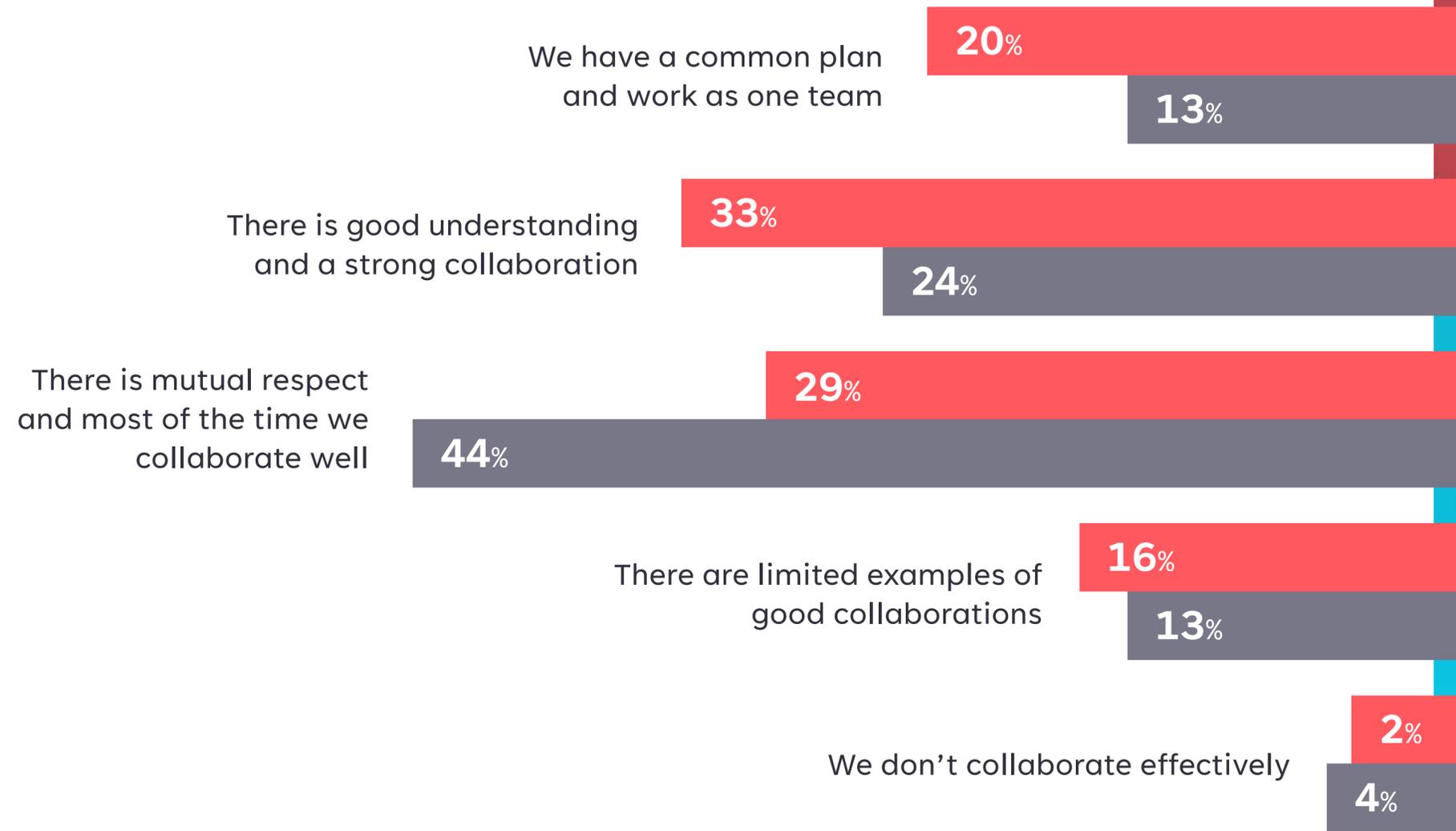
## “How strong would you say your relationship with sales is?”

### Leaders’ relationship with sales is strong, but also forthright

As you might expect, B2B marketing leaders generally have positive relationships with sales.

However, when it comes to the question above, leaders selected the option “There is mutual respect and most of the time we collaborate well” 15% less than other marketers. This shows that leaders are more likely to go beyond mutual respect and develop common plans and strong collaboration.

■ Leaders   ■ The rest



**35%**

**of marketers agree their brand  
is extremely well connected**

**“How well connected  
would you say your brand  
and demand efforts are?”**

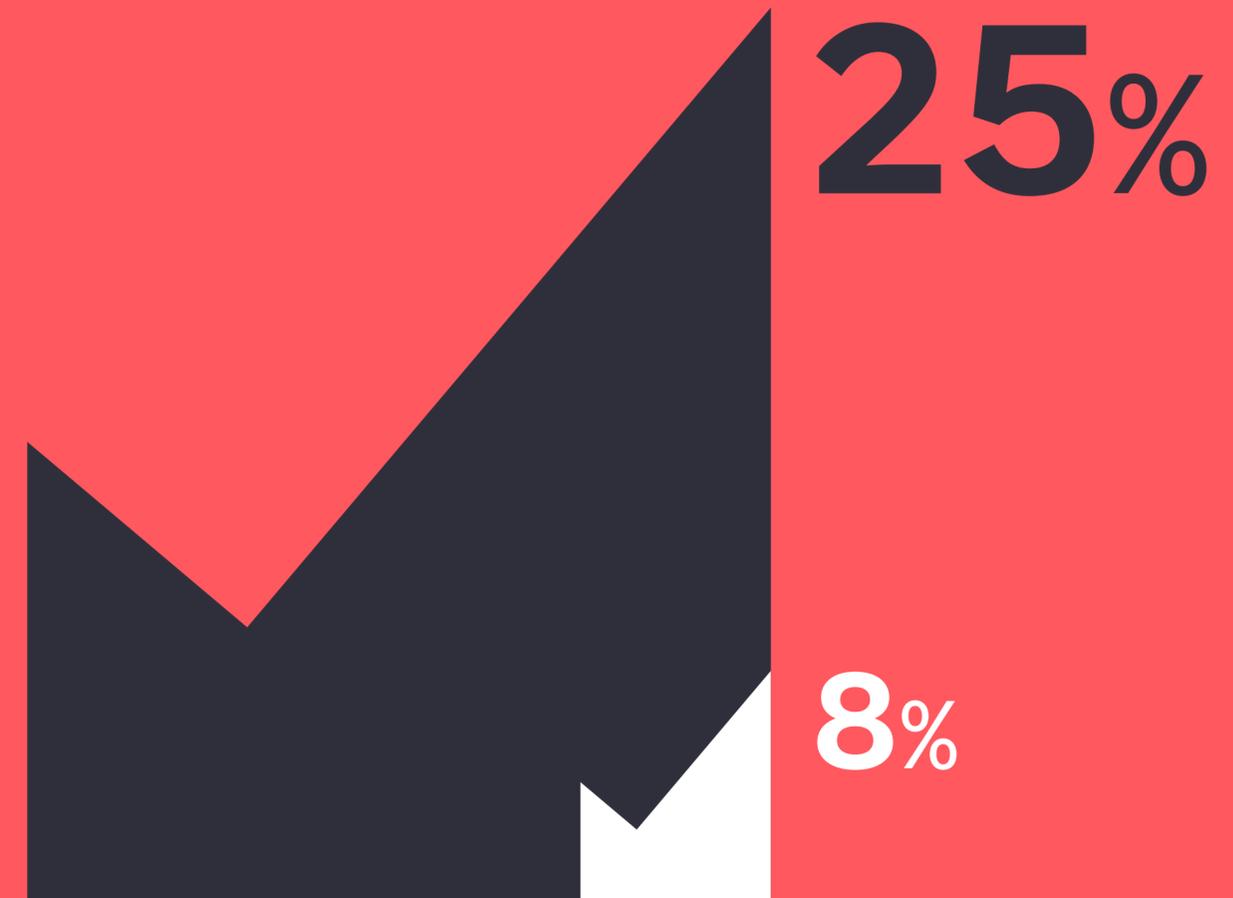
**Leaders demonstrate the strong  
link between brand and demand**

Leaders scored 38% for being extremely connected while the rest only managed 11%. It shows the benefits of finding ways to reduce the barriers between brand and demand in marketing teams, like developing common scorecards.

## “How creative is your brand activation?”

**Creativity is a clear differentiator setting leaders apart**

Leaders were three times more likely to consider their brand activation creative – the same brands that are seeing the most growth.



**Say their brand is extremely creative**

▲ Leaders    ▲ The rest

# Responses to recession

The advice from experts is to hold your nerve and keep investing in marketing, and it appears B2B marketers are taking note

# When the going gets tough, the tough keep their marketing budgets going

**We are facing a period of low growth and high inflation. So how should B2B marketers respond?**

The advice from studies of previous recessions suggests marketers shouldn't cut budgets. In fact, now could be a good time to invest more, as share of voice becomes cheaper if your competitors reduce their investments.

For many marketers we speak to, the economic slowdown has accelerated a trend that was already taking hold: put more emphasis on customer lifecycle marketing.

As investors prioritise profitability over growth-at-any-cost, and metrics like ARR (Annual Recurring Revenue) and NRR (Net Revenue Retention), we see customer marketing as a key trend for B2B marketers in the next two years.

We've also been advising clients to focus their messages on productivity to tackle the pinch of wage pressure and low growth and invest in getting new products quickly to market that can help customers adapt to the new economic reality.

It is, of course, one thing to give the advice and another to put it into practice. So we asked marketers what strategies they were employing.

The responses show that they're on the right path...

## “How has your marketing adapted to the recent economic forecasts of stagflation and recession?”

### Growing existing customers and holding firm on spend

Marketers are focusing on existing customers, investing more in brand and share of voice and accelerating new products to market.

However, despite the economic headwinds, less than a quarter of B2B marketers have ‘reduced their spend somewhat’, and even fewer have ‘drastically reduced marketing budgets’.

This shows that B2B marketers are not feeling the squeeze just yet and see the importance of continued marketing activity.

# 46%

**of B2B marketers have put more emphasis on growing existing customers or moving them to more profitable products/services**

“We have increased our marketing budgets because now is a good time to win market share”

37%

23%

■ Leaders ■ The rest

“How has your marketing adapted to the recent economic forecasts of stagflation and recession?”

### B2B marketing leaders sense opportunity

They ranked 14% higher than the rest of B2B marketers when it comes to increasing marketing budgets. This underlines the importance of continuing to reach out to your customers, even though the temptation is there to cut things back in the face of economic pressures.

Furthermore, leaders are also 18% more likely to ‘accelerate the time to get products/services to market where they can help our customers respond to the recession’.

# The role of marketing

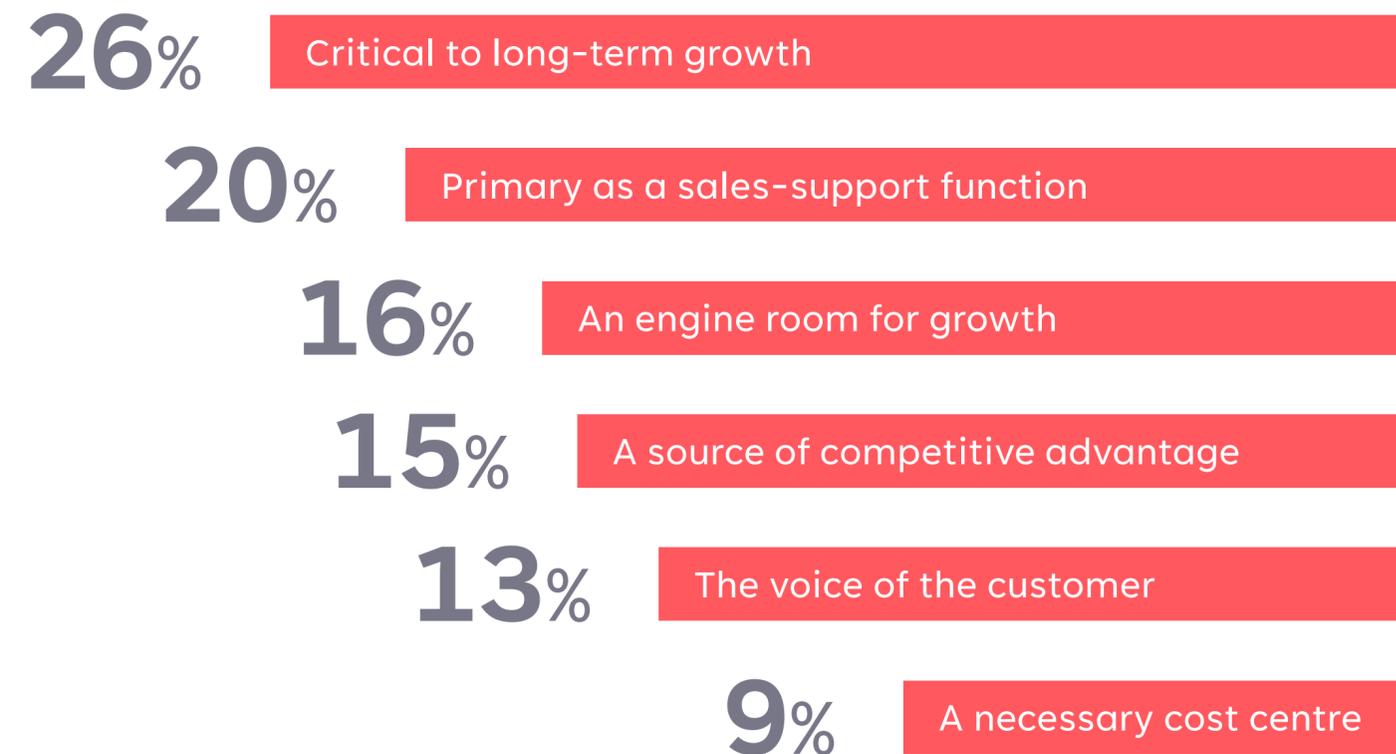
B2B marketing is maturing into a commercial function, accountable for growth

## “How would you describe marketing’s perceived role in your business?”

### The days of B2B marketing being the PowerPoint department are long gone

Our survey suggests times have changed for the better with the majority identifying marketing as providing a strategic function.

Whereas only a small minority view marketing as a necessary cost centre and 20% say it is perceived as primarily sales-support.



# “What objectives is marketing directly responsible for in your business?”

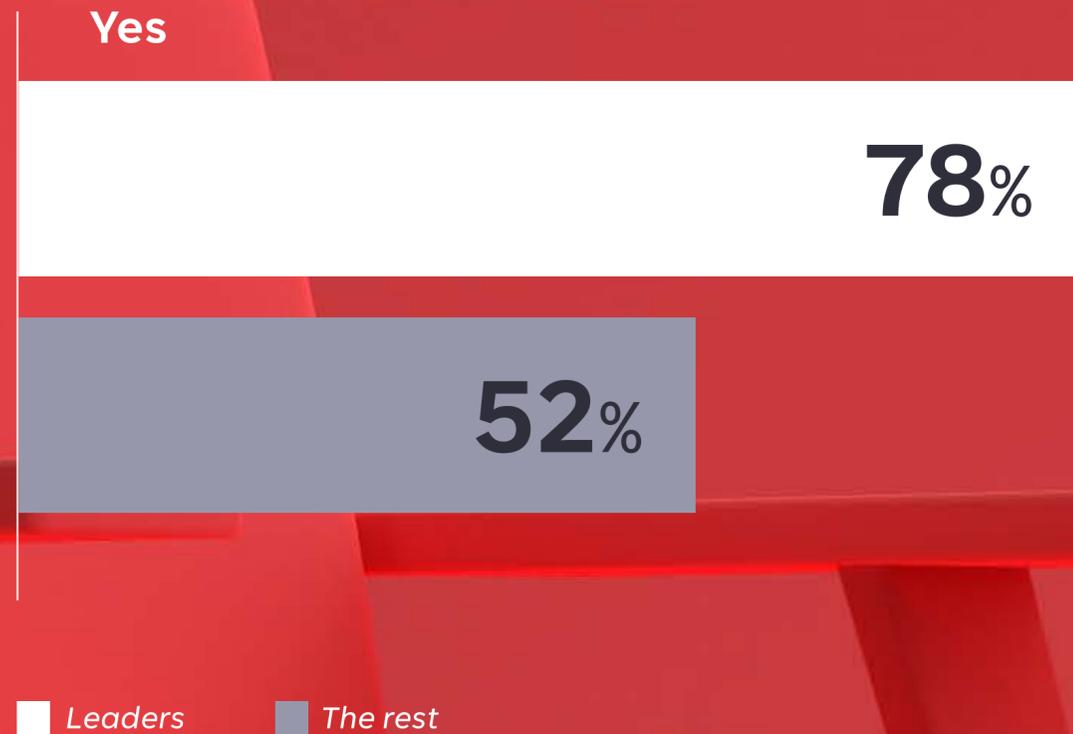
## No surprises – organic growth tops the charts

Although growth is king, market share and penetration also scored highly, as was the case for new business wins.

It’s interesting to see that leaders are more likely to focus on objectives around profitability, net revenue retention and deal size, which suggest a targeted, strategic approach vs a volume game.

At the bottom, came marketing metrics such as MQLs.





## “Does your CMO sit on the board?”

### Leaders make their voice heard

It’s encouraging to see that the majority of our respondents have a CMO on their board, and it’s perhaps no surprise to see that leaders are significantly more likely to have that representation.

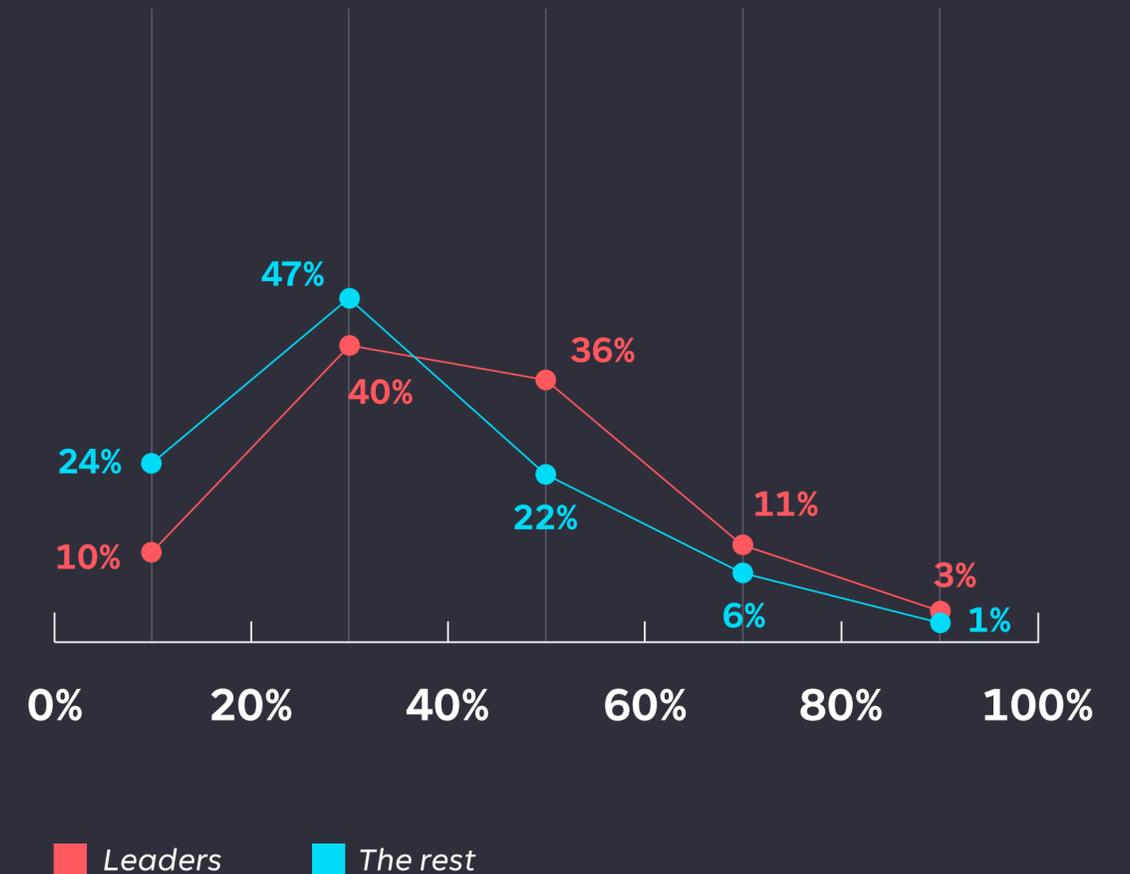
# The long and the short

Our research adds weight to the argument that leaders are more likely to think long-term. Investment in long-term goals has bounced back from a lurch towards short-termism during the pandemic

# “What percentage of your resources do you allocate to long-term marketing goals (i.e. more than 6 months) compared to short-term marketing goals?”

## Leaders plan for the long-term

Everyone tends to plan for the long-term, however there are still a segment of marketers (24%) that are driven by short-term instincts.



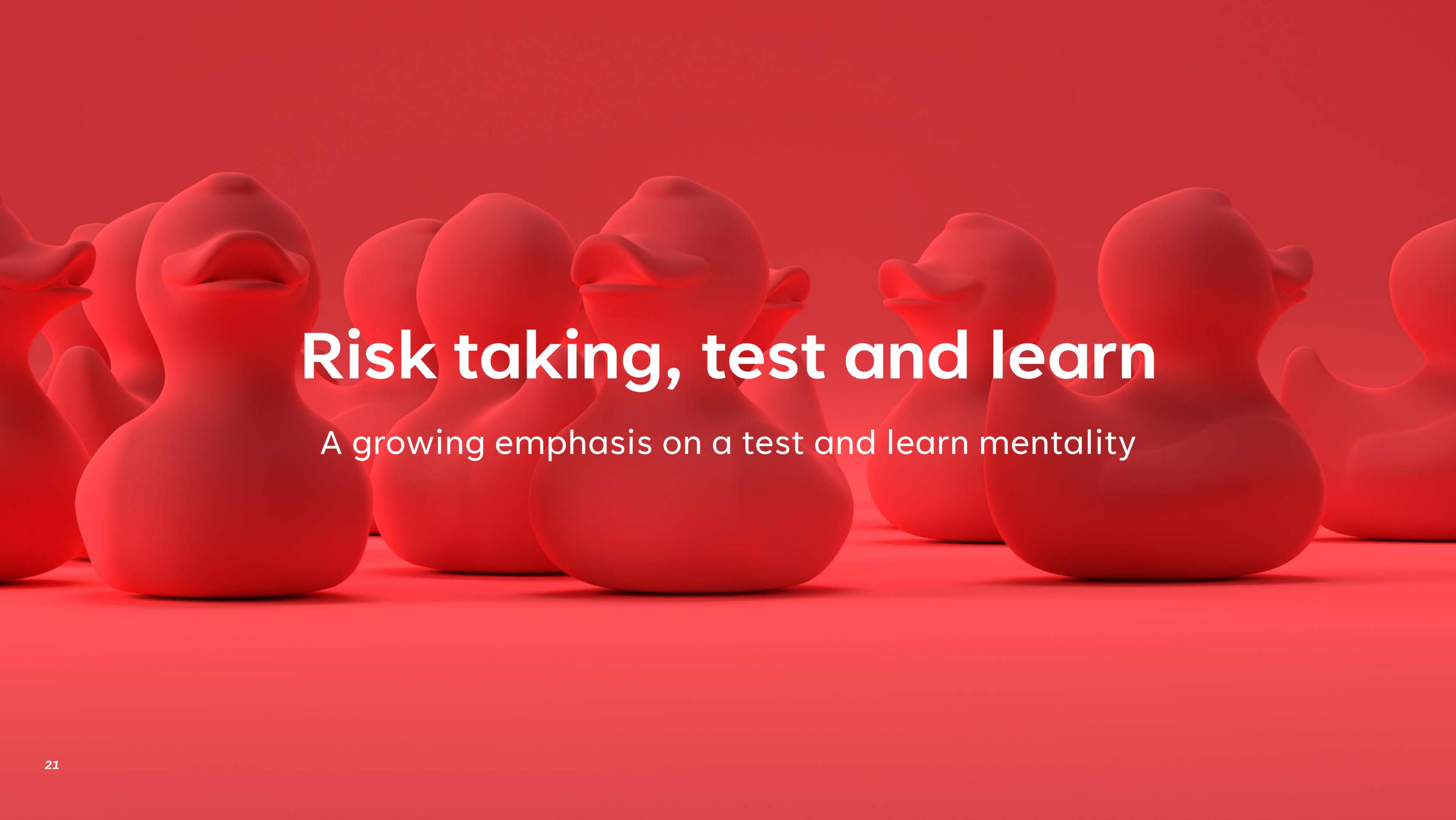
**21%**

of leaders say their buyer journey is tightly integrated, vs 9% of the rest

**“How well do you do at coordinating the buyer journey across multiple channels?”**

**Leaders have a more joined-up buyer journey, but many still struggle to create a seamless experience**

These findings demonstrate that a joined-up buyer journey leads to effective B2B marketing. However, the results show that the vast majority of marketers are still having difficulties in building a coordinated and joined-up experience across channels.

A row of several red rubber ducks is positioned across the middle of the frame. The ducks are rendered in a smooth, matte red color and are set against a solid red background. The lighting is soft, creating subtle shadows and highlights on the ducks' bodies. The ducks are arranged in a slightly staggered line, with some appearing more prominent than others.

# Risk taking, test and learn

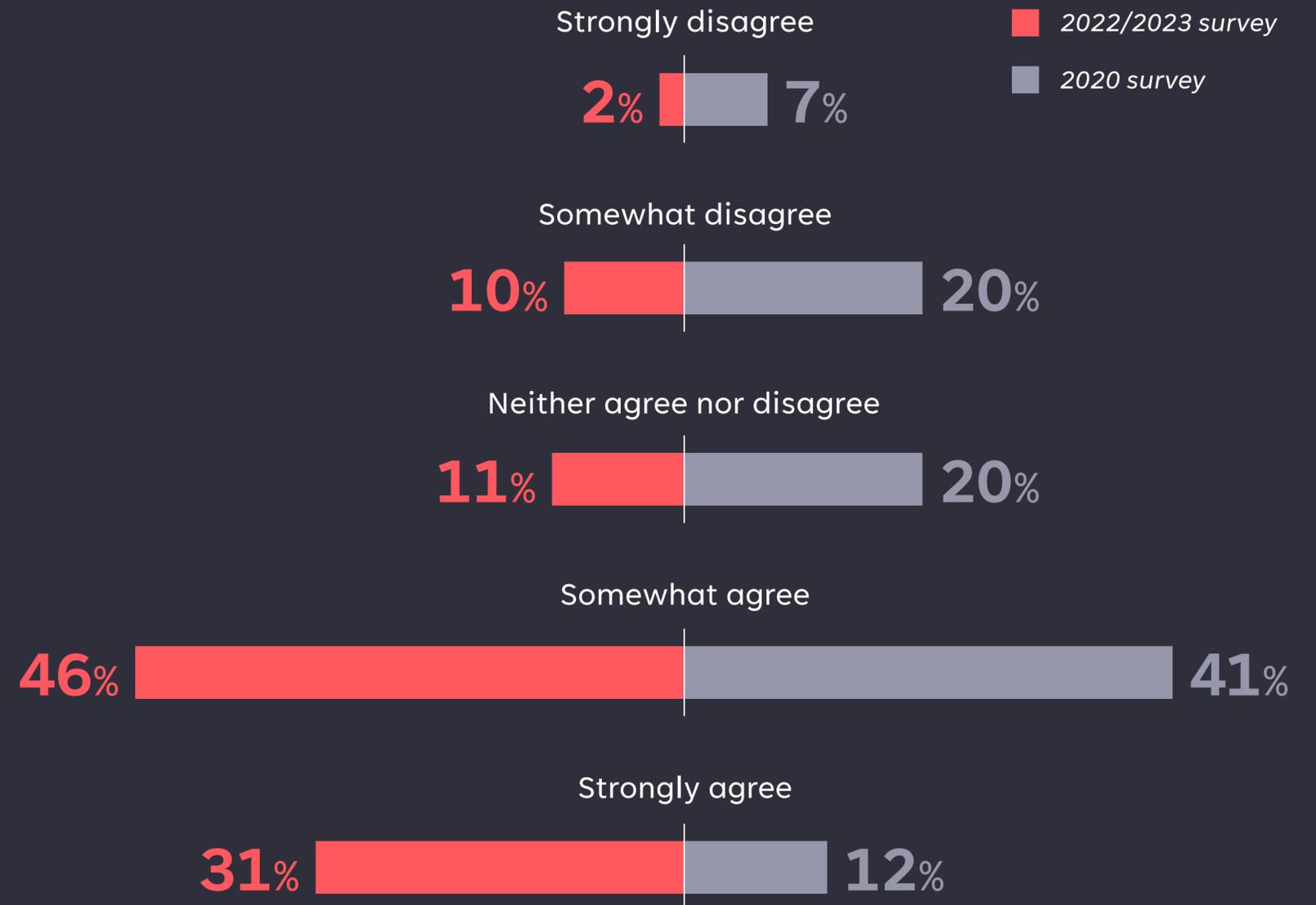
A growing emphasis on a test and learn mentality

**“To what extent do you agree with the following statement: ‘My team and I are encouraged to take risks/ experiment in order to try to improve results over time’?”**

### An appetite for innovation

The ability to take risks, experiment, learn and adapt is a fundamental capability in modern growth marketing.

That’s why it’s brilliant to see a vast majority of marketers agree that they are encouraged to take risks to improve performance, a majority that has increased by over 30% since our last survey.



## “Do you have a structured approach to testing?”

### Structure is critical

Leaders are more likely to have a structured approach with regular testing and feedback, and reap the benefits as a result.

Conversely, the rest are possibly earlier in their journey, with testing more likely to be limited to certain channels or sporadic in nature.

36%

18%

▲ Leaders    ▲ The rest

**As the industry continues to change, it's important to stay agile and understand what it takes to be a market leader.**

If you'd like to learn more about the results from this survey, get in touch with The Marketing Practice to organise a one-to-one session.

[Get in touch](#)

## An important report and a positive story for marketing leadership.

The 2022/2023 B2B Marketing Effectiveness Barometer is an illuminating report which contains essential insights for those working in B2B marketing right now, and is great grounds for optimism about their future impact. It shows significant indications of the leadership role that's been played – and which is now being recognised.

There's also an essential point to highlight when reading the conclusions in this.



**Sophie Devonshire**  
CEO

## What marketers think is important; what their employers think is critical.

The Barometer is arguably more important for what it says about the rest of the B2B world than what it says about B2B marketers. The majority of marketers surveyed say their role is seen as strategic, and vital for the growth of the business. What's terrific is that the behaviour of their companies confirms this.

More than half give their CMO a seat on the board. And in a time of significant economic uncertainty, more than half have backed their marketers by maintaining or increasing their marketing budget.

Equally significant is the clear relationship the report shows between a B2B business's belief in marketing and its success. Marketers in leading companies are more likely to have had their budget increased; to allocate budget strategically; and to have a close relationship with sales. Their work is also much more likely to be creative, well-integrated and joined up across branding and performance.

In other words, B2B businesses are finding that if they trust their marketing team to be more than just sales support, and give them the backing they need, that trust will be amply repaid. Great marketing builds market leaders.

## There's no success without failure.

But as CEO of The Marketing Society, the finding that stands out most for me is that more than three-quarters of B2B marketers say their company encourages them to experiment and take risks in pursuit of future growth.

Having the courage to fail is one of the quintessential qualities of the contemporary marketer. Failing once is uncomfortable, failing repeatedly is frightening, and it still feels like a short step from having a failure to being a failure. Edison's quote about not having failed, but having found a thousand ways that won't work, appears on inspirational posters not because people know it's true, but because they need reminding that it's true.

In this time of constant upheaval, when for the most advanced companies the goal of digital transformation is the agility to respond rapidly to changes in customer behaviour, technology and market conditions, test-and-learn remains the crucial mindset.

This is particularly true in B2B, where buyers are turning their backs on the traditional sales-led path to purchase. Instead, as Gartner has revealed, 83% of the buying decision is now made before a salesperson gets in the room with the client. If you don't know who your customers are, you can't target them, so the best thing you can do is continually experiment and optimise.

And this takes us back to the attitudes of B2B businesses revealed by the Barometer. It's great that so many marketers are risking failure to drive future growth. It's even better – and more important – that so many feel their employers are encouraging them to do so.

So let's celebrate together this recognition of the increased strength of marketing leadership and understanding of its impact. The Marketing Society has been accelerating marketing leadership since 1959, but we know that now (more than ever) is the time for marketers to step forward and lead the business conversations; to unite and support each other in increasing marketing's positive impact. It's time for us to make sure we can take pride in marketing, and in particularly in the skills, art and science involved in great B2B marketing. This is its moment; the moment when it matters. This great report by The Marketing Practice and the work they are doing helps us elevate the conversations and encourages us to look forward to what happens next.

Very best,



Sophie Devonshire, Chief Executive  
The Marketing Society



# The Marketing Practice

[themarketingpractice.com](http://themarketingpractice.com)