



2019 Trends in Personalization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To help organizations better understand the prevailing attitudes, key benefits, current usage and future plans related to personalization, Evergage and Researchscape International surveyed 314 marketing professionals across industries and countries, although predominantly in the U.S. The online survey was fielded from February 21 to March 21, 2019. Additional details about the survey respondents can be found in the firmographics section of the report.

Marketers overwhelmingly agree (98%) that personalization helps advance customer relationships, with 70% claiming it has a “strong” or “extremely strong” impact. And 85% state that their customers and prospects expect a personalized experience. When asked what drives personalization within their own organizations, marketers cite delivering better customer experiences (88%), increasing loyalty (59%) and generating measurable lift/ROI (50%) as top motivating factors.

Email remains the most personalized channel (78%) this year, followed by website (58%), in-person (42%), online advertising (35%), mobile app (28%) and web application (19%).

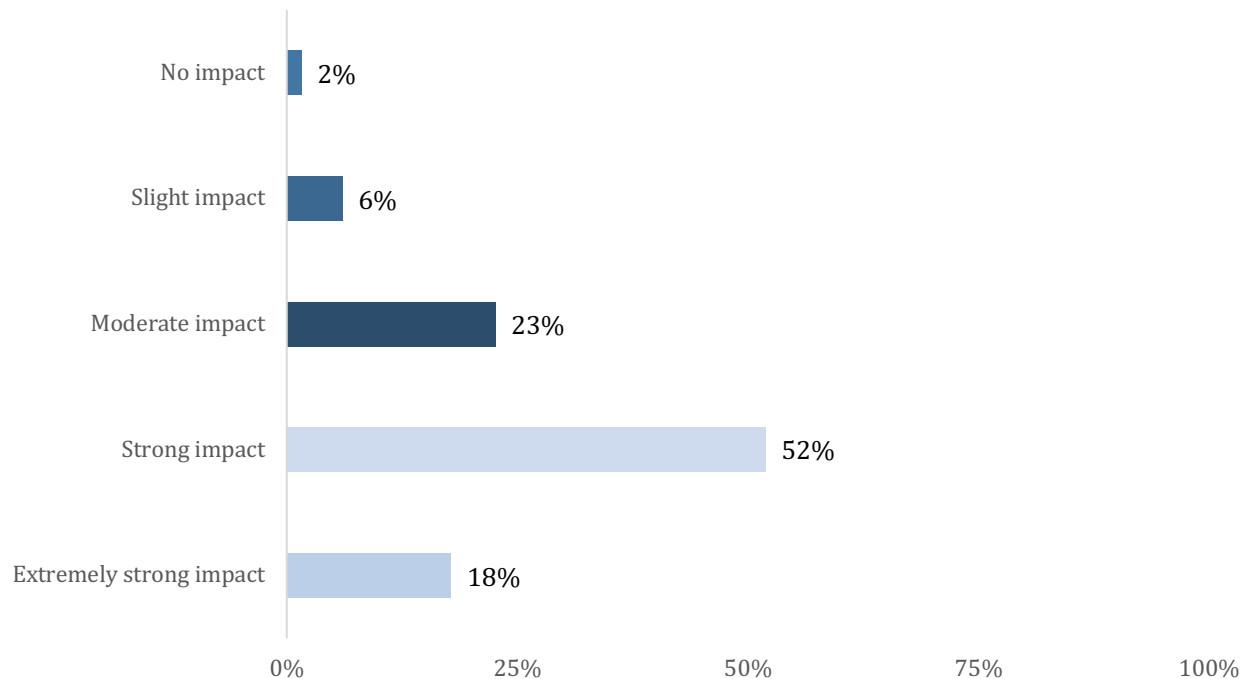
While marketers are certainly dealing with some challenges pertaining to personalization (only 16% are “very” or “extremely” satisfied with the level of personalization in their marketing efforts), they are becoming more sophisticated in their approach. Usage of machine learning/algorithmic personalization is up from 26% last year to 40% this year. The use of emails triggered based on a person’s on-site behavior is up from 35% last year to 45% this year. And cross-channel connections have improved: the percentage of marketers who say their company has “no channels connected” declined from 27% to 21%, while the percentage of those who say they have “a few channels connected” rose from 46% to 53%.

Importantly, marketers continue to see results from personalization. The majority (90%) report a measurable lift from their personalization efforts. More than half (58%) experience a lift of more than 10%, while 15% report a lift of over 30%. This success is translating to continued support and investment. The vast majority of organizations (97%) plan to maintain or increase their personalization budgets this year, with 48% saying they plan to increase their investments (up 11 points from 37% last year). In addition, three quarters of respondents (74%) believe personalization should be a bigger priority in their organization than it is currently.

ATTITUDES TOWARD PERSONALIZATION

The vast majority of marketers (98%) believe that personalization has at least some impact on advancing customer relationships, while 7 in 10 (70%) believe personalization has a “strong” or “extremely strong” impact on advancing customer relationships.

What is the impact, if any, of personalization on advancing customer relationships?



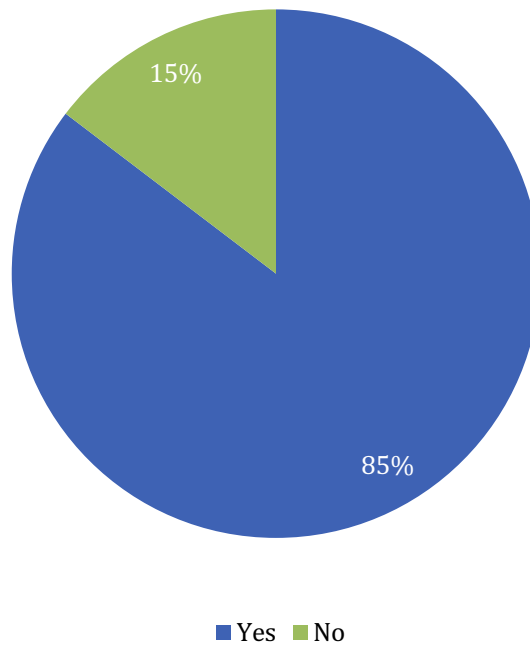
Sample Size: 314 (All Respondents)

Total does not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Among marketers who employ machine learning (which this report will cover in more depth later on), 78% described personalization’s impact on customer relationships as “strong” or “extremely strong.”

Additionally, the majority of marketers (85%) think their prospects or customers *expect* a personalized experience.

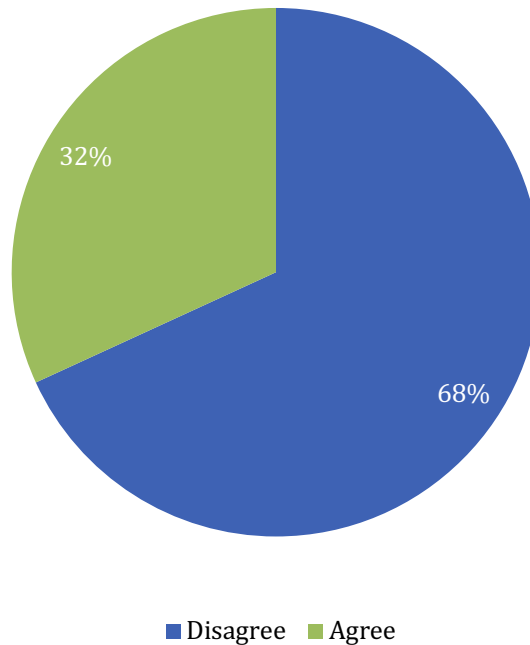
Do you think your prospects/customers expect a personalized experience?



Sample Size: 314 (All Respondents)

However, marketers don't feel that the industry is delivering personalization to customers as effectively as it should just yet. Only 32% believe that the marketers are currently getting personalization right.

Would you agree or disagree with the following statement: Marketers are getting personalization right.



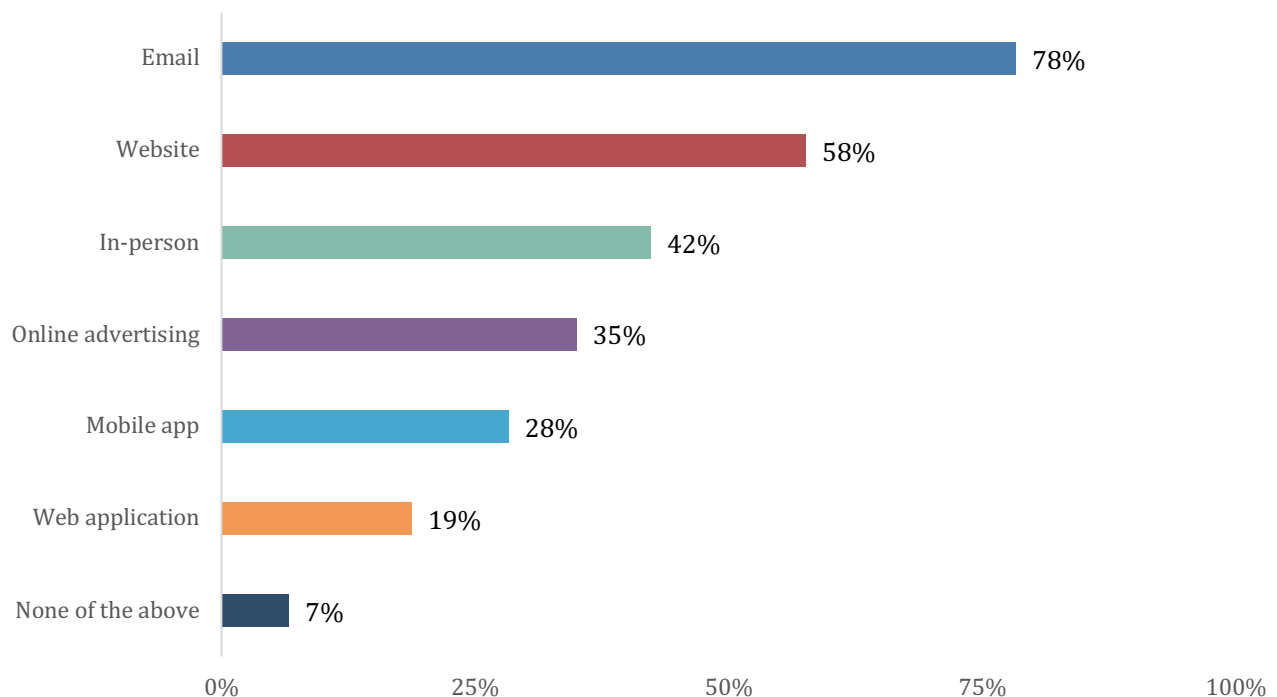
Sample Size: 314 (All Respondents)

PERSONALIZATION USAGE & SATISFACTION

Just over three quarters of marketers (78%) use personalization in their emails, making it the most popular digital channel for personalization. Six out of ten (58%) use personalization on their websites, while four out of ten (42%) use it for in-person experiences.

Personalization in online advertising (35%), mobile apps (28%), and web applications (19%) is less frequent.

In which of the following digital channels are you using personalization?



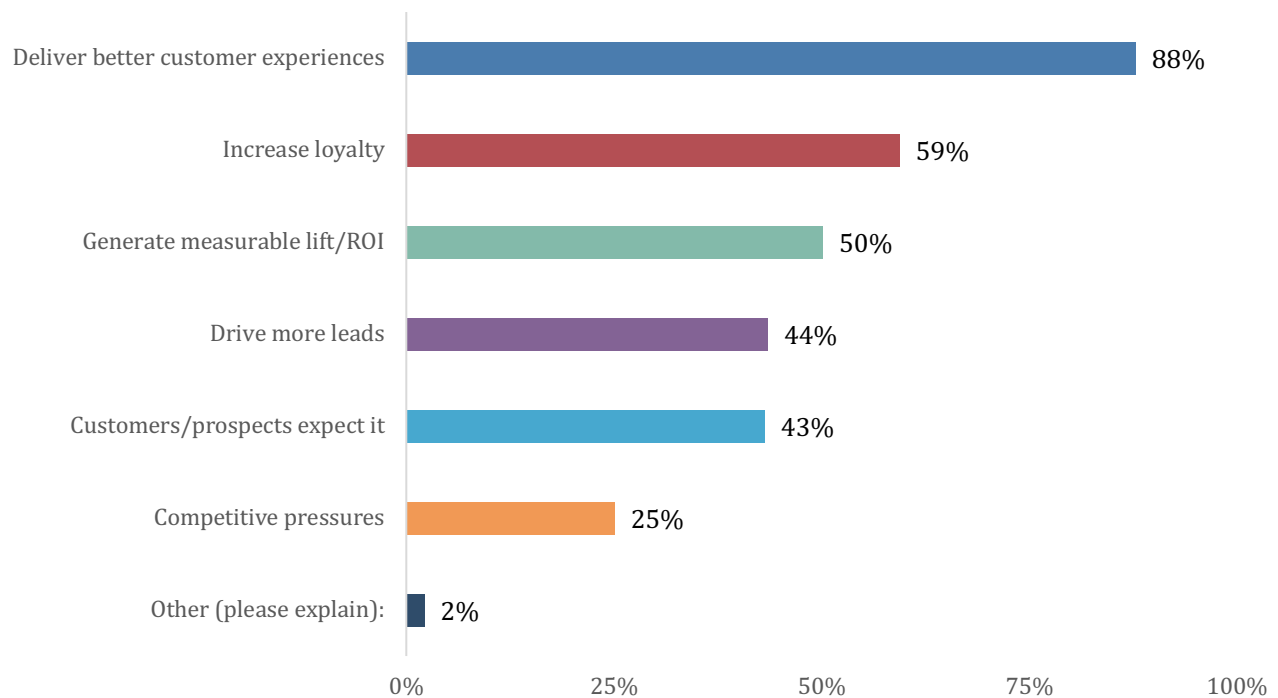
Sample Size: 314 (All Respondents)

Respondents could select multiple options

The main reason businesses leverage personalization is to deliver better customer experiences (88%). Increasing loyalty (59%), generating measurable lift/ROI (50%), and driving more leads (44%) are also top drivers for organizations.

Also noteworthy is that while 85% of companies acknowledge customers or prospects expect personalization, only about half as many (43%) are driven to implement it because of that expectation.

What are the drivers of personalization in your organization?

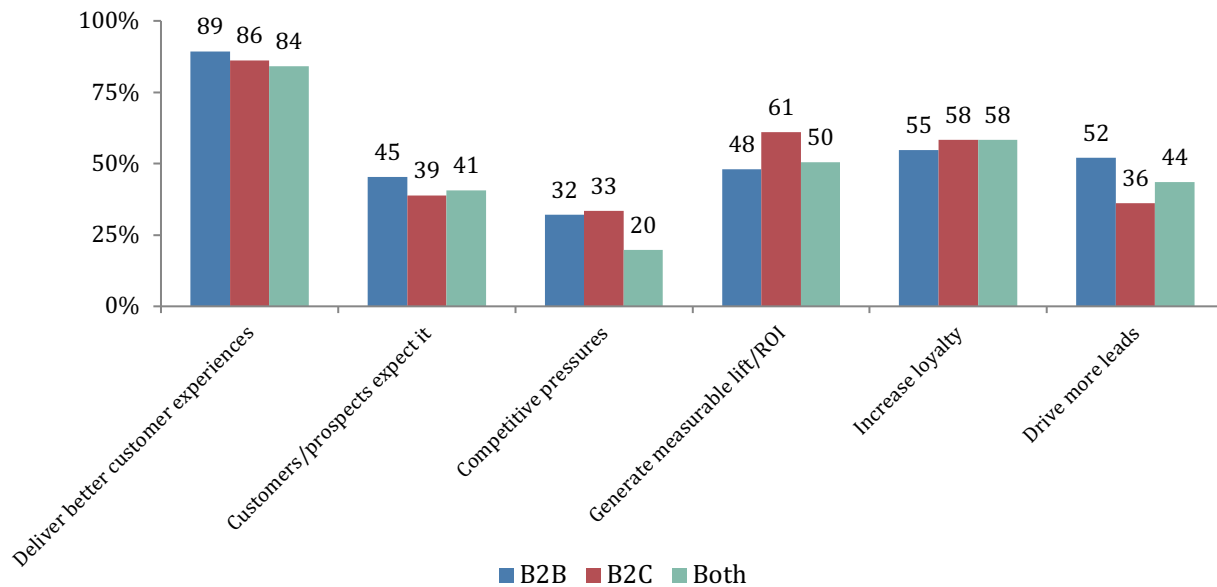


Sample Size: 271 (86% of Respondents)

Respondents could select multiple options

B2C companies are more driven to use personalization to generate measurable lift/ROI (61%) than B2B companies (48%) and hybrids (50%), which market to both consumers and businesses. B2B companies are more likely to use personalization to drive more leads (52% compared to 36% of B2Cs and 44% of hybrids).

Crosstab: What are the drivers of personalization in your organization?

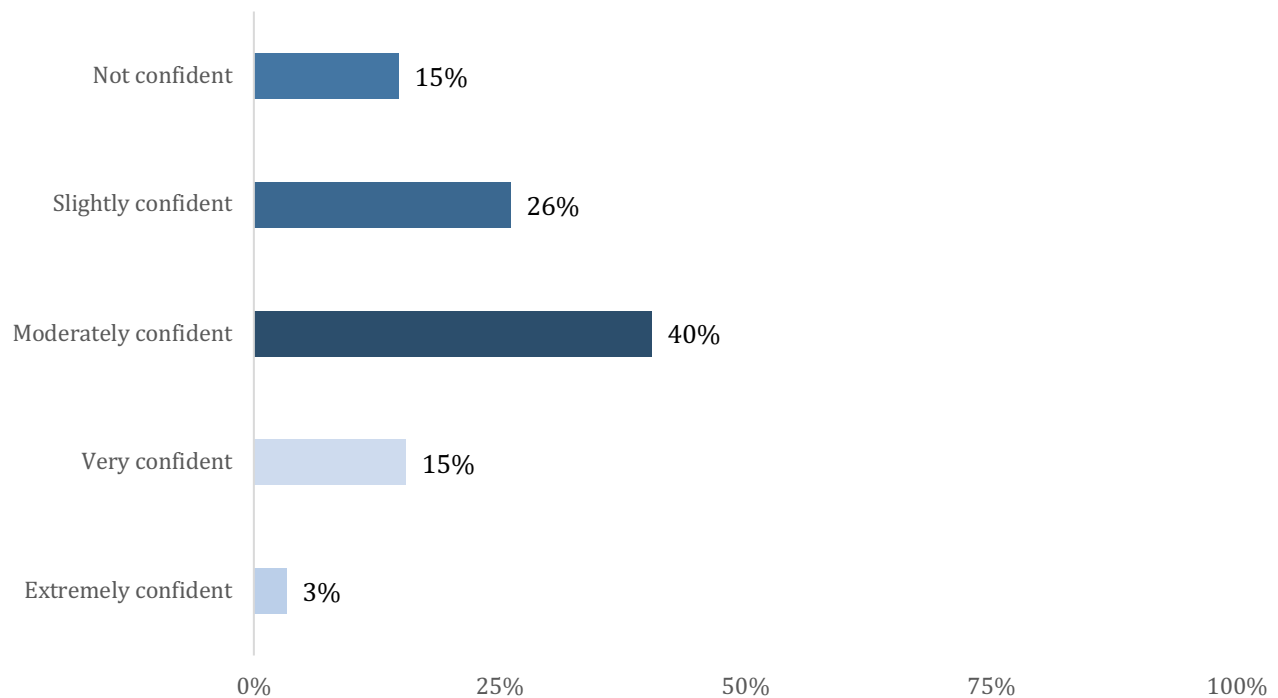


Sample Size: 271 (86% of Respondents)

Marketing professionals seem to lack confidence in their personalization strategies. Less than a fifth (18%) report they are very or extremely confident that they have a successful strategy for personalization.

Four in ten (40%) are moderately confident they have a successful strategy, while just as many (41%) have no or only slight confidence about their personalization plans.

How confident are you that you have a successful strategy for personalization?



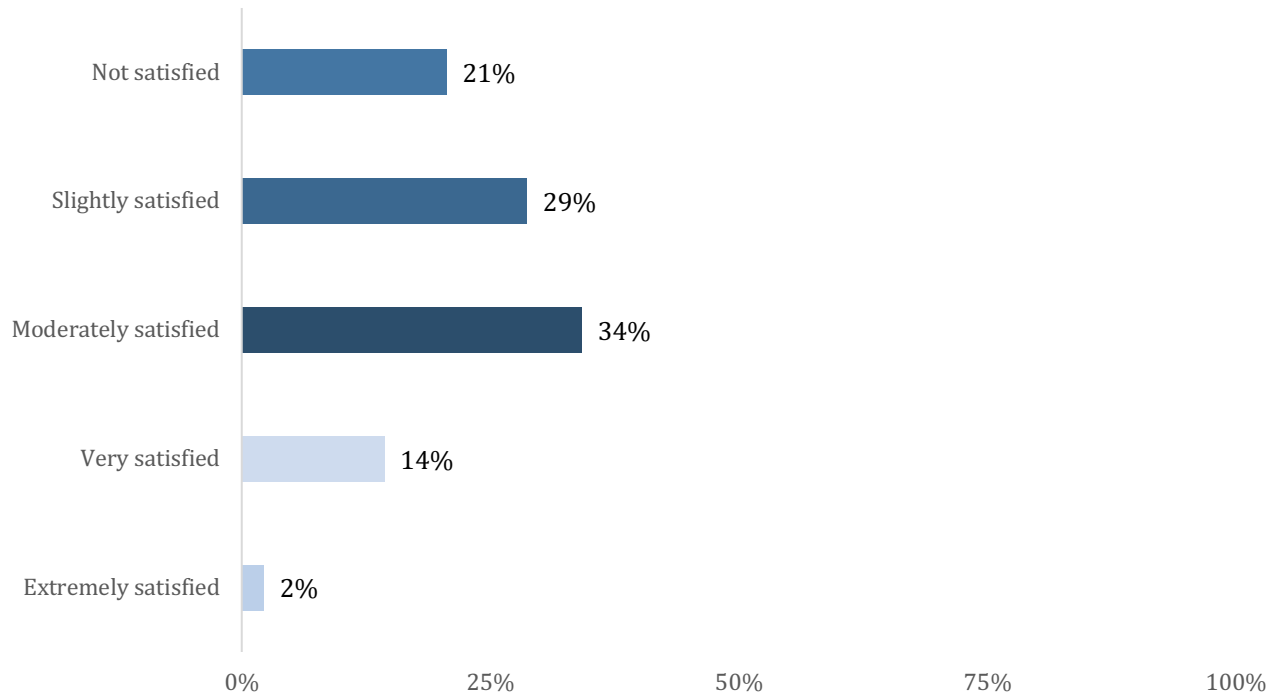
Sample Size: 272 (87% of Respondents)

Total does not add up to 100% due to rounding.

When looking to marketers' satisfaction levels with the level of personalization in their marketing efforts, just a sixth (16%) are very or extremely satisfied.

Half (50%) say they are not satisfied or only slightly satisfied, while a third (34%) say they are moderately satisfied.

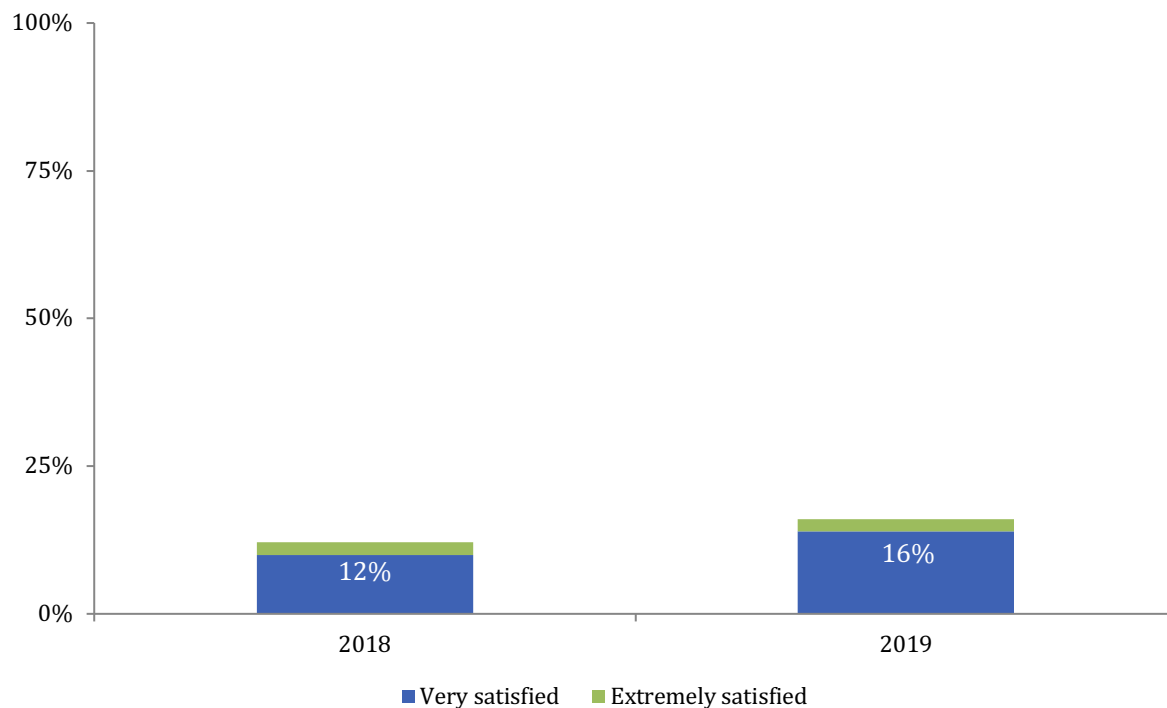
Overall, how satisfied are you with the level of personalization in your marketing efforts?



Sample Size: 272 (87% of Respondents)

However, satisfaction does seem to be trending upwards. The percentage of marketers who indicate they are very or extremely satisfied increased from 12% in 2018 to 16% in 2019.

Trend: Overall, how satisfied are you with the level of personalization in your marketing efforts?



Sample Size: 753 (70% of Respondents in 2018 + 2019)

Why are you not satisfied with the level of personalization in your marketing efforts?

Marketers cited various factors that impede their satisfaction with the level of personalization in their marketing efforts. Recurring themes included issues with data, personalization being siloed, limited resources, unpredictable customer expectations, and simply not maximizing personalization's potential.

One marketer responded by saying, "We don't use personalization to the fullest yet." Others described their relationship with personalization as still very new; one saying, "We are still at an early stage of our personalization journey." Additional feedback includes:

- “We are only scratching the service – we have so much personalization we should be integrating into our customer interactions, and we just can’t get to everything fast enough.”
- “We could be doing more, but there’s always a struggle with data that seems to hold us back.”
- “We aren’t doing enough and are not being thoughtful enough about user journeys and user needs as marketers. This is partly because of a lack of a combined marketing stack but also a lack of skillset.”
- “Trying to get the attention of the consumer is getting more and more difficult. What will make someone click on a digital ad?”

Key Driver Analysis

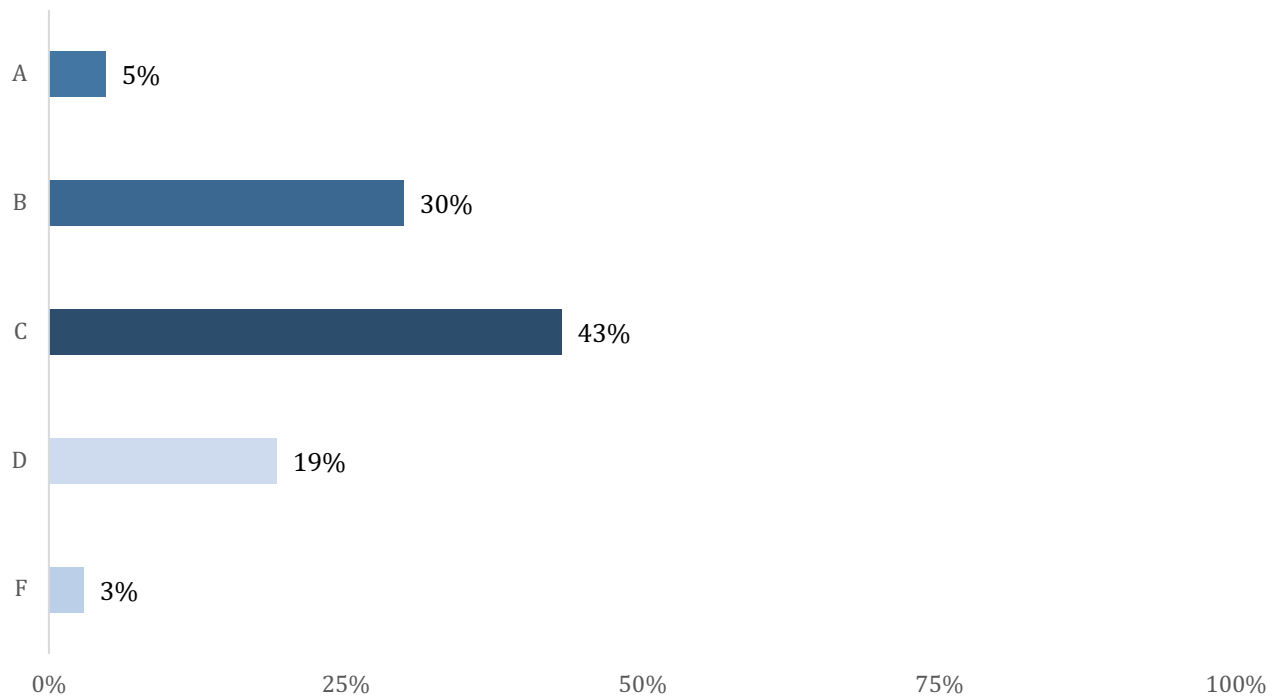
Drilling down into the question of how satisfied marketers are with their level of personalization, we see this is affected by the channel(s) being personalized. Marketers’ satisfaction with website personalization has the highest correlation to overall personalization satisfaction (52% of shared variance). In other words, the more satisfied marketers are with their website personalization, the more likely they are to be satisfied with their personalization efforts overall. Web is followed by email personalization (37% of shared variance) and web application personalization (35% of shared variance).

The closer the correlation is to 1.000, the greater the two measures correlate. However, the range is exponential, so a .900 correlation (and a -.900 correlation) means that 81% of the variance between the two measures is shared or overlaps, while a .800 correlation means that 64% of the variance does, and a .700 correlation means that 49% of the variance is shared.

Aspect	Shared Variance	Correlation
Website	52%	0.724
Email	37%	0.609
Web application	35%	0.594
Mobile app	31%	0.553
Online advertising	29%	0.542
In-person	11%	0.324

Further reflecting the sentiment that marketers feel they still have more work to do, when asked to grade their current personalization efforts, 4 in 10 respondents (43%) gave themselves a C, while only 5% graded themselves an A.

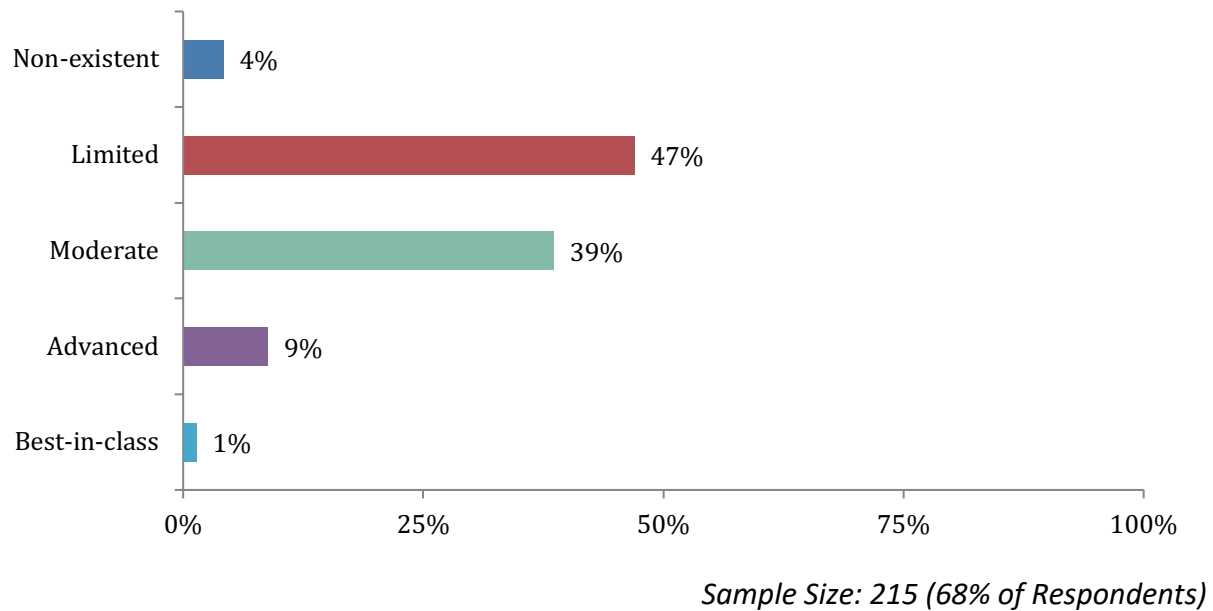
What grade would you give your current personalization efforts?



Sample Size: 271 (86% of Respondents)

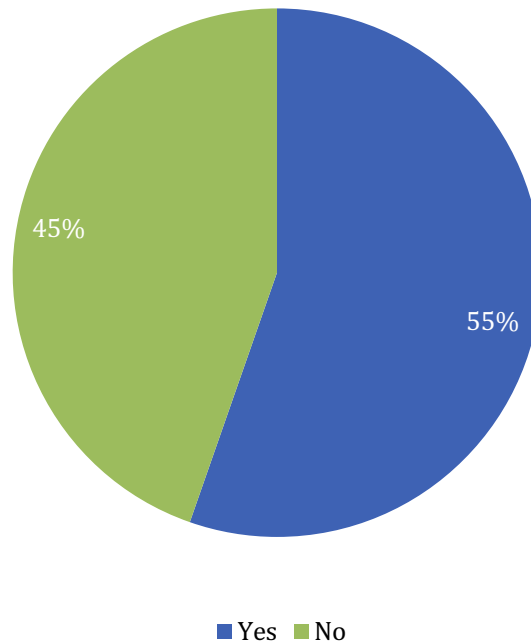
Most marketers think their organizations have plenty of room to grow in terms of personalization maturity: nearly half (47%) rated their organization's current stage as limited, while just 1 out of 10 (10%) felt theirs was advanced or best-in-class.

How would you rate your organization's personalization maturity?



Good data is essential for successful personalization. Bringing the right data sources together is a constant struggle for marketers across industries. Reflecting this challenge, nearly half of marketers (45%) feel they don't have sufficient data and insights to drive effective personalization.

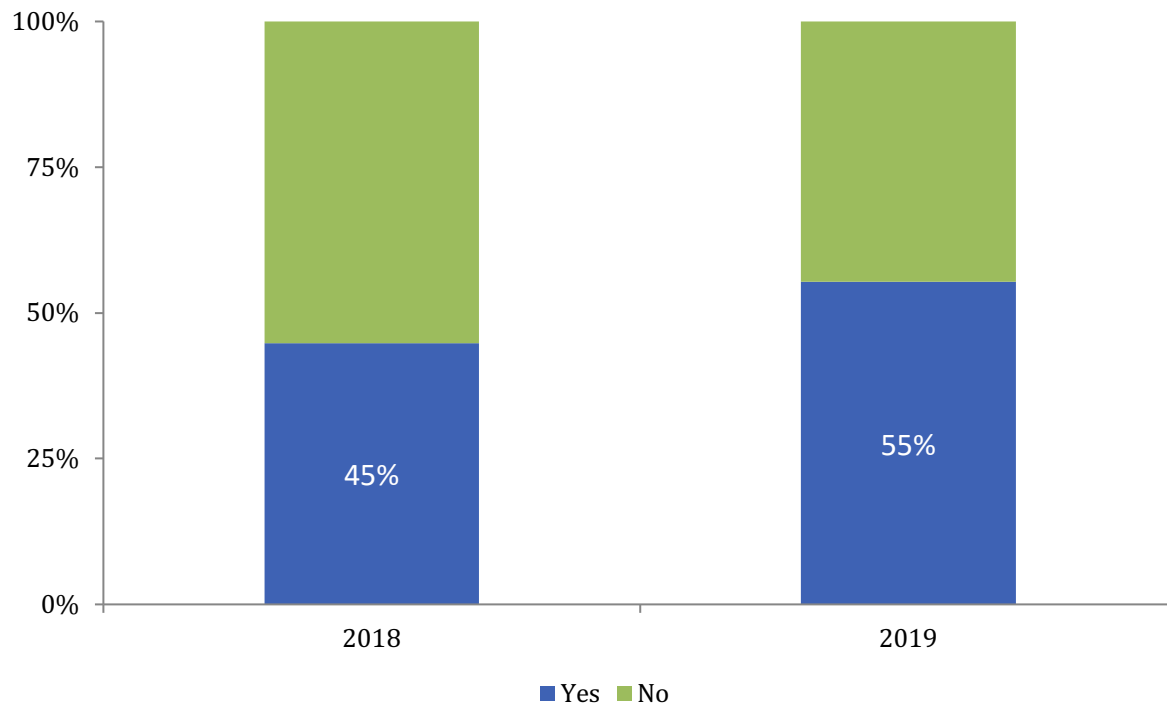
Do you feel you have sufficient data and insights for effective personalization?



Sample Size: 271 (86% of Respondents)

However, issues with data seem to be decreasing. Marketing professionals are more confident that they have sufficient data and insights for effective personalization this year than they were last year, with the number of affirmative responses jumping 10 points from 45% to 55%.

Trend: Do you feel you have sufficient data and insights for effective personalization?



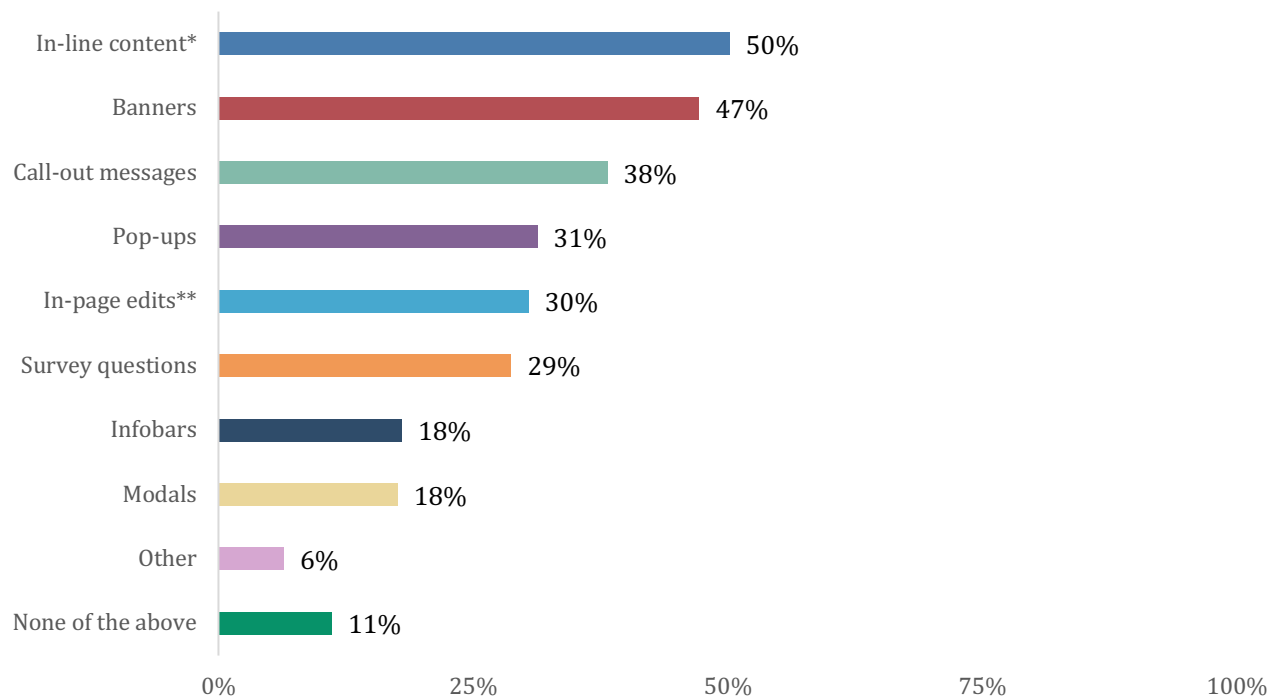
Sample Size: 512 (48% of Respondents in 2018 + 2019)

PERSONALIZATION FORMATS & TYPES

The most common personalization formats are in-line content (50%) and banners (47%), reported to be used by roughly half of all marketers.

Other popular formats, used by roughly a third of respondents, include call-out messages (38%), pop-ups (31%), in-page edits (30%), and survey questions (29%).

What personalization formats do you use?



Sample Size: 233 (74% of Respondents)

Respondents could select multiple options

To clarify two of these terms, respondents were presented with the following footnotes:

* In-line content allows you to dynamically **add or insert** sections of content on a page/screen/email

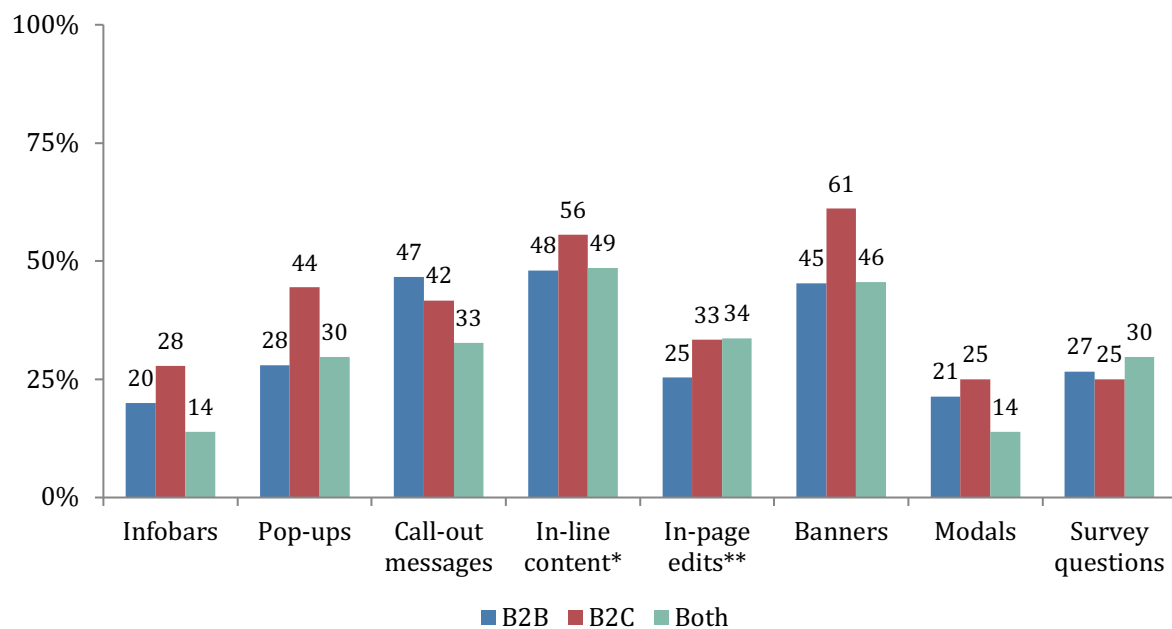
** In-page edits allow you to **modify or remove existing text or images** on a page/screen/email

Respondents could select multiple options

B2C companies are more likely to use banners (61%), pop-ups (44%), in-line content (56%), and infobars (28%) to reach customers in their personalization strategy than are B2B companies or hybrids.

B2Bs are more inclined than other types of businesses to utilize call-out messages (47%). Hybrid companies show a relative preference for survey questions (30%).

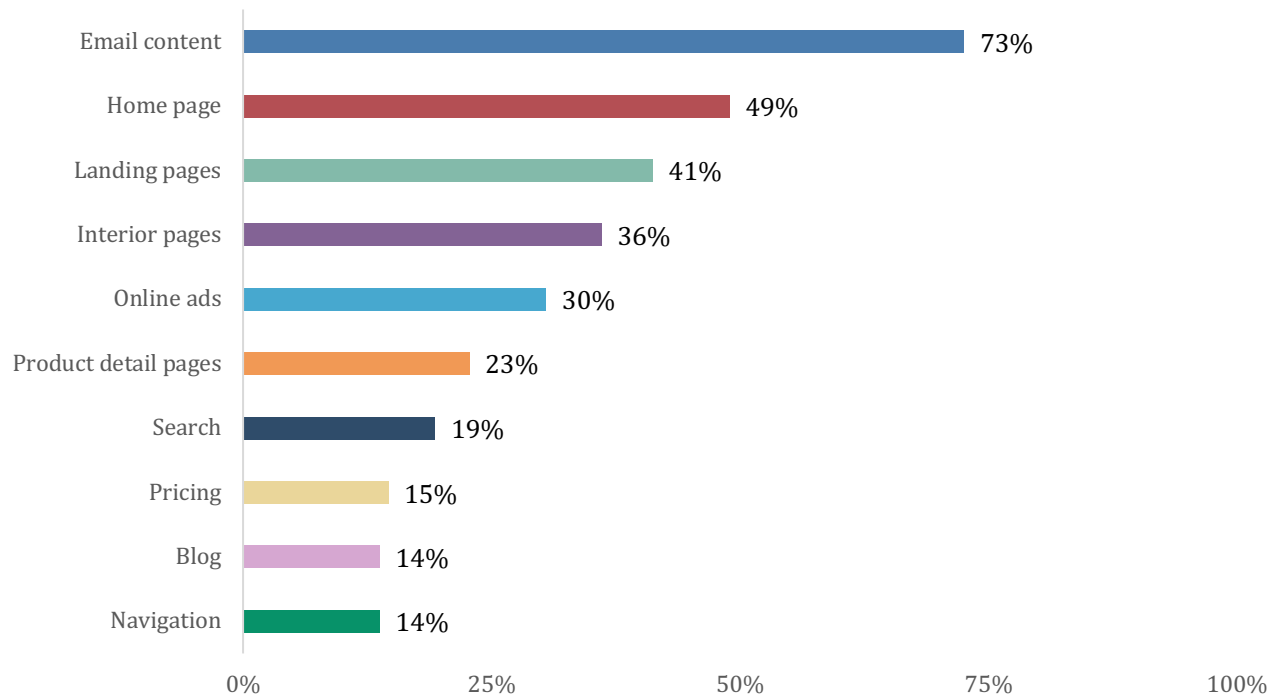
Crosstab: What personalization formats do you use?



Sample Size: 233 (74% of Respondents)

Email content (73%) is the top area marketers deliver personalized experiences. The next most popular locations for personalized experiences, indicated by half or fewer of respondents, are webpages, specifically home pages (49%), landing pages (41%), and interior pages (36%).

Where do you utilize personalized experiences? - Top 10



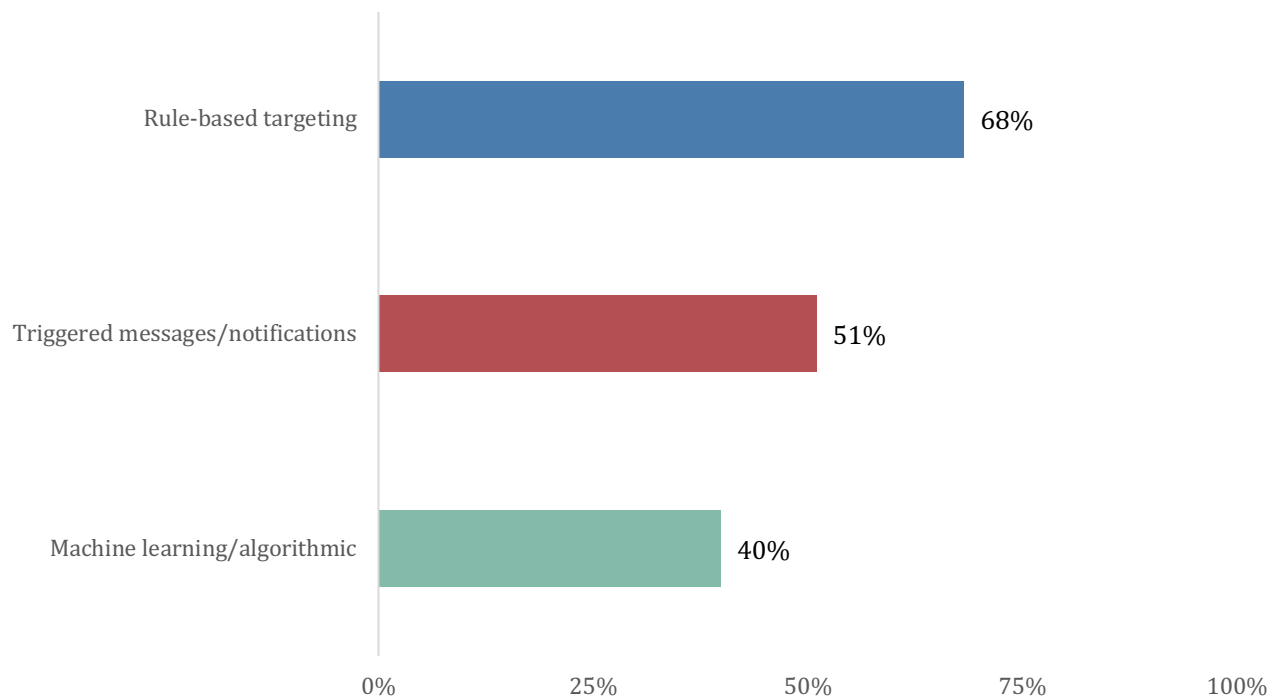
Note: Showing only the top 10 most selected options.

Sample Size: 233 (74% of Respondents)

Respondents could select multiple options

Seven out of ten marketers (68%) use a rule-based approach to personalization, compared to five out of ten (51%) who use a triggered messages/notifications approach, and four out of ten (40%) who use a machine learning/algorithmic approach.

Which approach to personalization do you utilize?



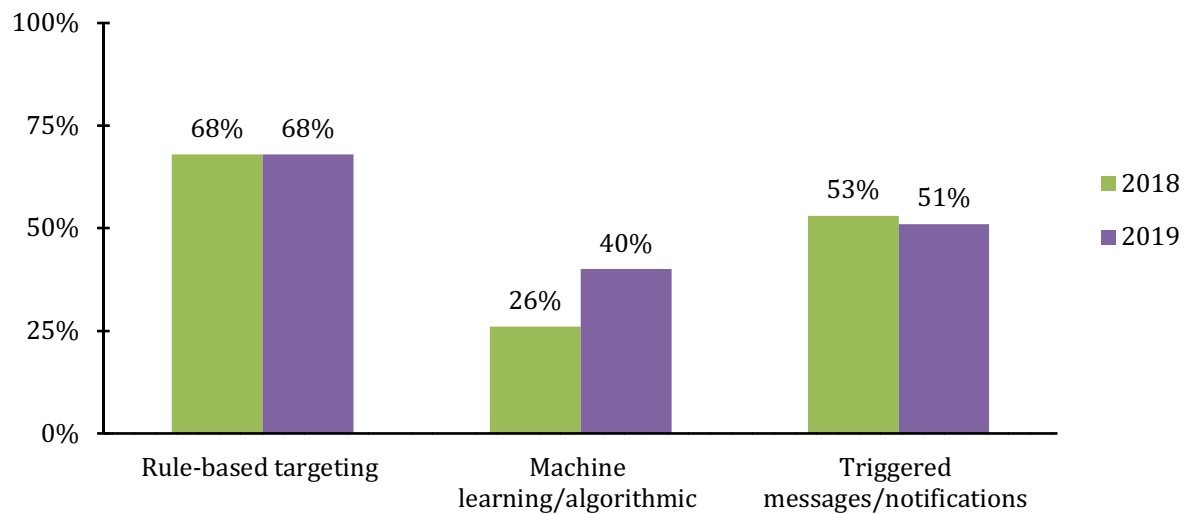
Sample Size: 233 (74% of Respondents)

Respondents could select multiple options

The percentage of companies using a machine learning/algorithmic approach to personalization has climbed significantly in the last year, up 14 points from 2018 (40% of firms in 2019 use this approach, compared to 26% in 2018).

The percentage of firms using either of the other two approaches, meanwhile, has remained stable.

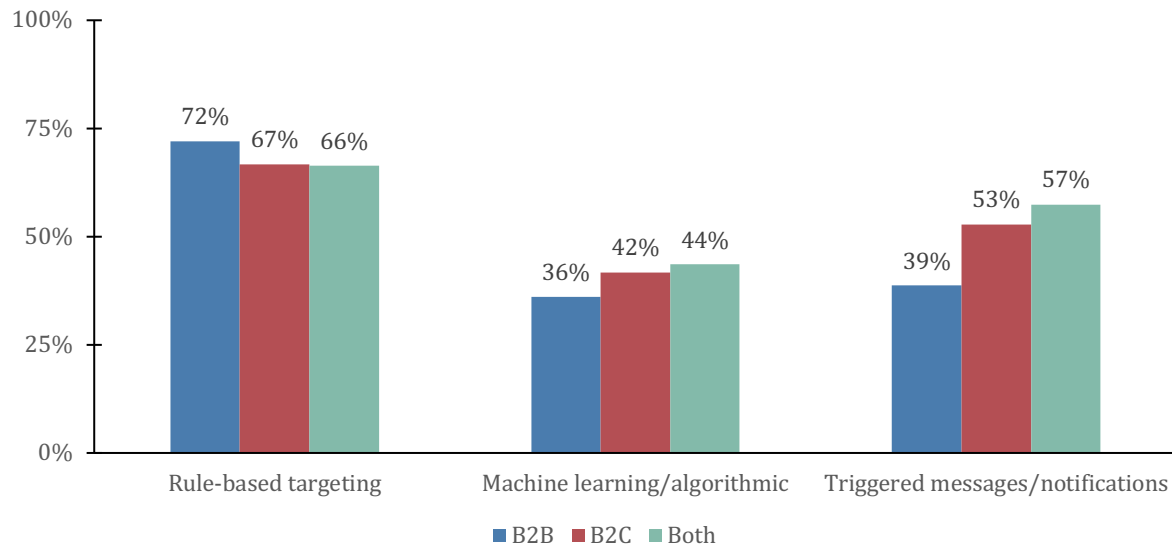
Trend: Which approach to personalization do you utilize?



Sample Size: 435 (71% of Respondents in 2018 + 2019)

B2B companies report a slight preference for a rule-based targeting approach to personalization (72% compared to 67% of B2Cs and 66% of hybrids), while the two business types that market to consumers show a preference for triggered messages/notifications and machine-learning/algorithmic approaches.

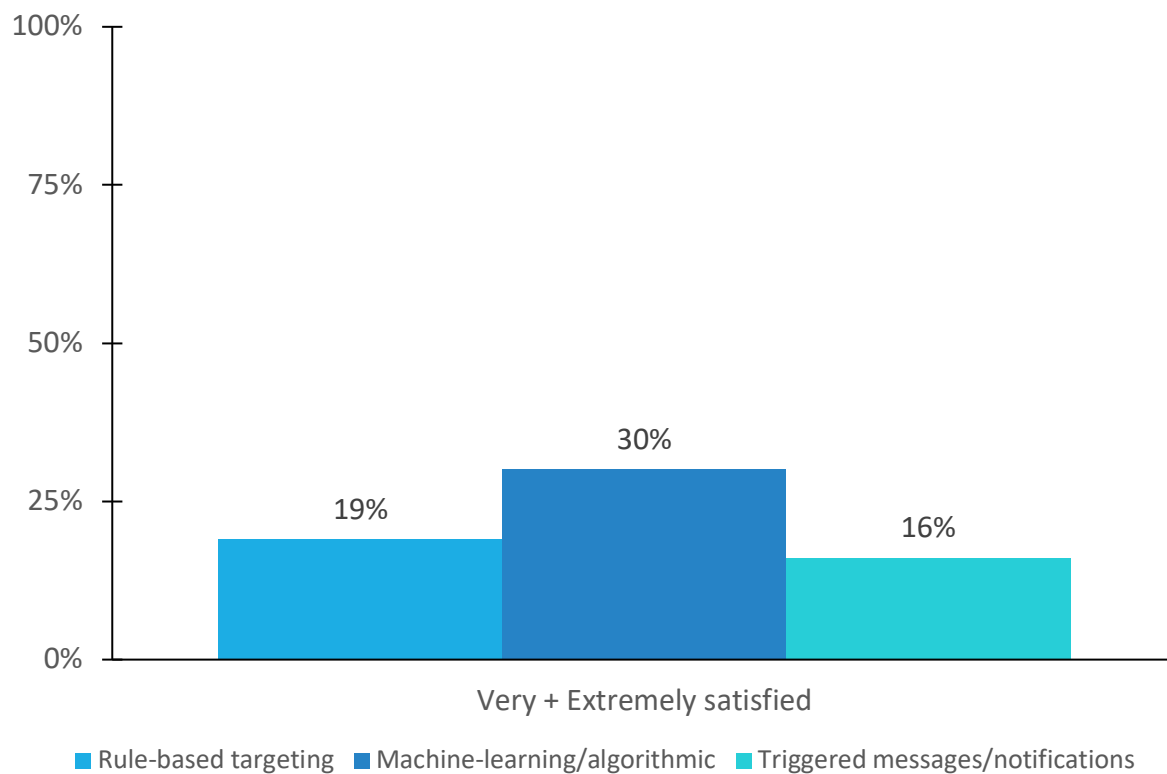
Crosstab: Which approach to personalization do you utilize?



Sample Size: 233 (74% of Respondents)

When looking at personalization satisfaction levels among marketers that leverage each approach, 30% of those that use machine-learning/algorithmic personalization are very or extremely satisfied with their personalization programs, vs. 19% for rule-based targeting and 16% for triggered messages/notifications.

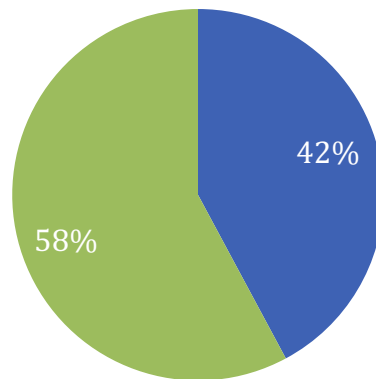
Crosstab: Overall, how satisfied are you with the level of personalization in your marketing efforts?



Sample Size: 272 (87% of Respondents)

Of those marketers not currently using machine-learning/algorithmic personalization, 42% plan to begin using it within the next year.

Do you have any plans to begin using machine-learning/algorithmic personalization in the next year?



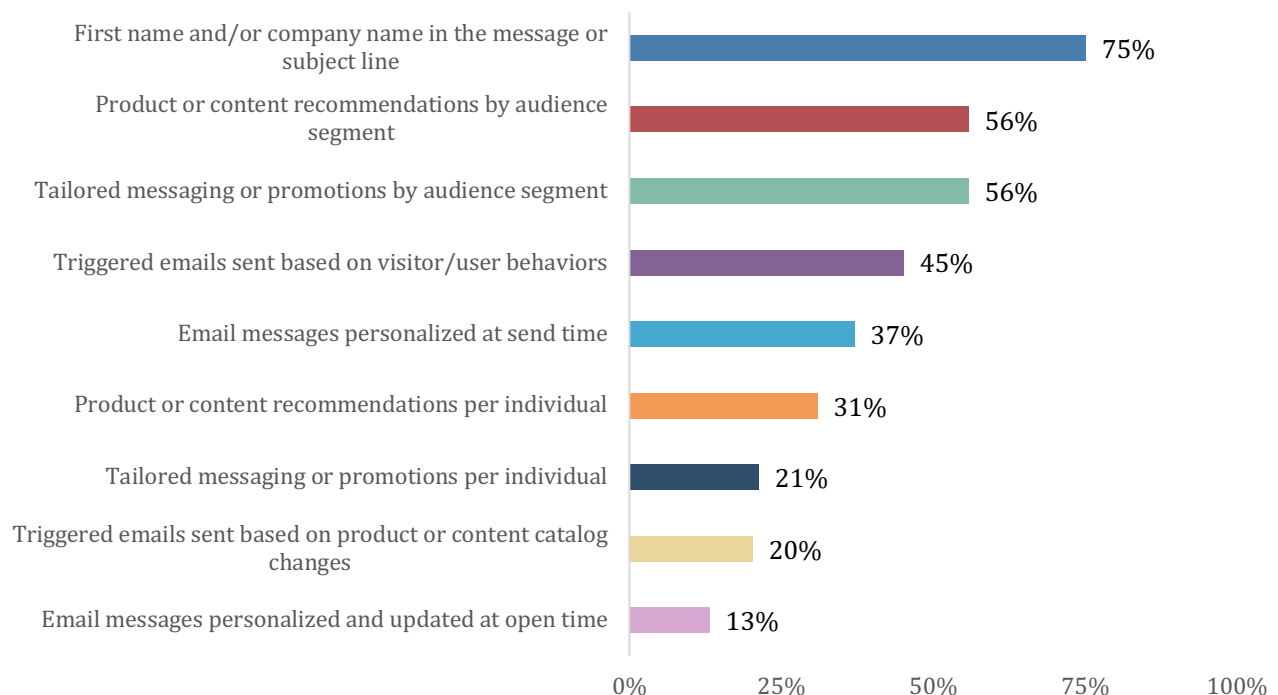
■ Yes ■ No

Sample Size: 102 (32% of Respondents)

Three quarters of companies (75%) personalize email campaigns by including a person's first name and/or company name in the message or subject line. More than half personalize emails based on the customer's audience segment: either by offering product or content recommendations (56%) or by tailoring messaging or promotions (56%).

In the last year, more marketers began using triggered emails sent based on visitor/user behaviors to personalize their email campaigns. This number jumped up 10 points from last year (from 35% in 2018 to 45% in 2019).

How are you personalizing your email campaigns?



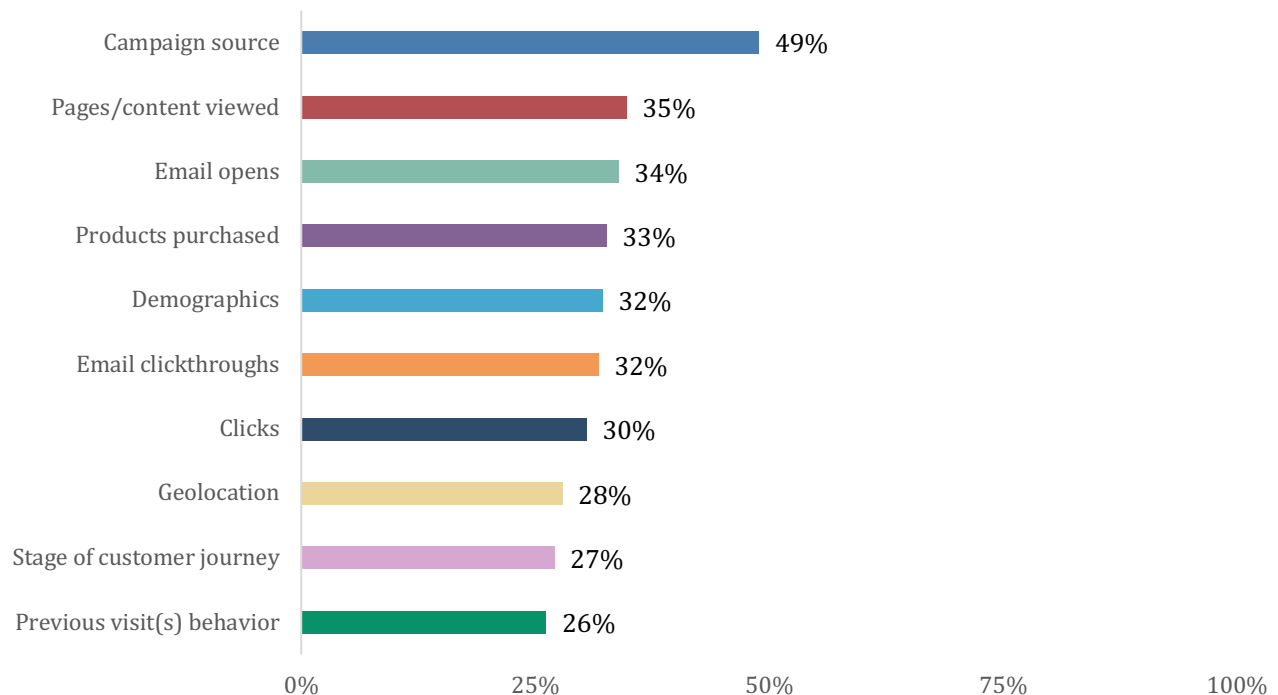
Sample Size: 197 (63% of Respondents)

Respondents could select multiple options

Organizations leverage a variety of criteria to target their personalized experiences. By far, the data point used most is a visitor's campaign source (49%).

About a third of companies look at pages/content viewed (35%), email opens (34%), products purchased (33%), demographics (32%), email clickthrough rate (32%), and clicks (30%) when creating a personalized experience.

Which of the following criteria about your visitors do you use to personalize the experience?
- Top 10



Note: Showing only the top 10 most selected options.

Sample Size: 233 (74% of Respondents)

Respondents could select multiple options

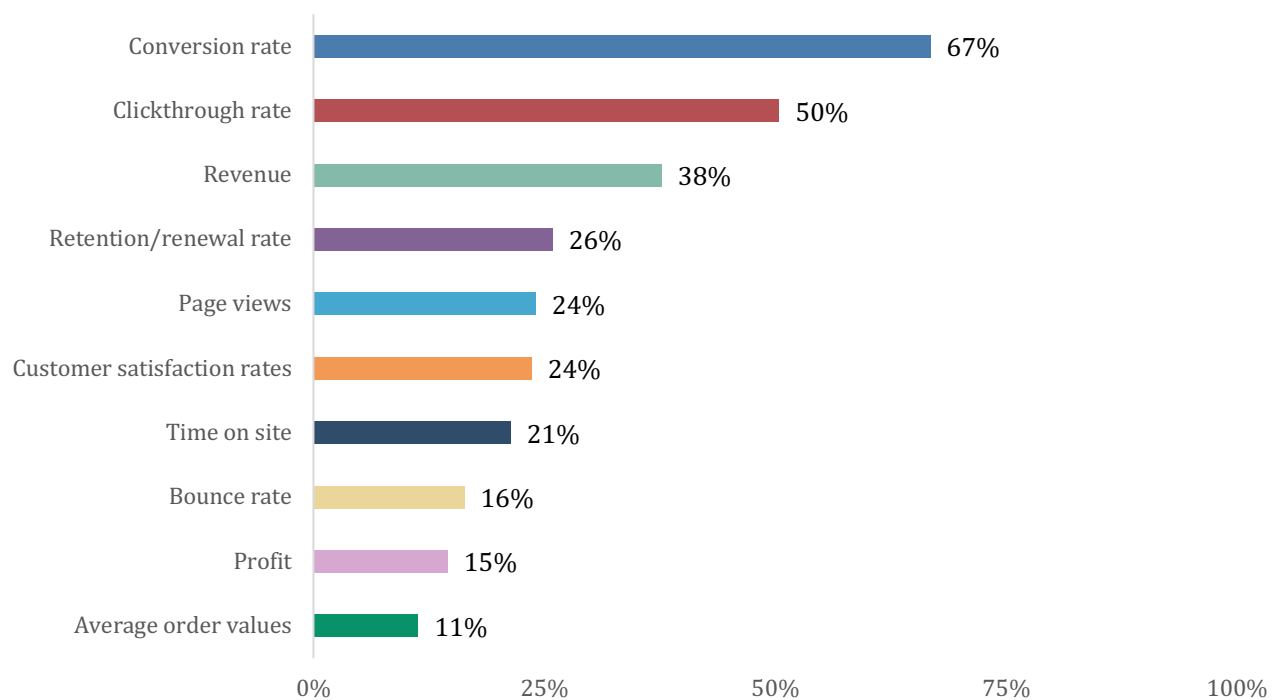
MEASUREMENT & BUDGETS

Marketers' go-to metric for measuring the value of personalization is improvement in conversion rate, true for two-thirds of respondents (67%).

Rounding out the top three KPIs are improvements in clickthrough rates (50%) and revenue (38%).

Nearly a quarter of businesses measure personalization improvements in retention/renewal rate (26%) and page views (24%).

Do you measure the value of personalization by improvements in...? - Top 10



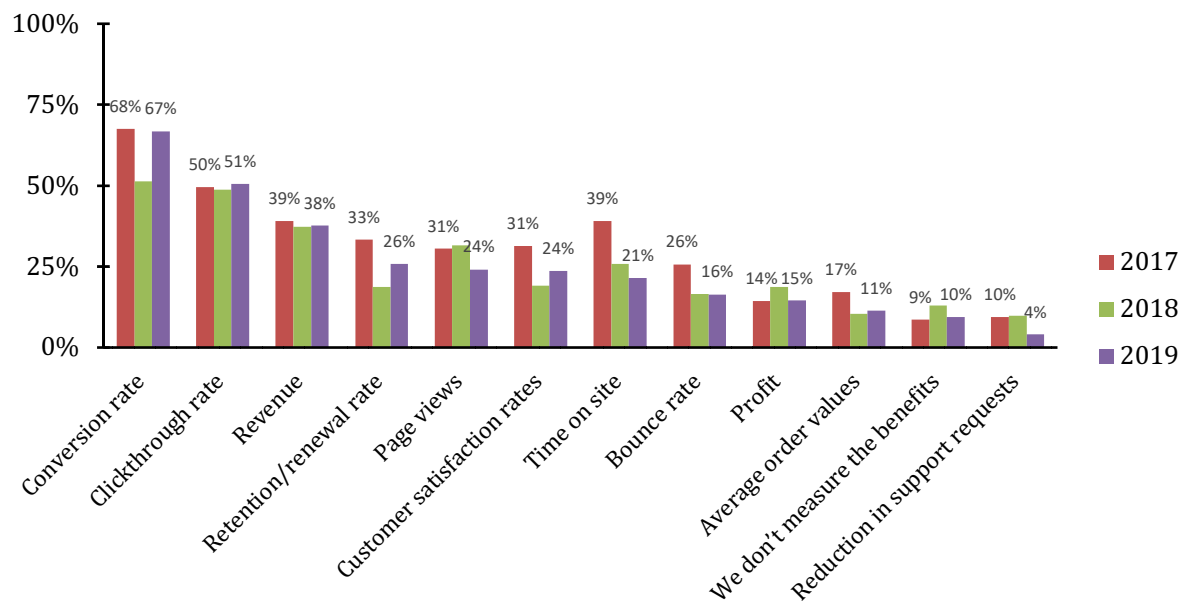
Note: Showing only the top 10 most selected options.

Sample Size: 220 (70% of Respondents)

Respondents could select multiple options

The top three metrics that organizations use to measure personalization's value have remained steady, with conversion rates, clickthrough rates, and revenue consistently ranking at the top over the past three years. Among those dropping are page views and time on site.

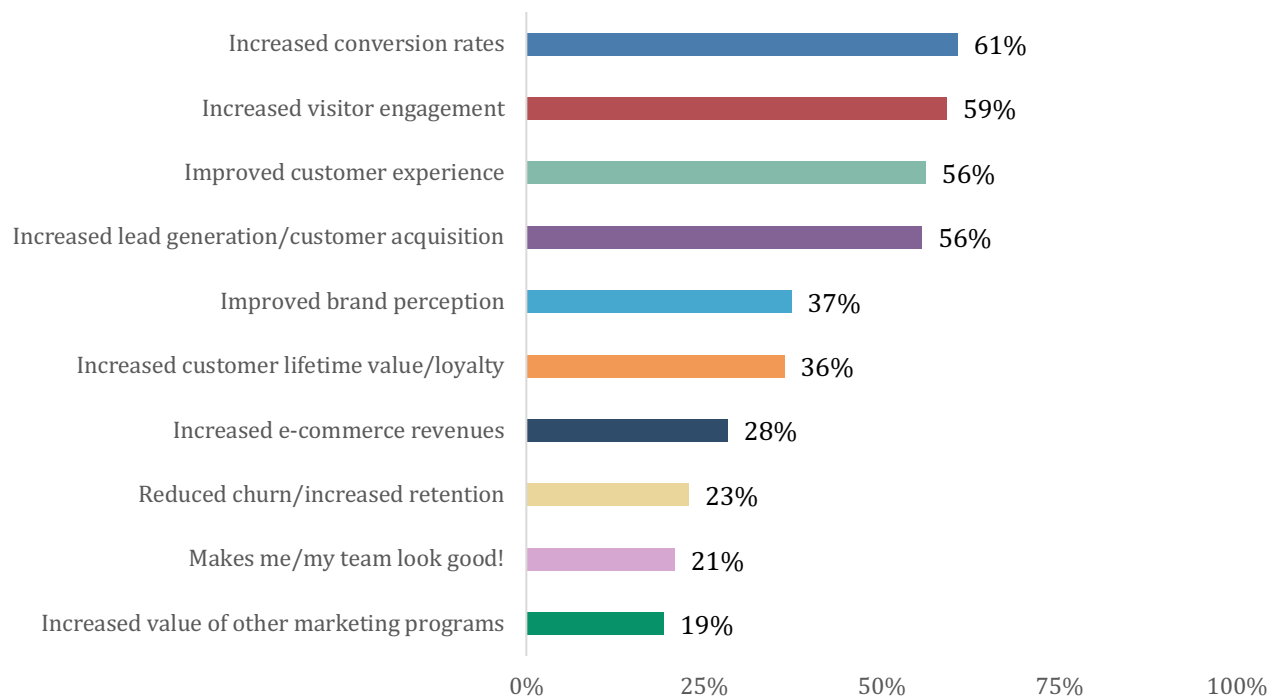
Trend: Do you measure the value of personalization by improvements in...? - Top 10



Sample Size: 632 (59% of Respondents in 2017 + 2018 + 2019)

In 2019, marketers say the top benefits of personalization are increased conversion rates (61%, up 10 points from 2018), increased visitor engagement (59%), improved customer experience (56%), and increased lead generation/customer acquisition (56%).

What are the main benefits you see from personalization for your organization? - Top 10



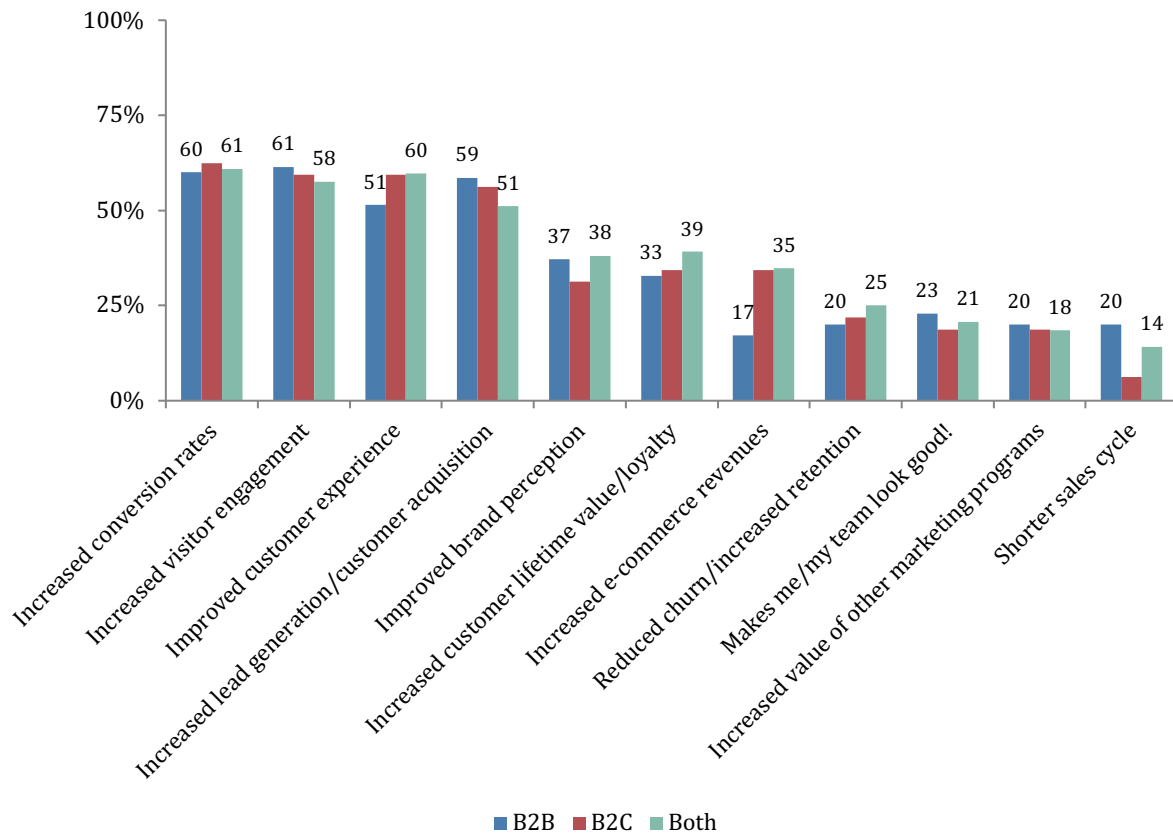
Note: Showing only the top 10 most selected options.

Sample Size: 201 (64% of Respondents)

Respondents could select multiple options

Personalization yields the same benefits across business types. For B2Bs, B2Cs, and hybrid companies alike, personalization's top four benefits are increased conversion rates, increased visitor engagement, improved customer experience, and increased lead generation/customer acquisition.

Crosstab: What are the main benefits you see from personalization for your organization?

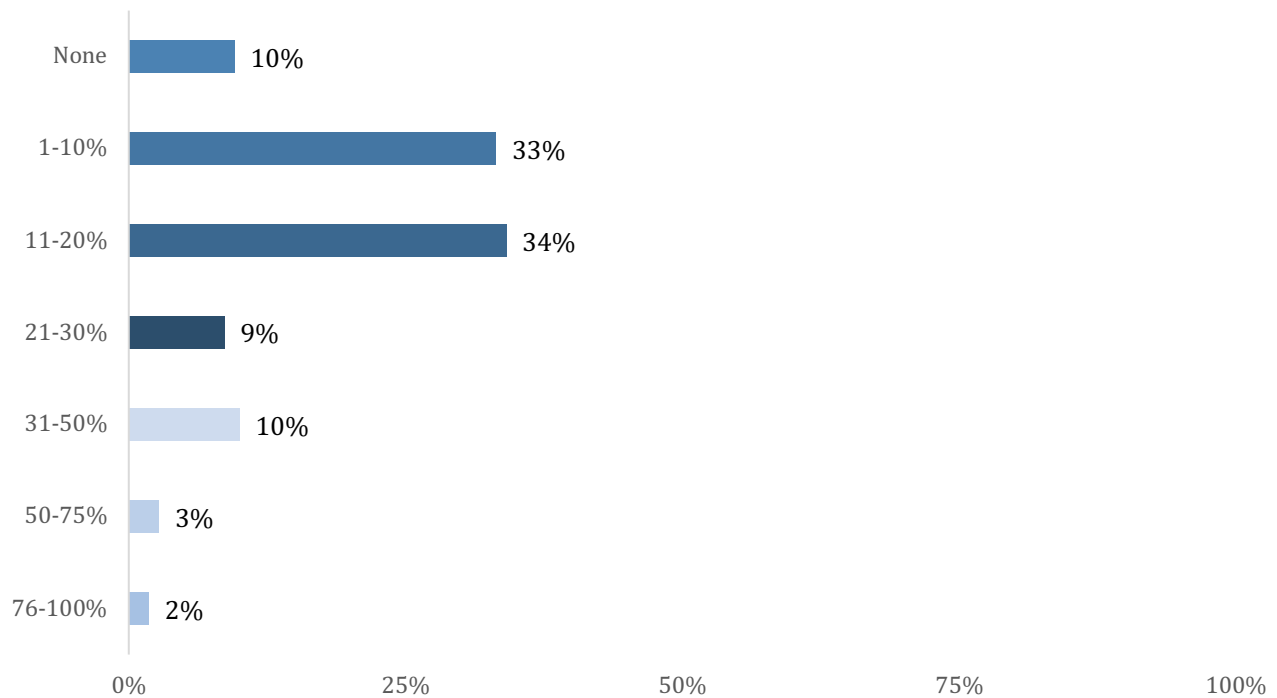


Sample Size: 201 (64% of Respondents)

The majority of marketers (90%) see some measurable lift from personalization, with more than half (58%) achieving a lift of over 10%.

Marketers are seeing a greater lift from their personalization efforts in 2019 than in 2018. While just 27% said they saw an 11-20% lift from personalization last year, 34% reported an 11-20% lift this year (up 7 points).

What percentage improvement or “lift” are you generally seeing from personalization efforts?



Sample Size: 220 (70% of Respondents)

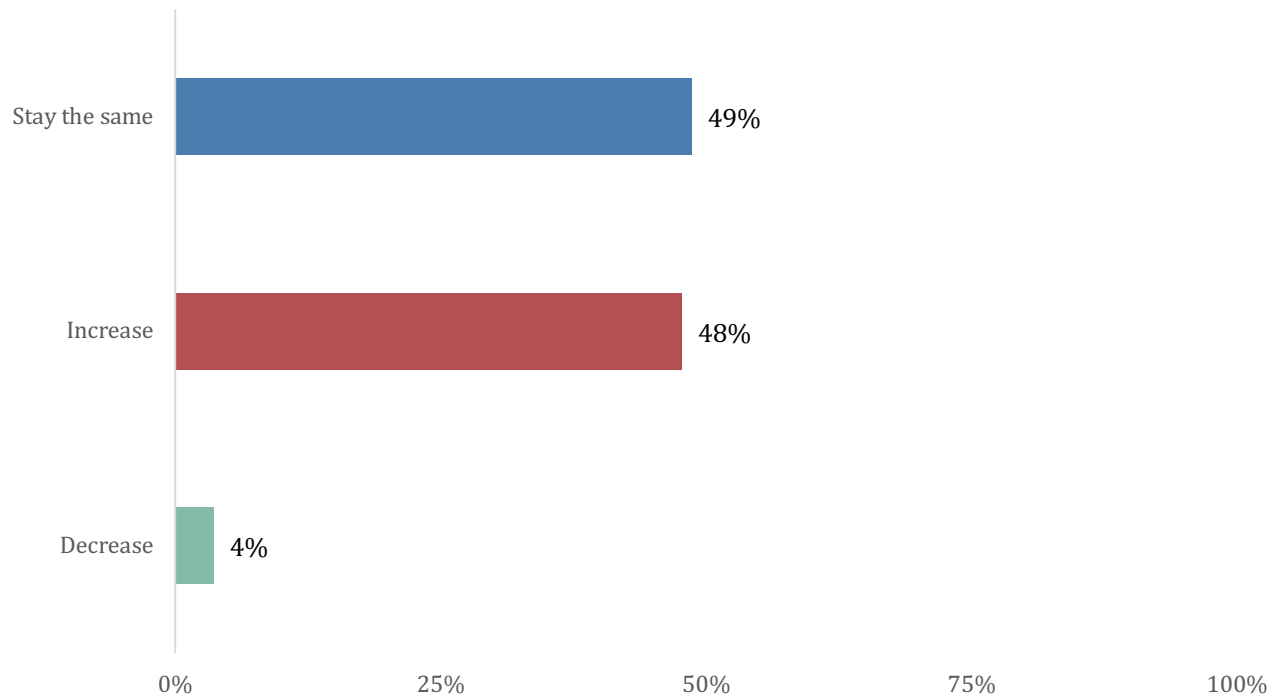
Total does not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Additionally, among marketers who use machine-learning personalization, 77% see a lift greater than 10%.

While about half of companies (49%) expect their personalization budget/spending to stay the same in 2019, nearly as many (48%) expect theirs to rise.

Just 4% of companies expect their personalization budget/spending to decrease.

Compared to last year, how will your personalization budget/spending change this year?

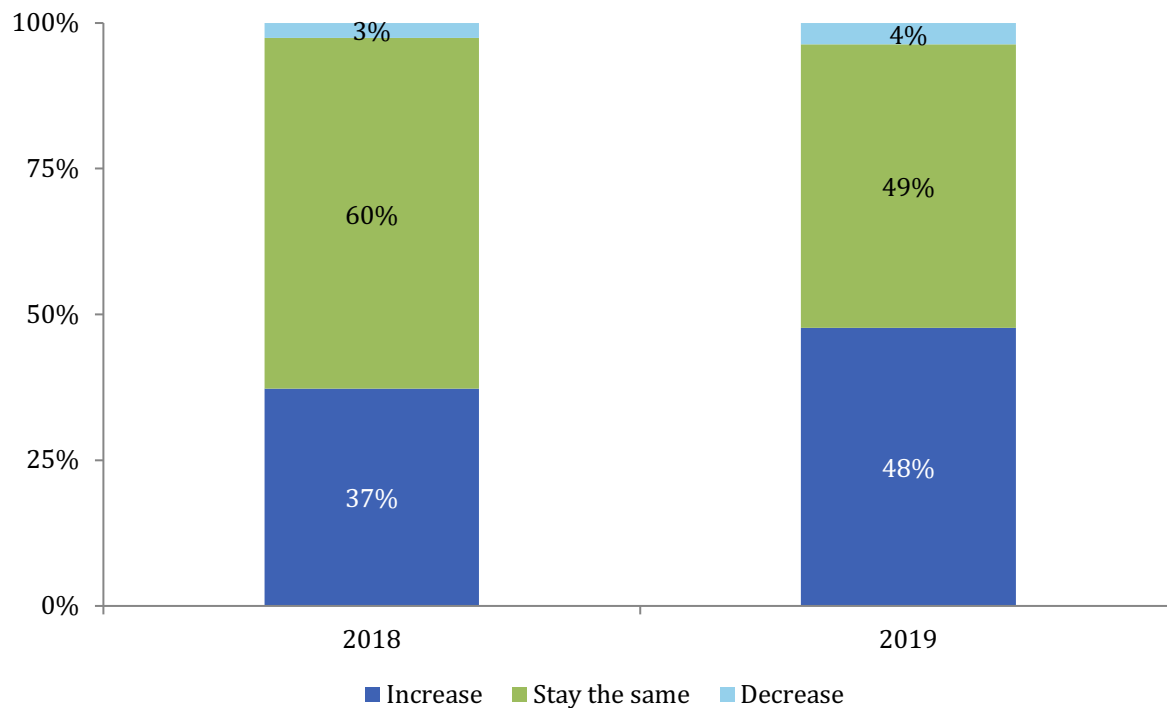


Sample Size: 220 (70% of Respondents)

Total does not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Company spending on personalization is accelerating in 2019. The percentage of organizations planning to increase spending on personalization in the next year has grown from 37% in 2018 to 48% in 2019.

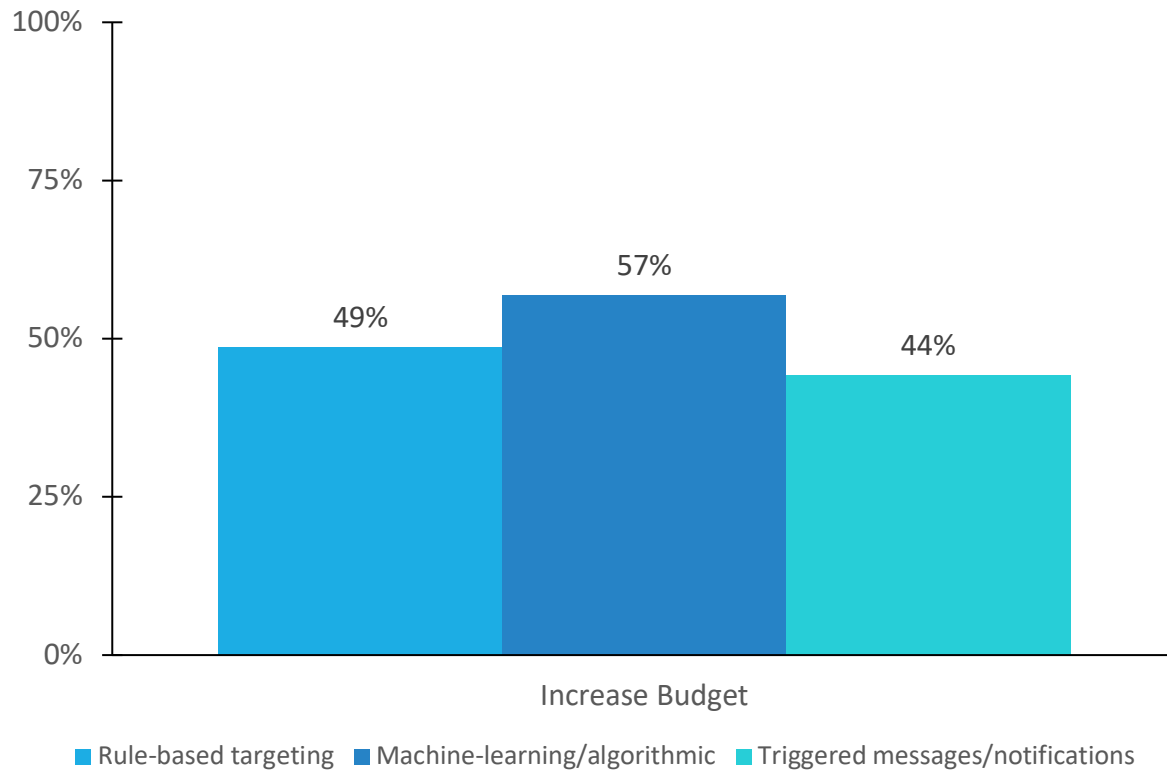
Trend: Compared to last year, how will your personalization budget/spending change this year?



Sample Size: 660 (62% of Respondents in 2018 + 2019)

A greater percentage of marketers leveraging machine-learning/algorithmic approaches to personalization are planning to increase their budgets this year (57%) compared to rule-based targeting (49%) and triggered messages/notifications (44%).

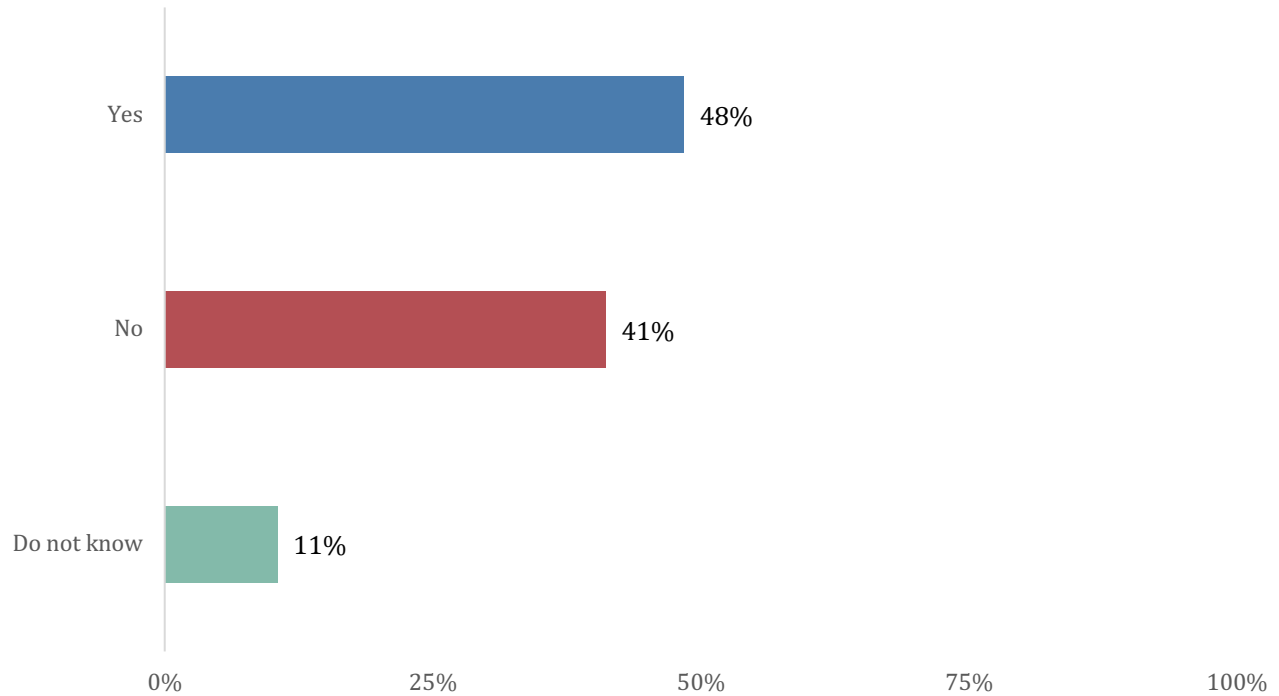
Crosstab: Compared to last year, how will your personalization budget/spending change this year?



Sample Size: 220 (70% of Respondents)

Nearly half (48%) of organizations deploying personalization have personnel focused on it.

Do you have personnel focused on personalization?

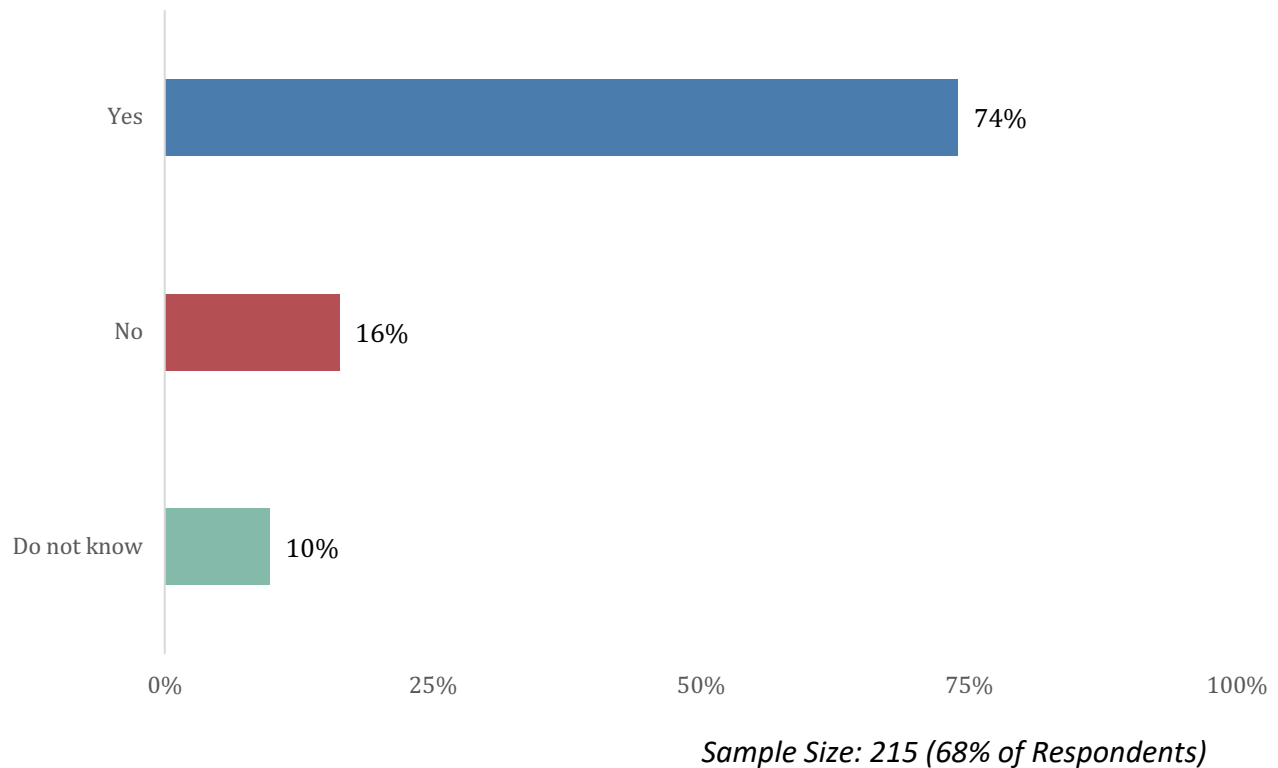


Sample Size: 219 (70% of Respondents)

LEVEL OF CORPORATE ADOPTION

Three quarters of marketers (74%) believe personalization should be a bigger priority in their organizations than it is currently. Just 16% believe it shouldn't be.

Do you believe personalization should be a bigger priority in your organization than it is currently?

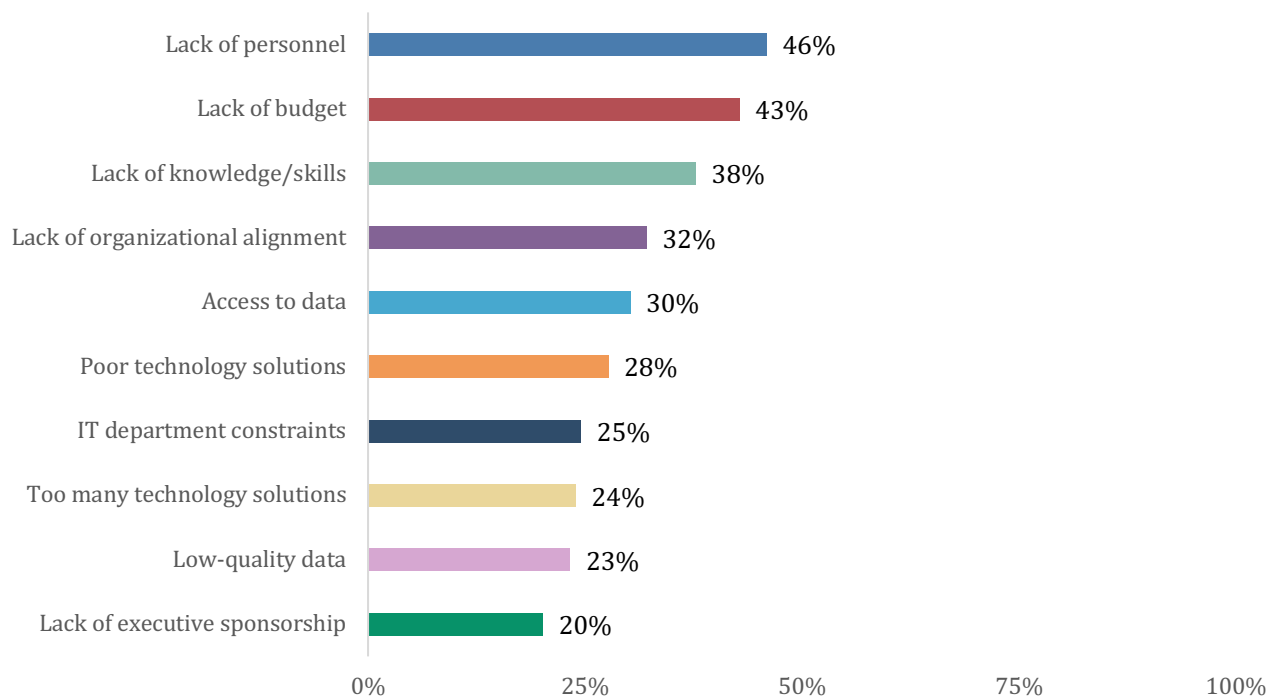


The top three obstacles to making personalization a bigger priority in organizations are a lack of personnel (46%), a lack of budget (43%), and a lack of knowledge/skills (38%).

Less than a third reported data-related concerns, including poor access to data (30%) and low-quality data (23%).

A quarter of respondents (24%) said too many technology solutions are impeding the move to make personalization a bigger priority in their organizations.

What are the greatest obstacles to making personalization a bigger priority in your organization? - Top 10



Note: Showing only the top 10 most selected options.

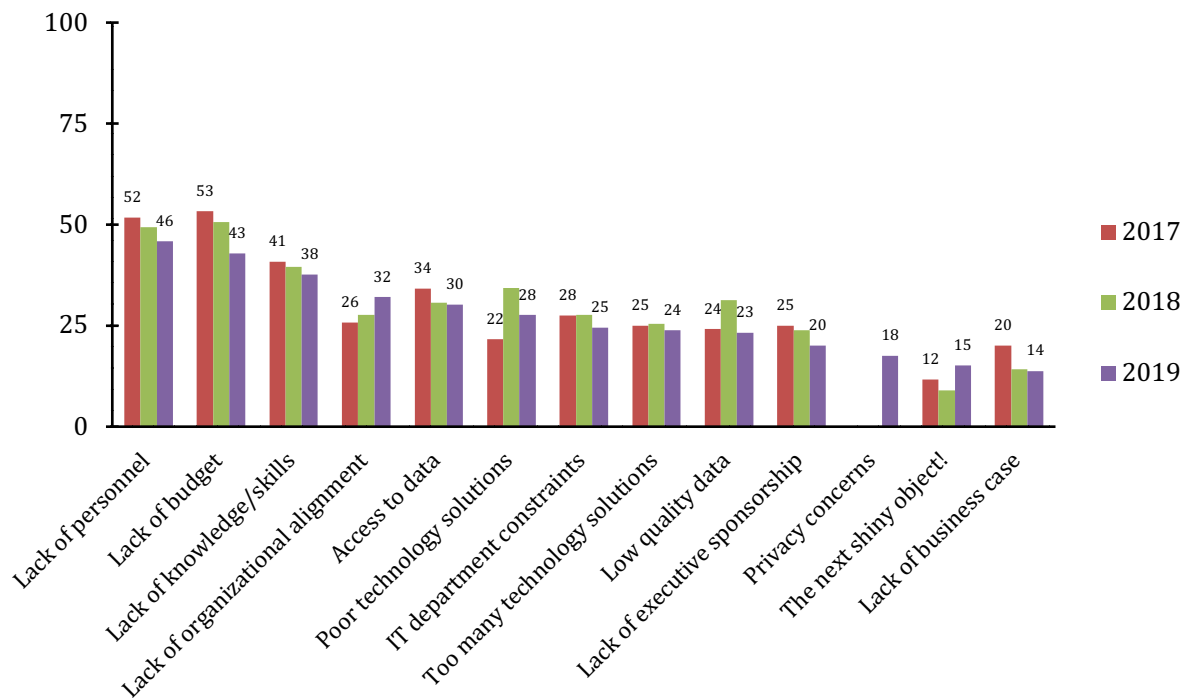
Sample Size: 159 (51% of Respondents)

Respondents could select multiple options

While the top three obstacles for personalization have remained consistent over the past three years (lack of personnel, lack of budget, and lack of knowledge), the percentage of marketers reporting these issues as obstacles has consistently declined — while only “lack of organizational alignment” is consistently increasing.

The option “privacy concerns” was added to the questionnaire this year: 18% reported privacy concerns.

Trend: What are the greatest obstacles to making personalization a bigger priority in your organization?

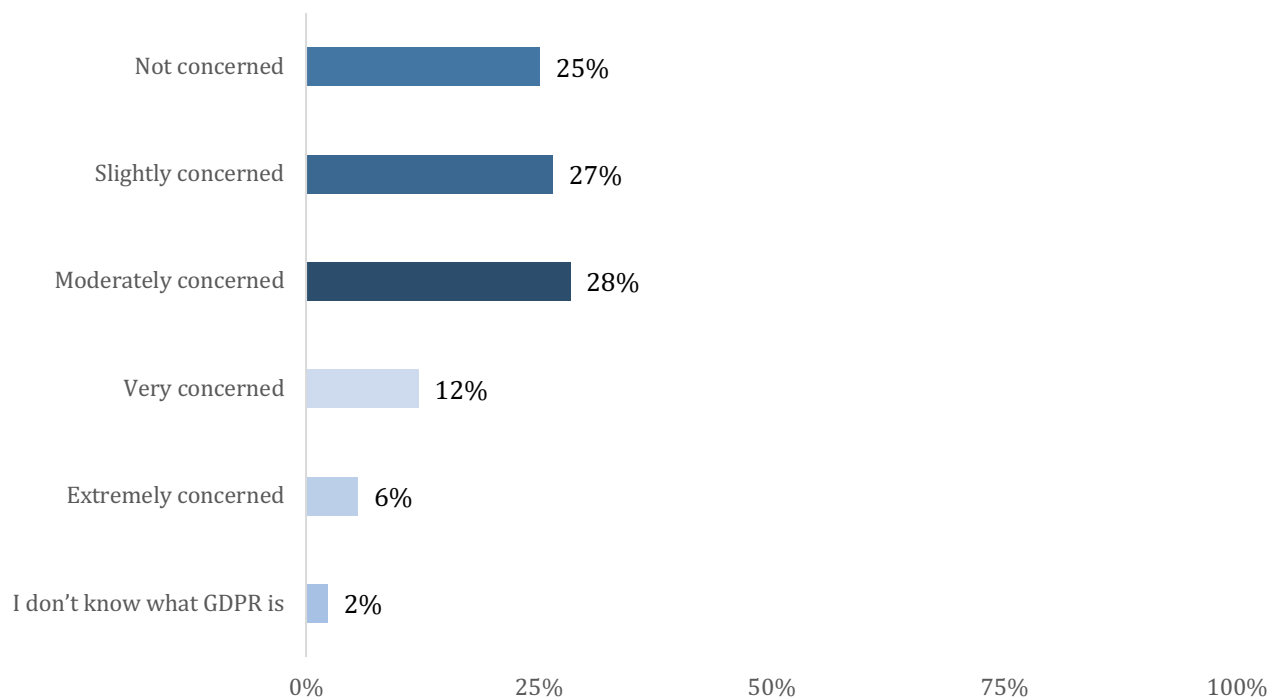


Sample Size: 520 (49% of Respondents in 2017 + 2018 + 2019)

Leading up to the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) taking effect, there was some concern about the impact it would have on personalization efforts going forward. About half of marketing professionals (52%) are not concerned or only slightly concerned about the impact of GDPR on their personalization efforts in 2019 and beyond.

Another 28% are moderately concerned, and just 18% are very or extremely concerned.

To what degree are you concerned about the impact of the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) on your personalization efforts in 2019 and beyond?

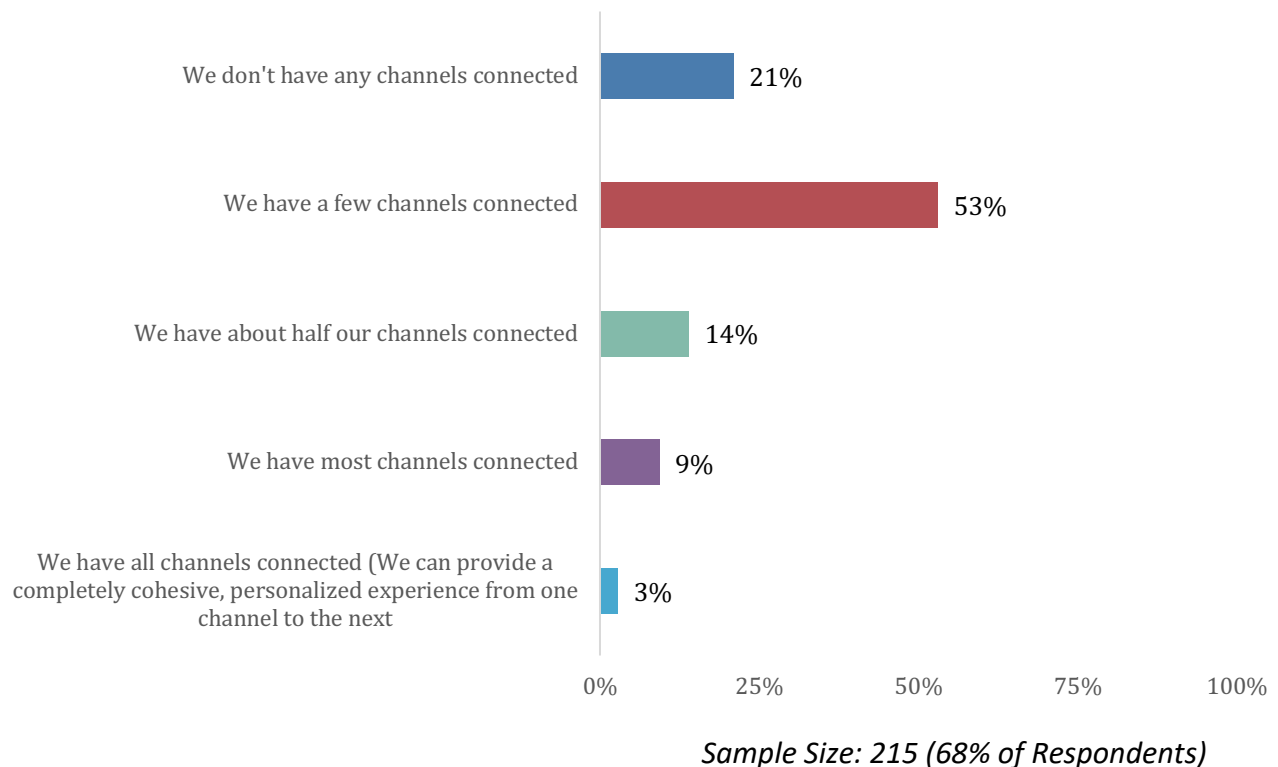


Sample Size: 215 (68% of Respondents)

The ability to connect different channels is essential for omnichannel personalization. About half of organizations (53%) have a few channels connected. A quarter (23%) have half or most of their channels connected.

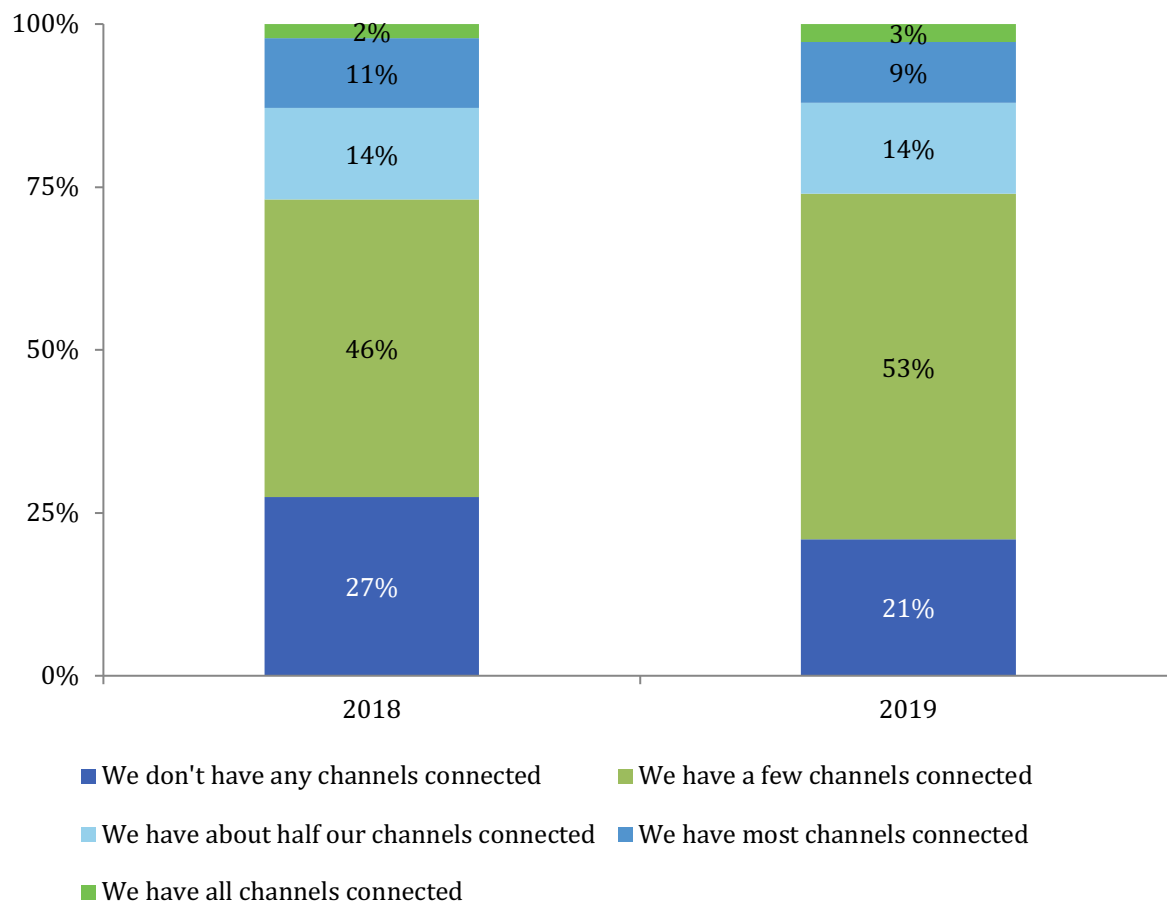
Just 3% have all channels connected in order to offer a completely cohesive, personalized experience from one channel to the next.

Which of the following describes your company's approach to omnichannel personalization?



However, it should be noted that marketers' approach to omnichannel personalization is progressing. From 2018 to 2019, fewer organizations are reporting "no channels" connected for personalization (21%, down 6 points from 2018); this is also reflected in more companies reporting "a few" channels connected this year (53%, up 7 points from 2018).

Trend: Which of the following describes your company's approach to omnichannel personalization?

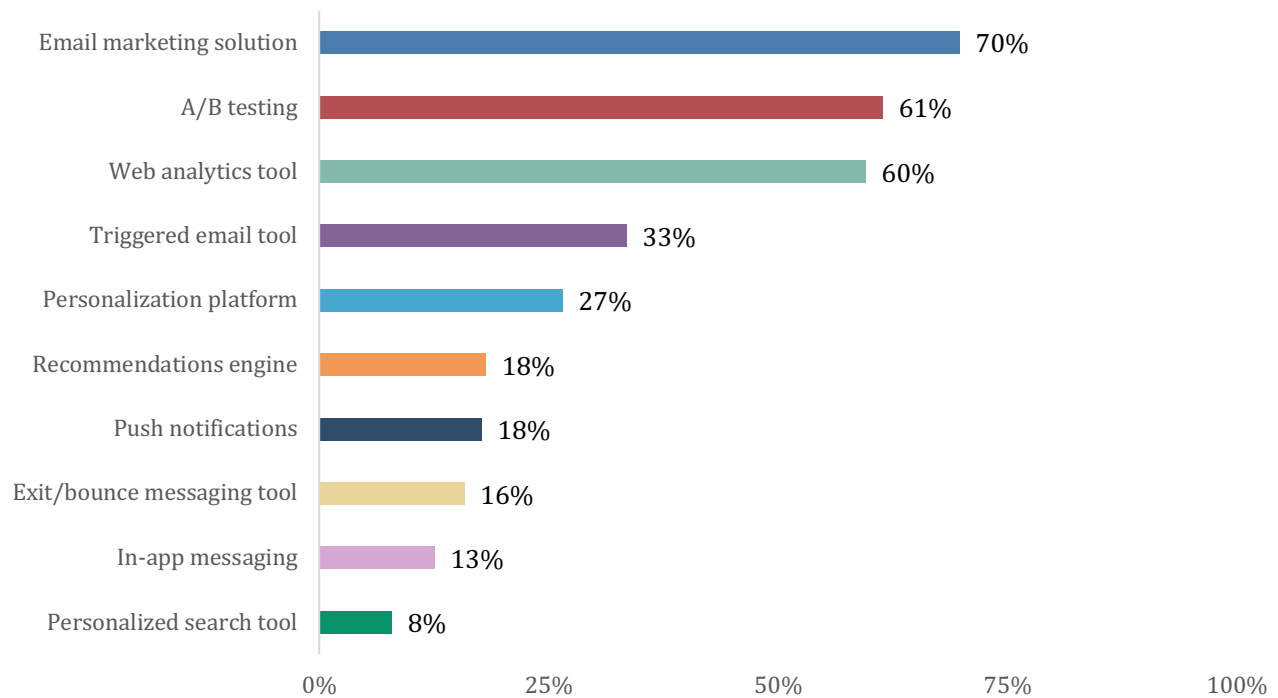


Sample Size: 401 (37% of Respondents in 2018 + 2019)

The top tools marketers use to execute personalization across digital channels are email marketing solutions (70%), A/B testing tools (61%), and web analytics tools (60%).

About a third use triggered email tools (33%) and personalization platforms (27%). Tools like recommendations engines (18%), push notifications (18%), and exit/bounce messaging (16%) were less common, each representing less than a fifth of respondents.

What tools are you using to execute personalization across your own digital channels? - Top 10



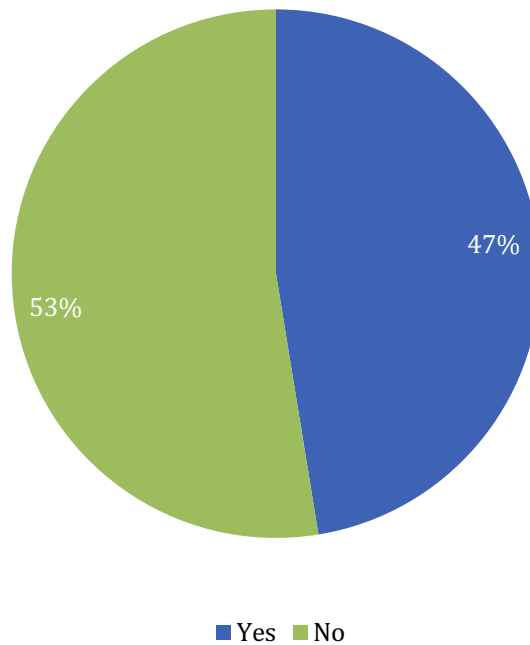
Note: Showing only the top 10 most selected options.

Sample Size: 215 (68% of Respondents)

Respondents could select multiple options

Respondents were nearly evenly split between those who claim to use a customer data platform (47%) and those who do not.

Do you use a customer data platform (CDP)?



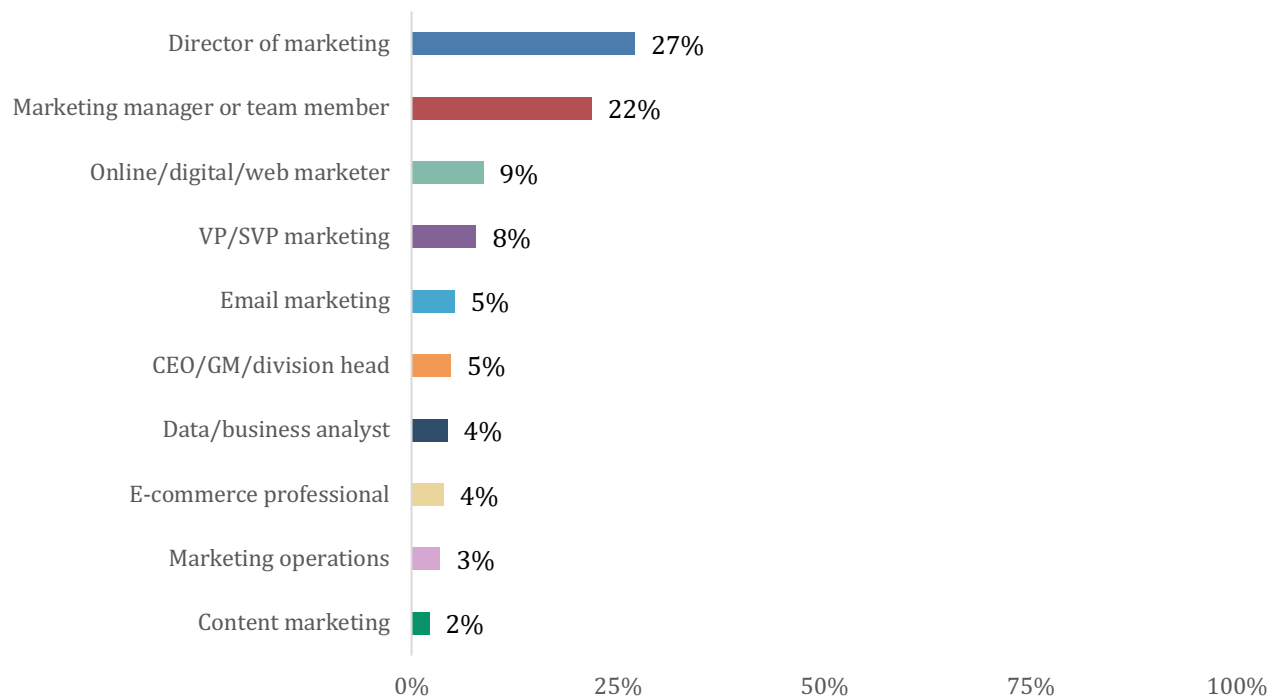
Sample Size: 175 (56% of Respondents)

FIRMOGRAPHICS

About half of respondents were either marketing directors (27%) or marketing managers or team members (22%).

A few others were online/digital/web marketers (9%), VP/SVPs of marketing (8%), or other marketing-related roles.

Which of the following titles best reflects your role? - Top 10

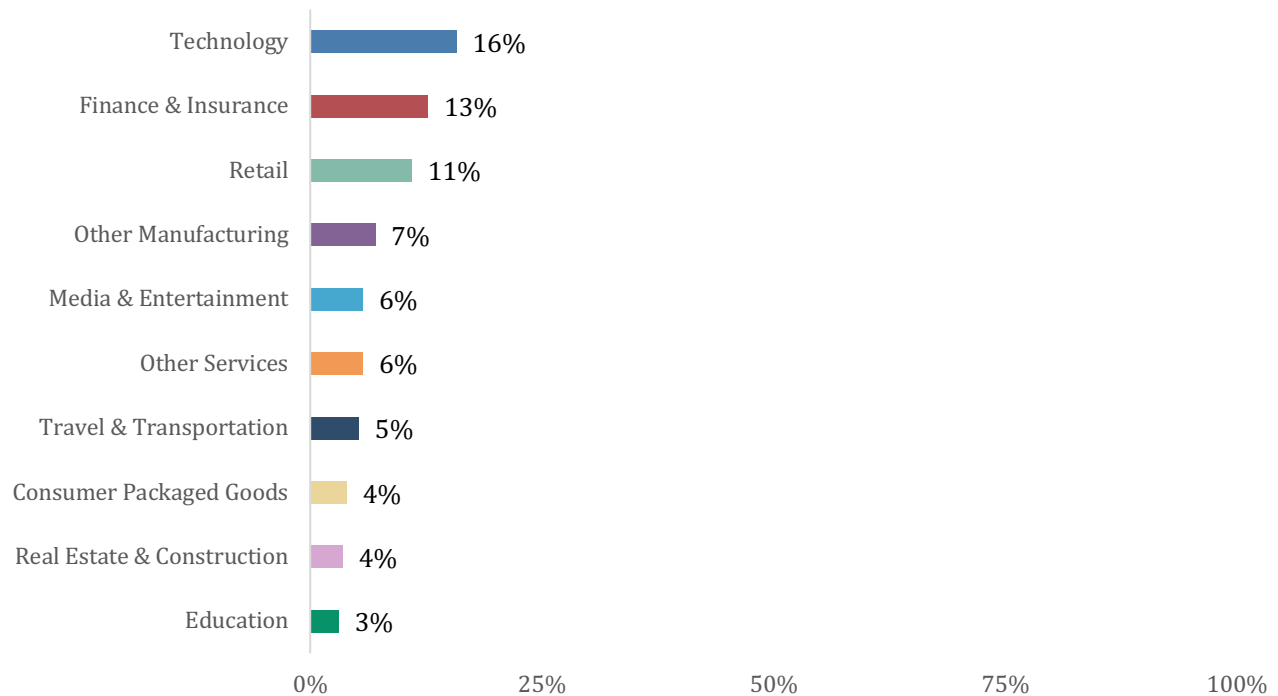


Note: Showing only the top 10 most selected options.

Sample Size: 229 (73% of Respondents)

The top three industries represented are technology (16%), finance & insurance (13%), and retail (11%). Over 17 other industries were included, such as other manufacturing (7%), media & entertainment (6%), other services (6%), and travel and transportation (5%).

What is your organization's industry? - Top 10



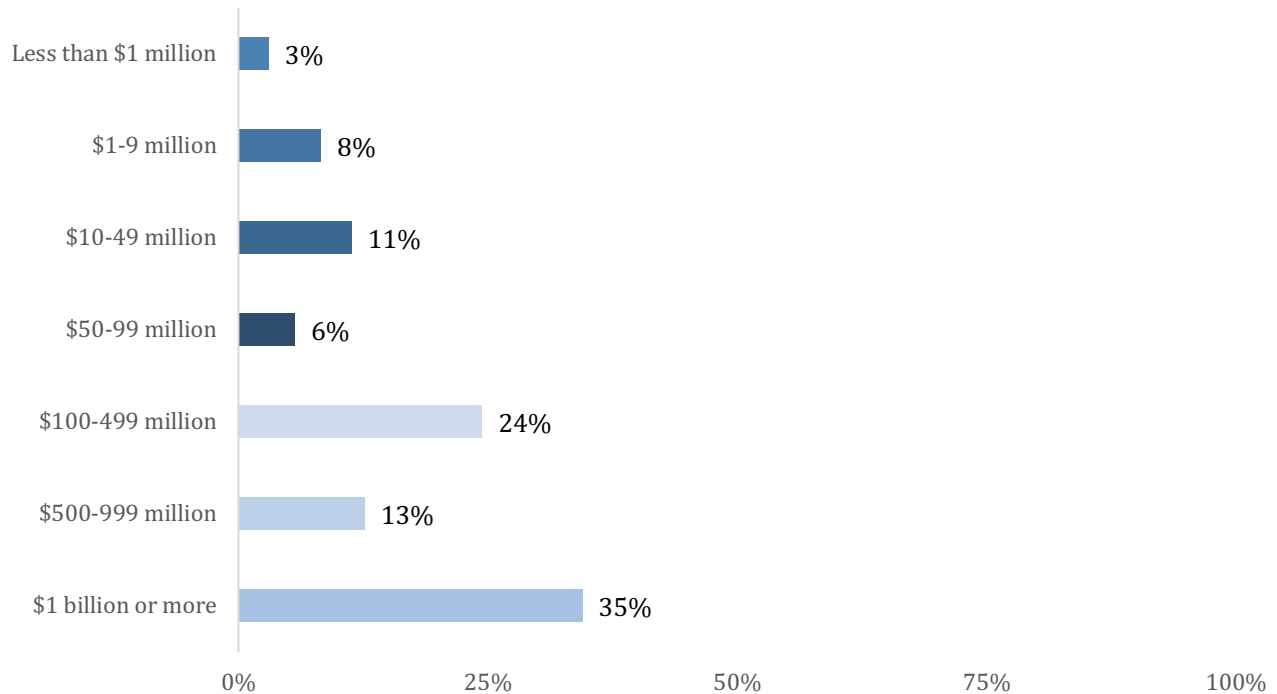
Showing only the top 10 most selected options.

Sample Size: 228 (73% of Respondents)

More than a third of respondents (35%) worked at the highest grossing organizations, with \$1 billion or more in annual sales. A similar number (37%) came from organizations with annual sales between \$100 million and \$999 million per year.

Just 3% of respondents worked at companies with annual sales under \$1 million.

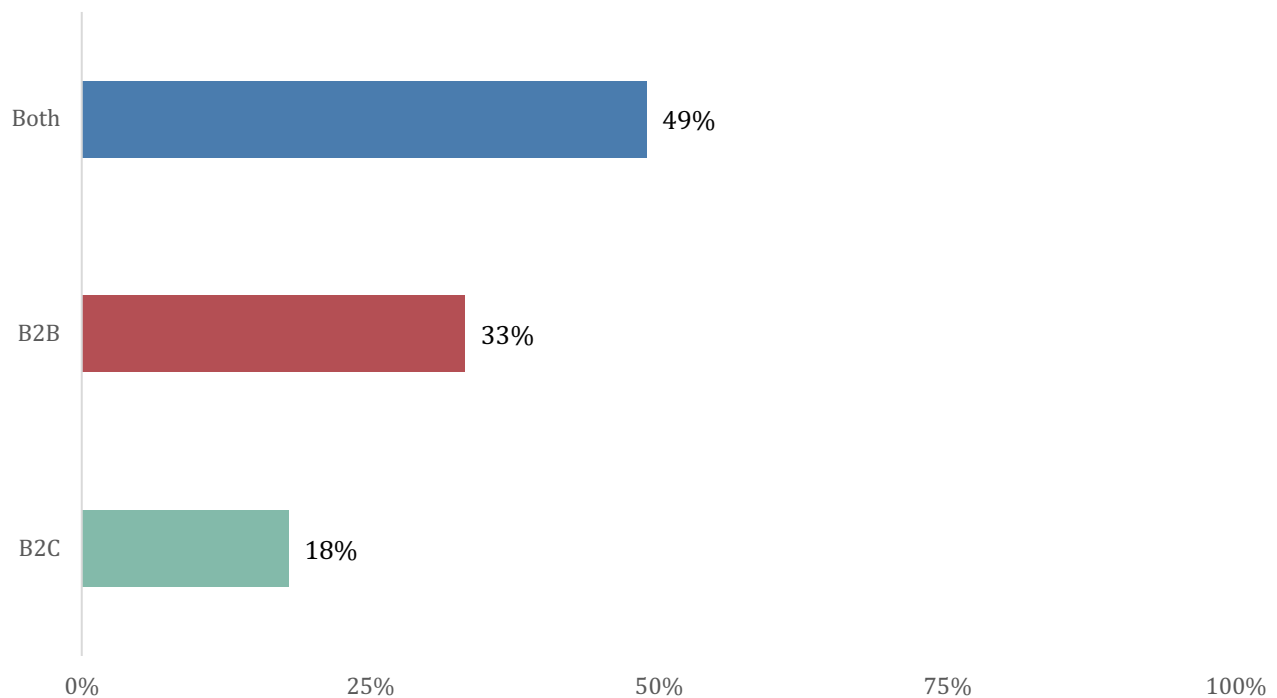
What are your organization's annual sales?



Sample Size: 229 (73% of Respondents)

Half of respondents (49%) worked at companies that market to both consumers and other businesses (hybrids). A third (33%) worked at B2Bs, and less than a fifth worked at companies marketing strictly to consumers (18%).

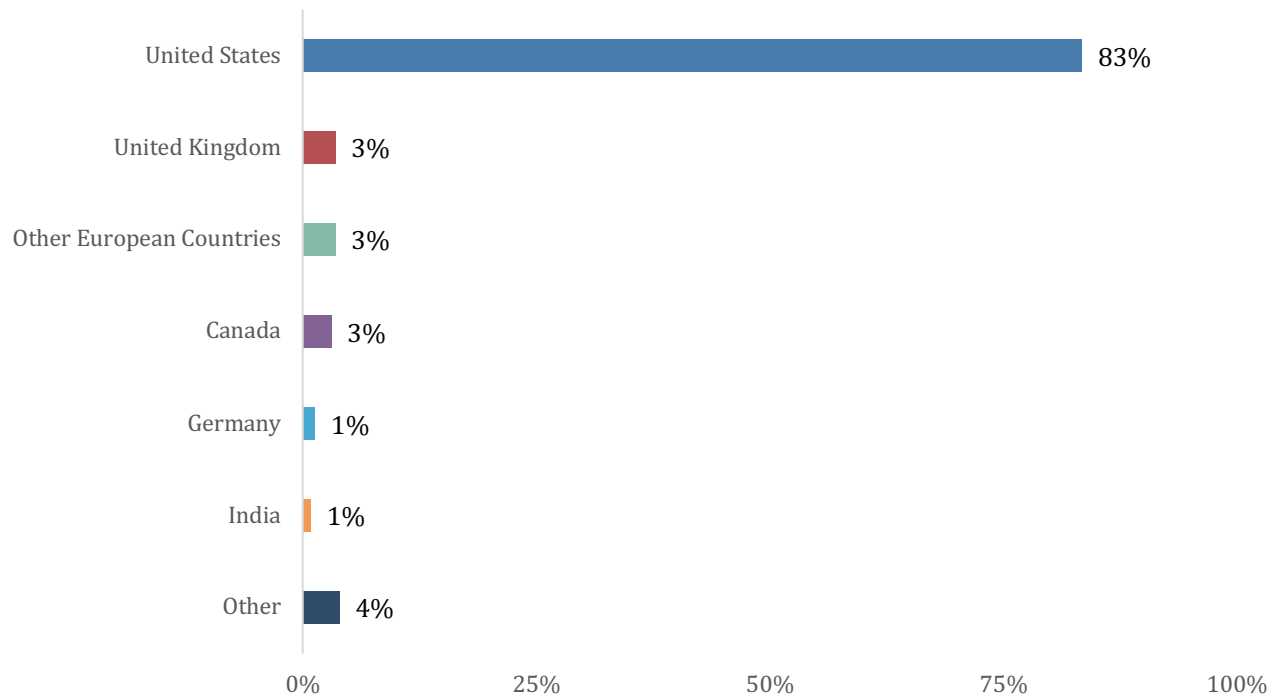
Is your company B2B, B2C or both?



Sample Size: 229 (73% of Respondents)

Eight in ten respondents (83%) were located in the U.S. Another 3% each were in the U.K., other European countries, or Canada.

What country are you located in?



Sample Size: 229 (73% of Respondents)

Total does not add up to 100% due to rounding.

APPENDIX - RESEARCHSCAPE METHODOLOGY

On behalf of Evergage, Researchscape conducted a survey of 314 respondents in order to better understand the behavior, usage, and attitudes of marketing professionals toward personalization. The online survey was fielded from February 21 to March 21, 2019. The survey results were not weighted. Throughout the research process, Researchscape followed a Total Survey Quality approach designed to minimize error at each stage. Total Survey Quality, also known as Total Survey Error, recognizes that multiple sources of error can reduce the validity of survey research.