

REPORT

# Marketing trends for a new era

How AI, consumer privacy, and a hot competitive environment will change the face of marketing

# Intro

For the past few years, marketers have been looking in the rearview mirror. They've had to decode years of changes in buying habits and understand the difference between actual purchase signals and noise. They've been asked to expand their brand to new markets and drum up more potential customers year over year, with less budget and resources than they've had in the past.

But 2024 might be the year when marketers can truly start looking forward.

**Marketing is undergoing a fundamental shift—from profiling to predicting, from tracking what people do to anticipating what they want.**

In addition to making sense of past actions, marketers will need to understand how user intent signals their next move. It will be the only way to stay a step ahead of the competition.

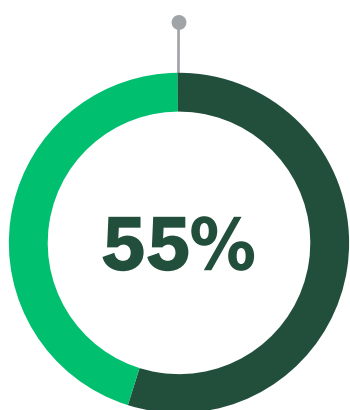
This kind of predictive marketing will be made possible by data. But marketers won't be looking at data in the same way they have in years past—new approaches will fundamentally change how data is collected and applied to everyday challenges.

Ground-breaking technologies, like AI, are already in the hands of marketers, and old tracking systems, like cookies, are being replaced. Disruptive? Yes, but marketers seem willing to try new approaches for finding, engaging, and converting customers.

Any way you look at it, the bar has been raised and marketers will be working hard to keep up. Instead of relying on third-party cookies to uncover customer preferences, marketers will need to collect first-party data about visitors and customers, and engage in more purposeful and customized conversations.

For marketers that take the time to ask, those conversations promise to pay off. In a recent study<sup>1</sup>, we found that 76% of consumers want to be asked their opinion on new products and services. That means that getting answers from your customers can both unlock what they want—but can also provide concrete data on what's next for your business.

We asked marketers about their company's goals. **The top response was a move to a more personalized version of marketing.**



<sup>1</sup> This SurveyMonkey study of 3,458 U.S. adults 18+ was conducted between March 12-16, 2024.

For this report, we reached out to 707 workers in the US January 2024, including 507 marketing professionals and 200 market researchers, to understand their thoughts. We included some of the same questions we asked in last year's study, and compared this year's responses to 2023.

This will require more of everything—more accurate segmentation, personalized outreach, engaging content, interesting storytelling, and unique ways of connecting. Long-format videos are being rolled out to keep customers on sites longer while interest in new platforms, like Threads, combined with changes to Twitter, have the potential to change the ground rules of social media marketing. Every channel is important right now—social, websites, email—even old-school techniques, like sign-up forms, newsletters, and direct mail are getting dusted off.

Read on to learn about what marketers think about the state of marketing; their performance expectations, job security, competitive pressures, the trends and technologies they think matter—and what steps they've taken to adapt to this new era.

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Ask. Listen. Act.

**ONE**



# **Competitive pressure**

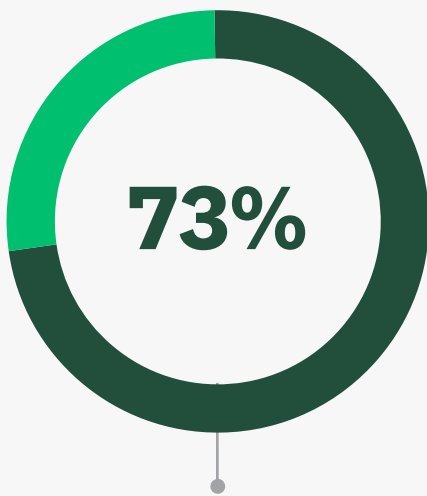
## Big goals drive marketers to perform

Getting through 2023 should feel like an accomplishment. Last year, marketers in many industries were facing a wave of layoffs and across-the-board downsizing. But, the market outperformed expectations last year in three key areas: economic growth, a resilient labor force, and a cooling of inflation. Things should feel rosy—but marketers are wary.

Increased performance expectations, a fast-moving market, and the need for better insights is creating a pressure cooker for marketers.

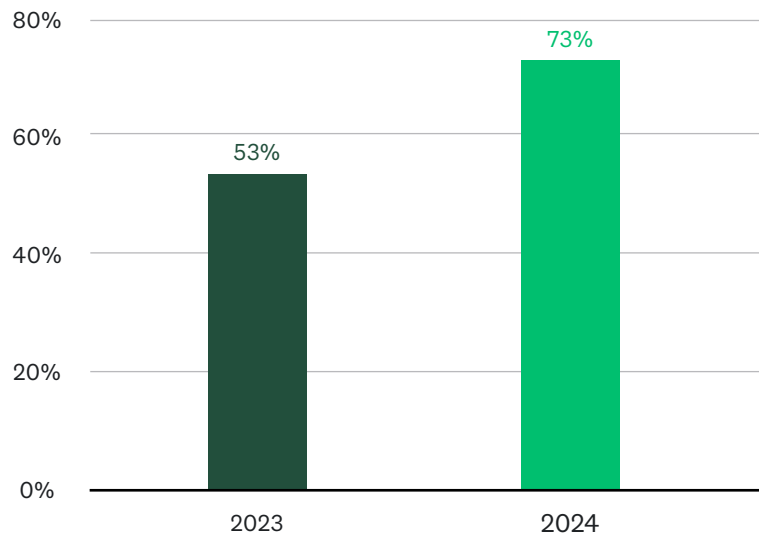
Three quarters (72%) of marketers say the market will move at a faster pace this year; this is even more true for marketers at larger companies with 1000+ customers vs. smaller companies with less than 1000 employees (84% vs. 63%).

Competition is also a big concern. When we asked them last year, a little over half, or 53%, of marketers said their company was experiencing more competition. For 2024, three out of four marketers expect competition to heat up.



of marketers expect to face more competition in 2024, a 19 point increase over last year\*

### Marketers face more competition this year



Marketers who believe they are facing more competition are likely to be from larger vs. smaller companies (81% vs. 69%). They also tend to be more optimistic than pessimistic about their industry (74% vs. 55%), expect changes to happen at a faster rather than slower rate (81% vs. 49%), and prefer the flexibility to do things differently rather than sticking with tried-and-true practices (78% vs. 64%). In other words, they are aware of the challenges—and prepared to take action with new approaches.

Marketers who are prepared for competition also...

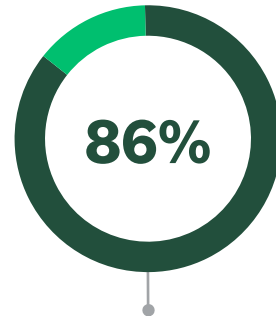


## Marketing teams are pushed to deliver

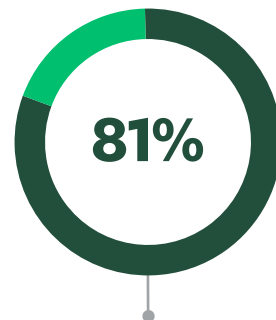
As market pressures increase, so do performance expectations. Almost nine out of ten marketers report their teams are being asked to do more this year.

Marketers at large companies expect a bigger boost in performance goals, with 36% of these marketers saying expectations will increase a lot, compared to 24% of marketers at smaller companies.

Just when marketers need to be at the top of their game, concerns about job security have surged. The layoffs and hiring slowdown of 2023 are top of mind—eight out of ten marketers are concerned about job security this year, and over a third (35%) are very concerned.



of marketers expect their team's performance expectations to increase in 2024, up 7 points from 2023



of marketers are concerned about their job security in 2024, up from 53% in 2023, a 28 point increase year over year

## Data is more important than ever

If 2024 is a year of change, then that change is going to be driven by data. Last year, about eight out of ten marketers said their companies relied on data for decisions.

That number has risen to over 92% for 2024, an increase of 11 points over 2023. Almost a third of

marketers believe that data will fully determine their business decisions this year, an increase of 11 points. Conversely, only 7% of marketers say that data does not influence their decisions, a decrease of 11 points from 2023.



# What best describes the role of data in your company’s business decisions?

	2023	2024	Year over year change
Data fully determines business decisions	26%	30%	+3
Data helps with business decision-making	54%	62%	+8
Data inspires ideas, but does not influence business decisions	18%	7%	-11

Companies have identified lofty goals for 2024 that center on data insights. Over half of marketers (55%) say their companies are prioritizing more personalized marketing experiences this year, the number one response. Expanding their use of insights and adopting AI are also top priorities that will ultimately support the need for more data.

## What are your company’s top goals for 2024?



Larger organizations are more focused on expanding the use of data and insights. In our study, 54% of marketers at larger companies said they would expand their use of data and insights compared to 37% of marketers at smaller companies. In addition, marketers who

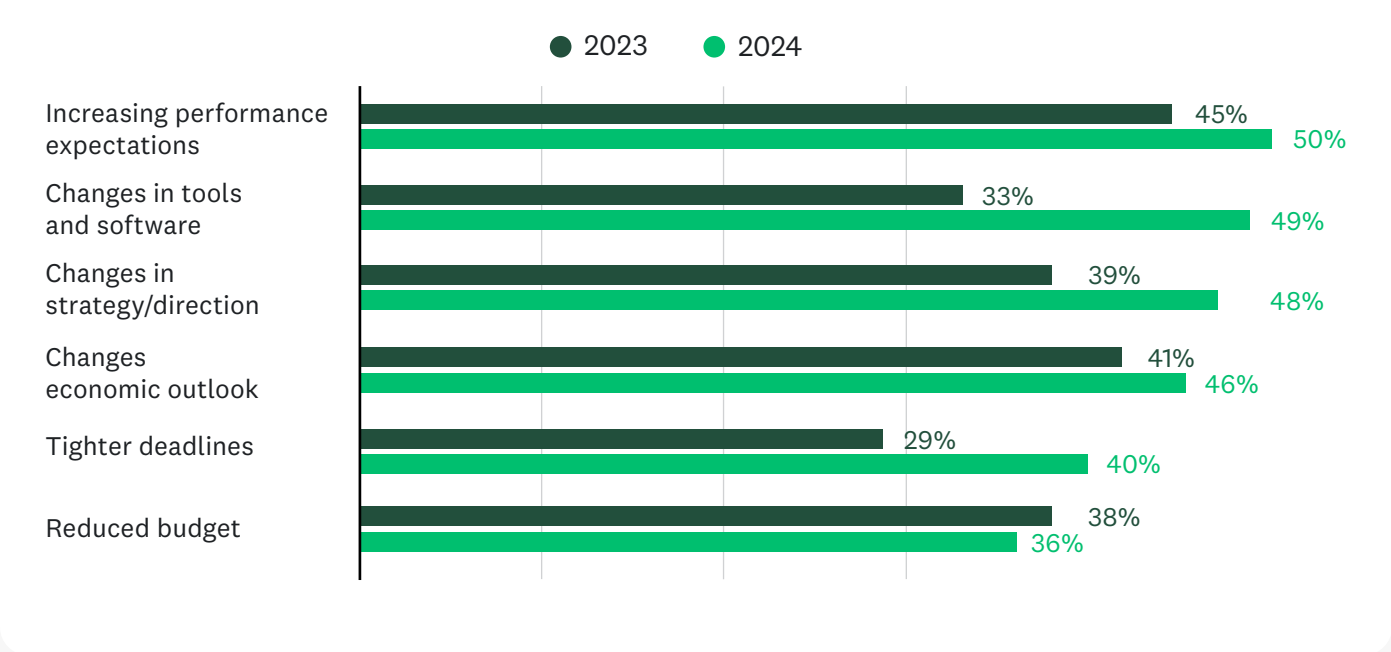
are optimistic about their industry’s direction are more likely to expand their use of data, with 47% of marketers with an optimistic outlook saying insights were a priority vs. 28% of those who are pessimistic.

## Tight deadlines and strategic changes challenge marketers

Marketing challenges reflect what’s going on in the macro environment. While performance expectations top the list, the biggest change for marketers this year will be changes to solutions and tools, and shifts in strategy and direction. Wrap all of this in tighter timeframes and marketers likely feel they are building the plane while it takes off.

Half (49%) of marketers listed changes in software and tools as the top challenges, which came in second behind increased performance expectations. Compared to last year, this represents a 15 point increase over 2023, when only 33% of marketers listed new tools as a challenge.

Top challenges facing marketers 2023 - 2024



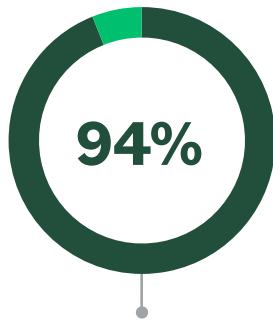


**TWO**

**The  
gamechangers**

## Reimagining how marketing gets done

Despite the challenges, marketers are pretty positive about 2024. In our study, more than nine out of ten (94%) of marketers are optimistic about where their industry is headed in 2024, an increase of 7 points over last year. About two-thirds (64%) of marketers feel they are able to make decisions; a 6 point increase over last year.

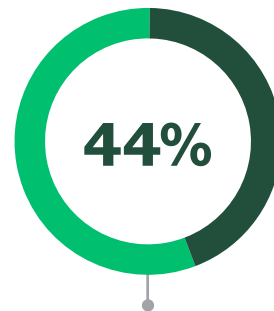


of marketers are optimistic  
about where their industry is  
headed this year

Change is coming but marketers appear to be ready for it. This is the year that established practices will give way to a new way of working. Almost half (48%) of marketers say that changes in strategy will be one of their top challenges. And those changes are already happening in the way they do their jobs on a daily basis.

Taking advantage of any new approach requires a learning curve; in this case, marketing teams will have to adapt to new tools and resources. These changes come with risk—and according to our study, just over half (53%) of marketers say their company will take risks this year, a 3-point decrease from 2023.

The challenge will be to reap the benefits of new tools and solutions in time to meet aggressive goals, while carefully phasing out the old way of doing business. Just under half (44%) of marketers agree that access to tools and resources is the most important factor to the success of their jobs—the top response. Access to tools tied with access to data and insights, which 43% marketers cited as the most important factor.



of marketers say access to tools  
and resources is the most important  
factor to the success of their job

## Marketers rank what's most important to their success



## AI is here and making an impact

AI presents both challenges and opportunities for marketers. On the upside, AI promises to speed up key tasks and improve data accuracy. Conversely, it introduces questions of authenticity and fears of replacing human tasks with bot automation. It's hard to predict where the benefits will outweigh the fears, but for now, marketers seem open to change.

Many marketers have already jumped on board the AI train. From harnessing AI to generate content, images, or social posts, to tapping into AI-driven analytics in existing systems, there is broad awareness that AI is already making things more efficient, and campaigns and programs more effective.

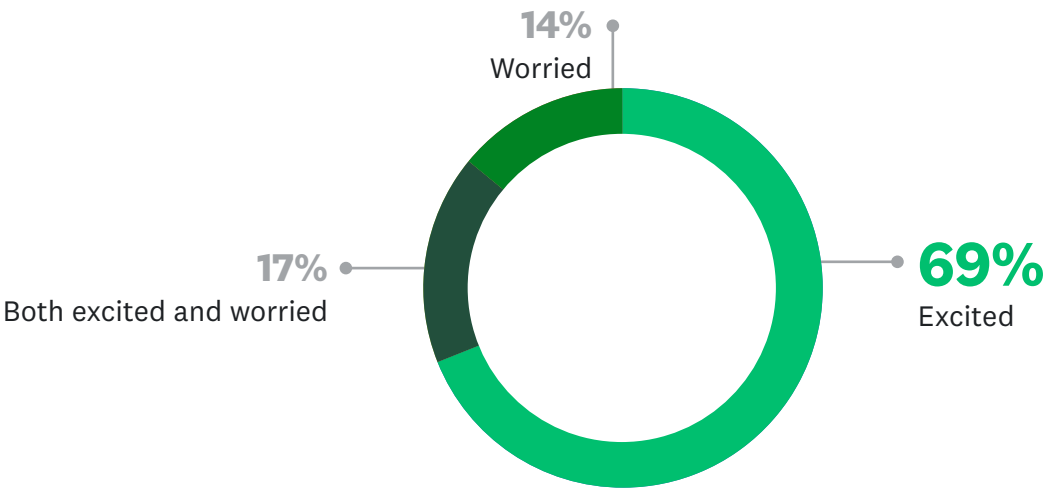
The large majority of marketers are excited about AI and its impact on their jobs: 69% are excited, compared to only 14% who say they are worried, and 17% report a mixture of both excitement and worry.



**Over two thirds** of marketers are excited about AI and the impact it will have on their job

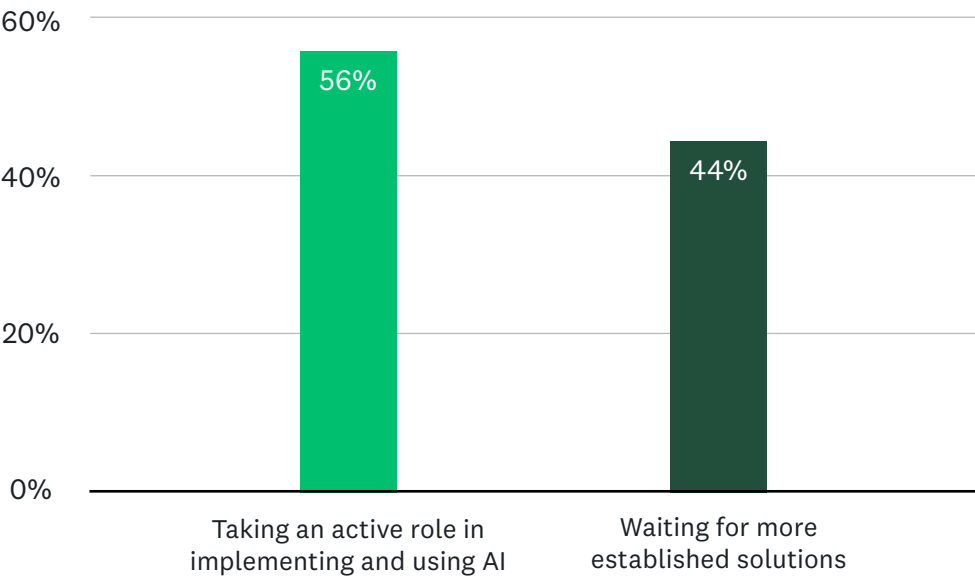
This is especially true at large companies—84% of marketers at companies with 1000+ employees are excited compared to only 57% of marketers at smaller companies.

# Which best describes how you feel about AI and its impact on your job?



Companies are split on whether they are jumping in on today’s emerging AI solutions or waiting for more established offerings.

# How would you describe your company’s approach in deploying AI?

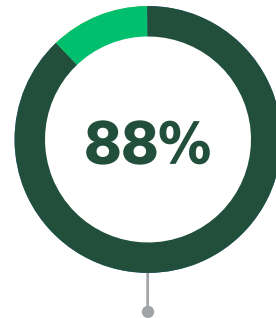


Marketers who plan to use AI share some similar characteristics. Those at larger companies plan on expanding their use of AI this year; with 57% of marketers at companies with 1000+ employees saying they would use AI more in 2024 compared to 40% of marketers at companies with under 999 employees.

In addition, marketers who are positive about their industry's direction are over twice as likely to say their company will increase the adoption of AI, with 50% of optimists giving the technology a thumbs up vs. 24% of pessimists. Optimistic marketers are also more likely to believe AI will become more important over time, with 72% saying AI will play a larger role over the next 5 years compared to 45% of pessimistic marketers.

In terms of current usage, one in three marketers (34%) say they rely 'a great deal' on AI software and tools in their current role, while half (54%) say they are 'somewhat' reliant on the technology. Only one in ten (12%) say they rely on AI 'not too much' or 'not at all.'

There's a good reason for this widespread acceptance. According to our study, nine out of ten marketers believe AI has helped them in critical areas—from making better decisions to generating content faster and revealing meaningful insights in data, quickly.

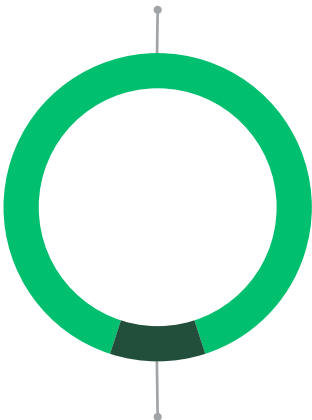


of marketers say they rely on  
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# Where AI makes an impact for marketers

Faster decision making

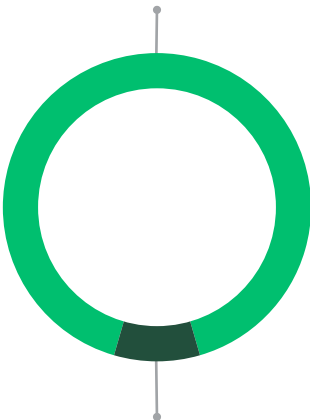
90%  
A great deal/somewhat



10%  
Not too much/  
not at all

Generate content faster

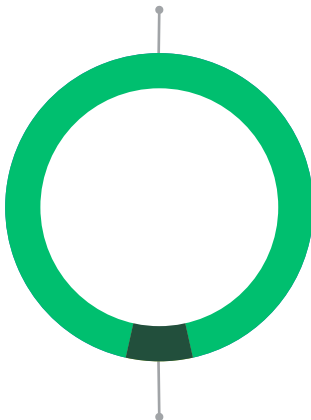
93%  
A great deal/somewhat



7%  
Not too much/  
not at all

Uncover insights more quickly

91%  
A great deal/somewhat

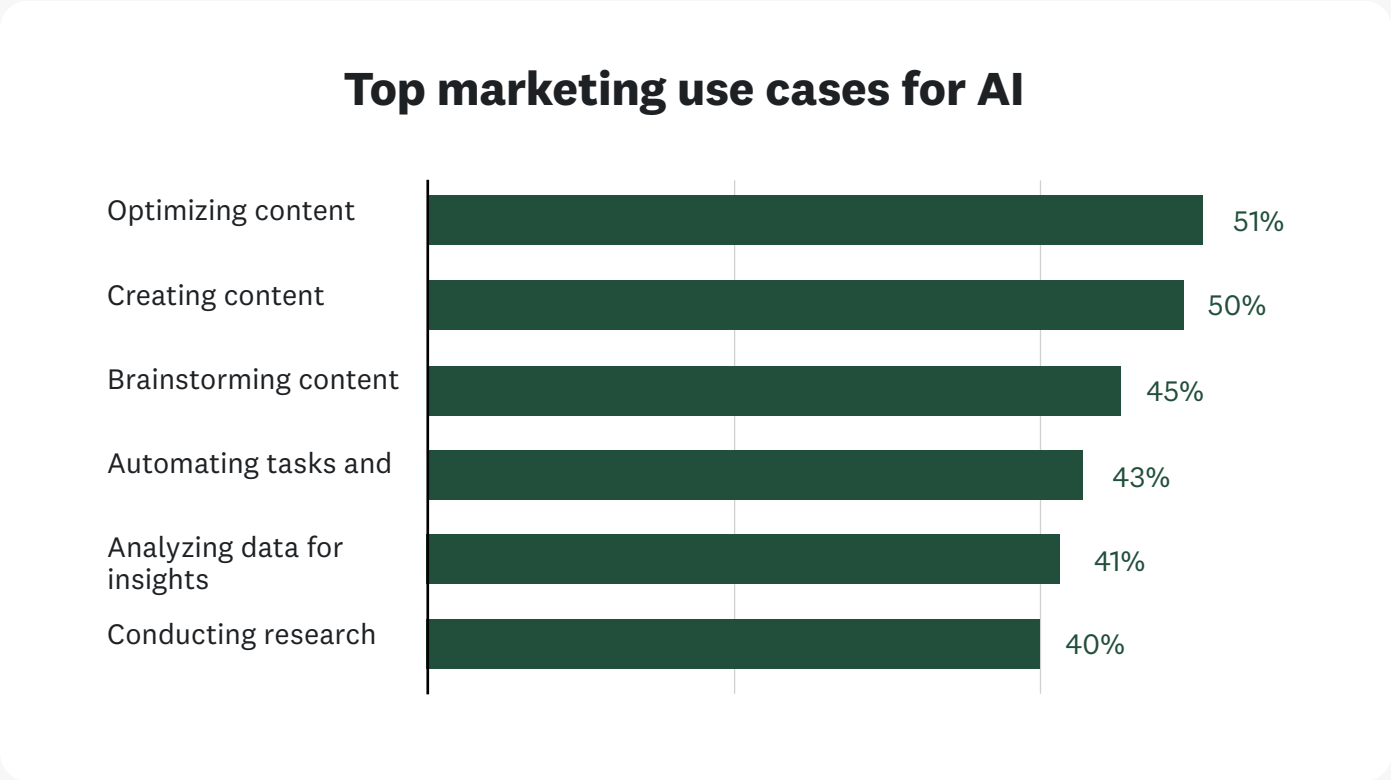


9%  
Not too much/  
not at all



# How marketers are using AI

Where will AI be used? According to marketers, everywhere. From generating content, like blog posts, slides, or social media, to optimizing SEO and email campaigns; around half of marketers are looking forward to applying AI to all use cases we asked about.



**One noteworthy stat:** marketers who are concerned about job security are less likely to say they would use AI to generate content. Six out of 10 (59%) of marketers who are not concerned about job security said they would use AI to create content, vs. only 47% of marketers who are concerned about job security.

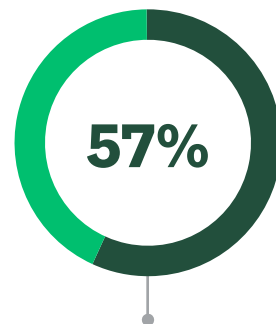
## Anti-tracking policies drive new ways of reaching customers

The elimination of third-party cookies will fundamentally shift how data is collected and shared, presenting a lot of changes for marketers. First-party data is now king, meaning that most companies will need to collect data from visitors for now, instead of relying on third-party data collected on other websites.

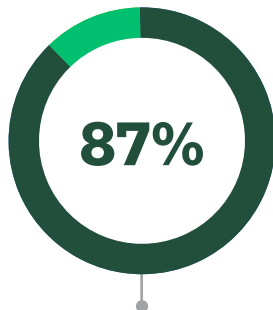
Marketers will have to focus their efforts on finding new ways to connect with users to get these valuable insights. They will have to do a better job of targeting their audience, segmenting users to understand their unique preferences, and encouraging connections with more personalized engagement. Sign-up forms, gated content, email, sales outreach, direct mail—many old-school marketing techniques are being considered to fill the gap in collecting data.

Almost nine out of ten marketers express some level of concern over the elimination of third-party cookies when it comes to reaching and understanding customers. More than half (57%) say the elimination of third-party cookies will have a major impact on their company's ability to target and understand customers.

All of this happens as companies are prioritizing more personalized marketing activities. That means not only do marketers have to reach their goals, they have to do so while dealing with a loss of data and insights they would normally rely on. Over nine out of ten (92%) of marketers believe the elimination of cookies will have some impact on their ability to target and understand customers, and over half say it will have a major impact.

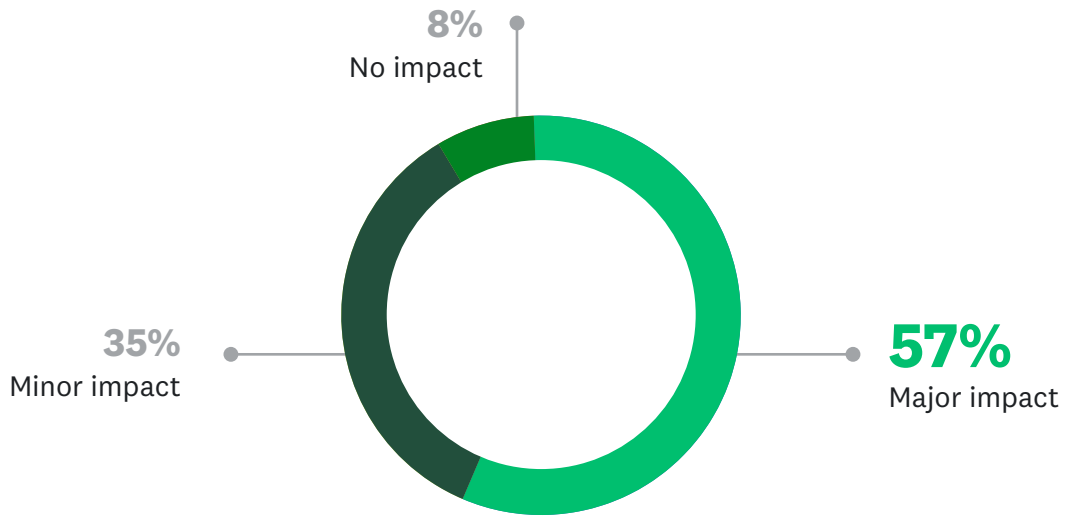


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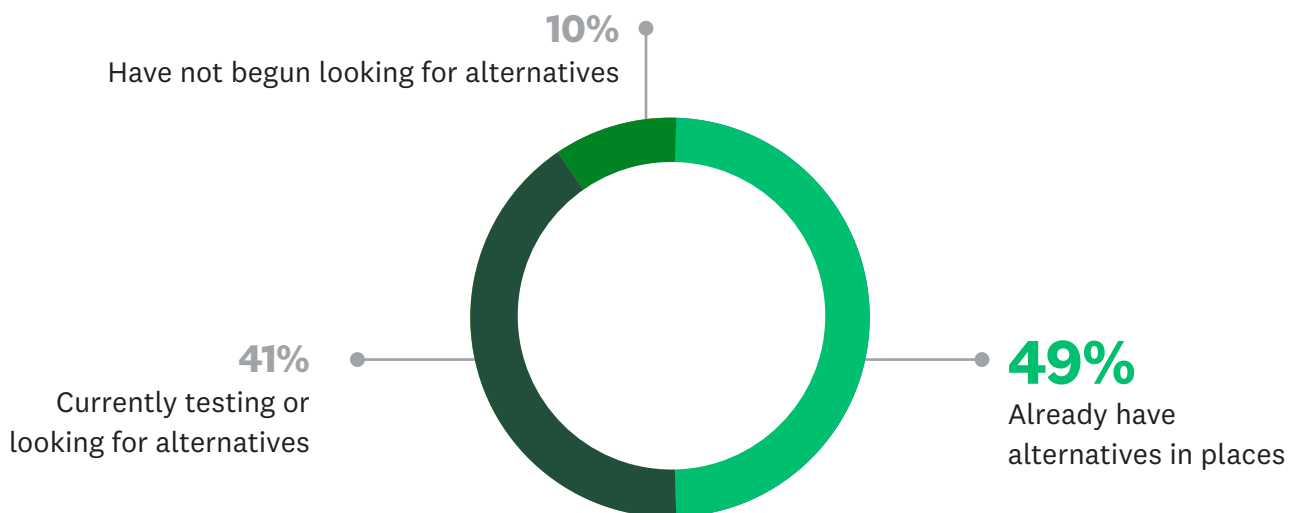
of marketers are concerned about the elimination of third-party cookies

## Impact of eliminating third-party cookies



But, new alternatives are in the works. Companies are split on whether they are using new methods or are testing options, but at least half have already put alternatives to third-party cookies in place.

## Companies respond to the elimination of third-party cookies



Large businesses have been more proactive about adapting to a cookie-less world: 61% of large companies with 1000+ employees have cookie alternatives in place compared to 42% of smaller companies. Only 5% of large companies say they haven't started looking for alternatives.

Despite concerns, marketers are cautiously optimistic about pivoting toward an increased focus on consumer privacy. Two in three (66%) say the increased scrutiny on customer privacy can be used as a marketing advantage, while the rest (34%) are more concerned about reaching customers.



**THREE**

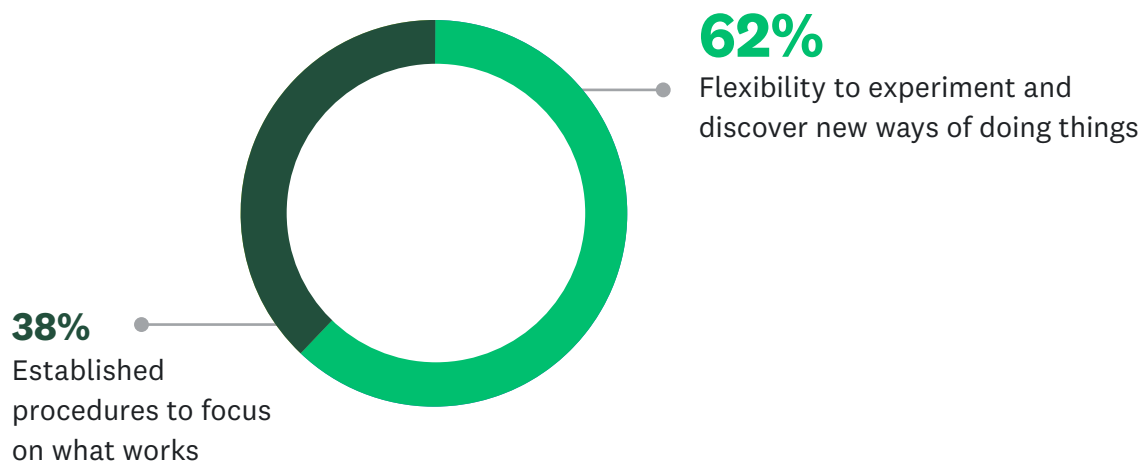
# **The table stakes**

## Every channel and interaction matters

Everything matters in this new era of marketing. Collecting data will become critical to all programs, creating a shift in the way content and interactions are handled.

Maybe it's the need to meet their goals and address market changes, but marketers appear to be open to a change in how things get done. In our study, marketers said they valued experimentation and new ways of doing things over following established rules by close to two to one.

### Which do you value more at your job?



## Multichannel marketing and personalization are top trends

Multichannel marketing is not a new idea, but it has a new focus. Today's multichannel marketing strategies are designed for a digital world, with the goal of collecting data on customers from a wide variety of sources.

Over half (55%) of marketers say they currently reach customers through multiple channels. That percentage is likely to go up as marketers recognize that every channel presents an opportunity to add to first-party data by capturing insights on customer behavior and preferences.

Four out of ten marketers (42%) say they will rely on first-party data to understand customers, an

important step in delivering a more personalized experience. In our study, 59% of marketers say their company's marketing efforts are mostly personalized, while 37% say they are somewhat personalized. Clearly there is room for improvement, but marketers have plans to get better at this part of their job.

Gated content is making a comeback—almost half (49%) of marketers will require customer information before providing access to certain content. Further, 43% say they rely on individual or personal outreach to customers.

## Social media and new content formats will be crucial tools

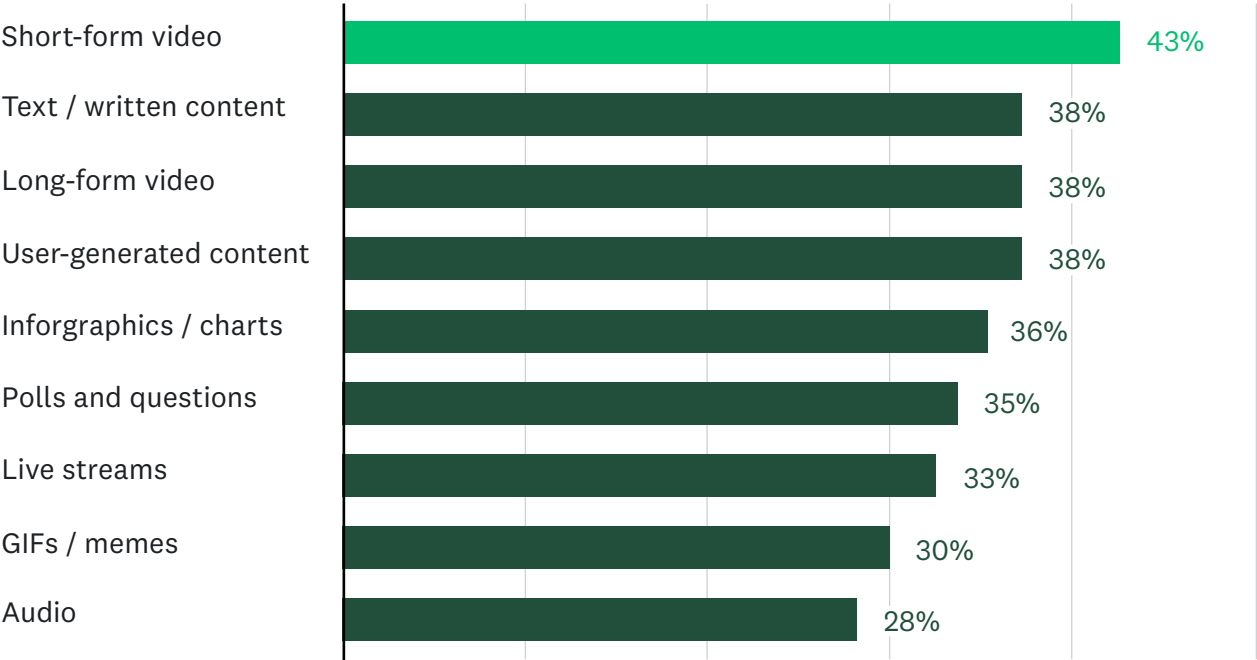
Social media has become a mainstream channel over the last few years, with both B2B and consumer companies harnessing the power of Facebook, Instagram, X, and LinkedIn to reach customers and prospects.

However, the goal of social media efforts has changed over time. Today, marketers aim to boost engagement by using new forms of content. Long-form videos are supplementing the short, attention-getting clips that have made social media

so engaging. TikTok started with 15-second clips which grew to 30-seconds and then longer; today the company is experimenting with 15-minute video uploads.

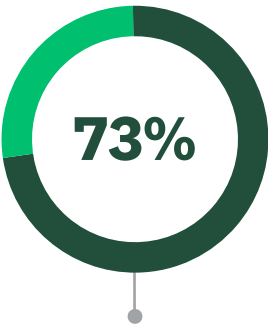
But that's not the only type of content that will resonate. Short-form video still reigns as the leading type of social media content for marketers in 2024.

## Social media content formats in 2024



Social media is also where marketers can make big inroads with personalization. The opportunities for 1-1 interactions is a natural fit for customized content and offerings, and micro influencers—those who have between 10,000 and 100,000 followers—can give companies a tool for reaching users with a hyper-personalized messaging.

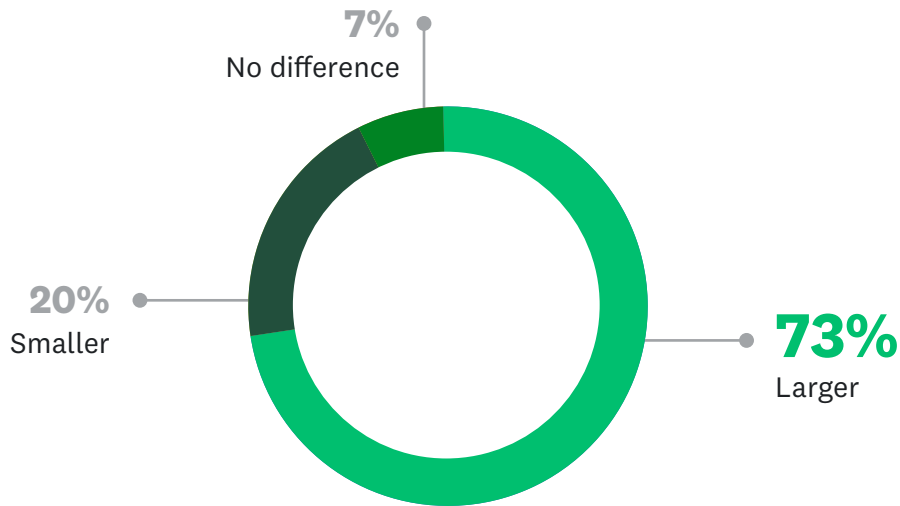
Our study found that social media is on the rise for marketers. Almost three in four marketers (73%) say they will increase their use of social media in their marketing campaigns this year.



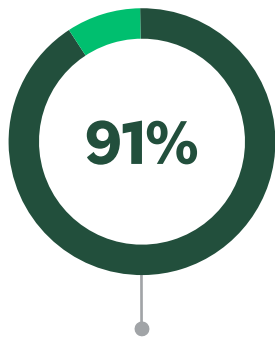
of marketers say social media will play a larger role in their company’s market efforts in 2024



## Will social media play a larger or smaller role in your company's marketing efforts this year?

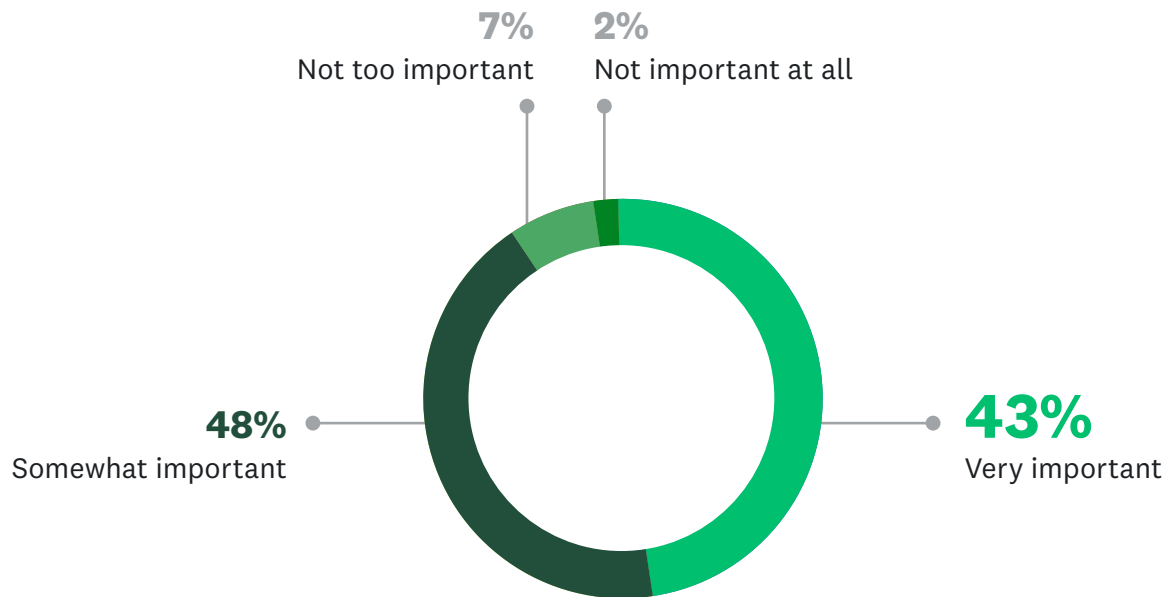


AI will increasingly be used in social media, providing in-the-moment insights about the interests and needs of a target audience—a key pain point for marketers. In our study, almost half (47%) of marketers said that one of their biggest challenges was understanding changing target marketing needs.



91% of marketers say AI is important to their company's social media strategy this year

## How important is AI to your company's social media strategy for the upcoming year?



AI will be able to identify trending topics, giving marketers a heads up on what kind of content will resonate. AI will also help create posts and images, automate tedious tasks, moderate comments, and address survey user experiences that need attention.



**FOUR**

**What you  
can do**

# What you can do: ask, listen, act.

Marketing teams can tap into feedback to drive more accurate targeting and personalized experiences, produce more engaging content, and find new ways to connect with customers and prospects.



## Have the courage to ask

Gather feedback with the intention of challenging current assumptions. Get started quickly by [harnessing AI](#) to create a study that collects the optimal data. Collect [feedback on your ideas](#) with a quick study that helps you focus on what has the best chance of working. Test your [messaging](#), [ads](#), and campaigns with a [concept testing study](#) that provides benchmarks of how you will stack up against competitors. Collect feedback on [events](#), new content, or [products](#) and put it to work in your next marketing effort.



## Listen with care

Once you dare to ask the tough questions, be open to feedback. Give prospects and customers an opportunity to provide feedback regularly with follow up communications and surveys. Consider adding a transactional NPS survey on your outreach efforts to get a quick understanding of how customers felt about the content or engagements. Use [advanced analytics](#) to dive deep into data and uncover insights that will help you identify the what will land with your customers. [Securely share your data](#) with stakeholders, [integrate survey feedback into the apps](#) you use everyday, and use [advanced visualizations](#) to make a case for your point of view.



## Take action and transform your business

Be open to changing things up and take action on your your findings. Connect feedback with data from other sources—like your CRM or analytics platform—using [business tools](#) that offer richer insights.

## Get the insights you need to ask, listen, and act

Find out how to deliver marketing programs that succeed in a changing marketplace by starting with feedback.

[Get started](#)



Methodology: <sup>1</sup> This SurveyMonkey study was conducted on January 8-18, 2024 among a sample of 707 US workers, including 507 marketers and 200 market researchers. Respondents for this survey were selected from the more than 2 million people who take surveys on our platform each day.

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