Strategies and Tactics for Data-Driven Marketing
Measuring the Usage and Success of Marketing Personalization

Ascend2 research conducted in partnership with Return Path
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Introduction

The inbox is a battlefield. In order to ensure their messages stand out in both the inbox and in subscribers minds, marketers need to collect, analyze, and incorporate data into their marketing strategies.

But what are consumer marketers doing to achieve this important goal for data-driven marketing? To find out, Return Path in partnership with Ascend2 fielded the Data-Driven Marketing Survey and completed interviews with 229 marketing influencers, primarily conducting business in the B2C space.

This report, titled Strategies and Tactics for Data-Driven Marketing, we share the opinions of these marketers, including:

- Key goals to an effective data-driven marketing strategy
- How many marketers have a successful strategy
- Barriers to data-driven marketing
- Most effective personalization tactics
- And more!

Feel free to put this research to work in your own marketing strategy. The charts may be used in your blogs or shared on social media, but please be sure to include the proper research credit.
Most important goals

Personalizing the customer experience is a top priority for 72 percent of data-driven marketing strategies. The following pages will provide strategic and tactical insights to achieve data-driven marketing goals for personalization and customer acquisition.

What are the most important goals of a data-driven marketing strategy?

- Personalizing the customer experience: 72%
- Acquiring new customers: 41%
- Targeting individual market segments: 37%
- Measuring data-driven marketing ROI: 37%
- Growing the marketing database: 30%
- Integrating data across platforms: 29%
- Enriching data quality & completeness: 25%

Data-Driven Marketing Survey/B2C Benchmarks
Return Path in Partnership with Ascend2, August 2016
Comparing data-driven marketing success

Four out of ten organizations consider their data-driven marketing strategy best-in-class compared to their competition, while a total of 16 percent have yet to achieve success.

Which best describes the success of your data-driven marketing strategy compared to competitors?

- **Very successful (best-in-class)**: 40%
- **Somewhat successful (above average)**: 44%
- **Somewhat unsuccessful (below average)**: 14%
- **Very unsuccessful (worst-in-class)**: 2%

Data-Driven Marketing Survey/B2C Benchmarks
Return Path in Partnership with Ascend2, August 2016
Most significant barriers to success

Enriching data quality and completeness is a significant barrier to data-driven marketing success for 49 percent of organizations. Integrating data across platforms and measuring the ROI of data-driven marketing are also significant barriers for 41 percent each.

What are the most significant barriers to achieving data-driven marketing success?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enriching data quality &amp; completeness</td>
<td>49%</td>
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<td>Integrating data across platforms</td>
<td>41%</td>
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<td>Growing the marketing database</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeting individual market segments</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data-Driven Marketing Survey/B2C Benchmarks
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Strategic goals versus success barriers

Personalization is seen as important goal for twice as many marketers than it is viewed a barrier to success. Conversely, data integration and quality issues present a more significant barrier than they offer as an important goal.

Analyzing strategic goals versus barriers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Important Goals</th>
<th>Most Significant Barriers</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personalizing the customer experience</td>
<td>35%</td>
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Types of sales cycles encountered

Data-driven marketing is useful in all types of sales scenarios but, the longer and more complex a sales cycle is, the more essential data-driven marketing personalization is to achieving goals.

Which best describes the type of sales cycle your organization most often encounters?

- Complex sale (long cycle, many influencers) 43%
- Direct sale (short cycle, few influencers) 37%
- Complex sale and direct sale equally 20%

Data-Driven Marketing Survey/B2C Benchmarks
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Most effective personalization tactics used

Personalizing targeted landing pages and email messages are considered among the most effective data-driven marketing tactics used by 45 percent and 42 percent of marketers respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personalization Tactics</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Targeted landing pages</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email message personalization</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web content personalization</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retargeted advertising</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triggered email campaigns</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact data segmentation</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead intelligence collection</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data-Driven Marketing Survey/B2C Benchmarks
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How the effectiveness of personalization is changing

While only four percent of organizations are experiencing a marginal decrease in effectiveness, a predominant total of 96 percent are experiencing an increase in the effectiveness of data-driven marketing personalization.

How is the effectiveness of data-driven marketing personalization changing?

- Effectiveness is increasing significantly: 41%
- Effectiveness is increasing marginally: 55%
- Effectiveness is decreasing marginally: 4%
- Effectiveness is decreasing significantly: 0%

Data-Driven Marketing Survey/B2C Benchmarks
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Most difficult personalization tactics to execute

Collecting lead intelligence, and using this data to personalize web content, are among the most difficult personalization tactics to execute for 45 percent and 41 percent of marketers respectively.

**What are the most difficult data-driven marketing personalization tactics to execute?**

- Lead intelligence collection: 45%
- Web content personalization: 41%
- Contact data segmentation: 40%
- Retargeted advertising: 39%
- Triggered email campaigns: 30%
- Email message personalization: 26%
- Targeted landing pages: 22%

Data-Driven Marketing Survey/B2C Benchmarks
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Resources used to execute personalization

Faced with a high degree of difficulty and a lack of internal capabilities, 28 percent of marketers outsource all data-driven marketing personalization tactics, while 12 percent have the capabilities to execute these tactics entirely in-house.

Which best describes the resources used to execute data-driven marketing personalization tactics?

- Outsourced to a specialist: 28%
- Combination of outsourced and in-house resources: 60%
- In-house resources only: 12%

Data-Driven Marketing Survey/B2C Benchmarks
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Tactical effectiveness versus difficulty

The two most effective tactics—targeted landing pages and email message personalization—present the least difficulty for marketers, while the least effective tactic—lead intelligence collection—is seen as 13 percent more difficult than it is effective.

Analyzing tactical effectiveness versus difficulty.

Data-Driven Marketing Survey/B2C Benchmarks
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About the Research Partners

Return Path

Return Path analyzes the world’s largest collection of email data to show businesses how to stay connected to their audiences, strengthen their customer engagement, and protect their brands from fraud. Our data solutions help analysts understand consumer behavior and market trends. We help mailbox providers and security providers around the world deliver great user experiences and build trust in email by ensuring that wanted messages reach the inbox while spam and abuse don’t. Learn more at ReturnPath.com

Ascend2

Marketing software and data companies, and digital marketing agencies partner with Ascend2 to reliably generate demand and supplement marketing content. Our Research Partner Programs are transparent – spotlighting your brand and the interests of your market. Learn more at Ascend2.com

Methodology

Ascend2 benchmarks the performance of popular digital marketing practices using a standardized questionnaire and proprietary 3-Minute Survey format. This survey was conducted online from a research subscriber panel of business, marketing, and sales professionals. The following are represented in this report:

Role in the Company
Owner / Partner / CXO 25%
VP / Director / Manager 57%
Non-Management 18%

Number of Employees
More than 500 82%
50 to 500 12%
Fewer than 50 6%

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