

2009 -10 B2B Marketing Benchmark Report

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MarketingSherpa's 2009 -10 B2B Marketing Benchmark Report

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	ii
Director's Note	2
B2B Marketing Research Highlights	3
1. Signs of Optimism among Marketers for the Rest of 2009	3
What is Your Business Outlook in Relation to an Economic Recovery This Year?	3
2. Search Generating Bulk of B2B Leads – But How Good are They?	4
The Quality and Quantity of Leads Generated by Search Sources	4
3. B2B Ahead of B2C in the Adoption of a Social Media Strategy	5
Percent of Organizations Using Some Form of Social Media Marketing and PR.....	5
4. Use of Information Resources in the Complex Purchase Process.....	6
Changing Use of Information Resources by Technology Buyers in the Past Six Months.....	6
5. Managing the Pipeline from Lead Generation to Sales Conversion	7
How Organizations are Managing Their Marketing-to-Sales Process.....	7
6. How Well Managed is the Hub of Your Marketing Strategy?	8
Agencies and Consultants Rate How Their Clients are Managing Website Capabilities.....	8
Chapter 1: The Increasingly Difficult Challenge Facing B2B Marketers.....	9
1.01 Most Significant Challenges for B2B Marketers to Overcome Today	9
1.02 Challenges, by Organization Size.....	10
1.03 Challenges, by Industry Sector.....	11
Marketer Insights: Overcoming Challenges in the Business Technology Sector	12
Marketer Insights: Overcoming Challenges in the Industrial and Manufacturing Sector	15
Marketer Insights: Overcoming Challenges in Other Sectors.....	17
Chapter 2: Marketing Budgets and Financial Metrics.....	19
2.01 Share of 2009 Revenue Projected to be Spent on Marketing, by Organization Size	19
2.02 Share of Revenue Spent on Marketing, by Industry Sector	20
2.03 Share of Marketing Budget Spent on People vs. Online Programs, by Organization Size.....	21
2.04 Share of Marketing Budget Spent on People vs. Online Programs, by Industry Sector.....	22
2.05 Average Profit Margins for 2008	23
2.06 Average Tactical Allocation of Online Marketing Budget Excluding Staff	24
2.07 Tactical Allocation of Online Marketing Budget Excluding Staff, by Organization Size.....	25
2.08 Tactical Allocation of Online Marketing Budget Excluding Staff, by Industry Sector.....	26
2.09 Percent of Leads Generated Versus Budget for Each Source	27
Notes from the Field: A Strategy for Defending Your Marketing Budget.....	28
2.10 Outsourcing Plans for Key Marketing Functions.....	31
2.11 Outsourcing Key Marketing Functions, by Organization Size	32
2.12 Outsourcing Key Marketing Functions, by Industry Sector	33
2.13 Marketers Tracking or Planning to Track Customer Metrics	34
2.14 Marketers Tracking Customer Metrics, by Organization Size	35
2.15 Marketers Tracking Customer Metrics, by Industry Sector	36
2.16 B2B Marketers Tracking Customer Metrics, by Size of Target Customer Organization	37
Chapter 3: Marketing Strategies for an Economic Recovery	38
3.01 Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the economy for the remainder of 2009?	38
3.02 How Optimists Think the Importance of These Tactics Will Change by the End of 2009	39
3.03 How Optimists Think Budgets for These Tactics Will Change by the End of 2009	40
3.04 What Economic Optimists and Pessimists are Spending on Marketing	41
3.05 Online Marketing Budget Allocation, Excluding Staff.....	42
3.06 Marketers Not Currently Outsourcing but Planning to, by Economic Outlook	43
3.07 Lead Quality a More Pertinent Marketing Challenge Than Quantity for Optimists	44
3.08 How Economic Optimists and Pessimists Manage Leads Differently	45
3.09 What Marketers Know About Leads Before Handing Off to Sales, by Economic Outlook.....	46

Marketer Insights: Strategies and Tactics for a Rebounding Economy	47	Search to.....	78
Chapter 4: Marketing Tactics and Best Practices...	52	4.22 Performance Metrics for Paid Search on Google AdWords, Yahoo!, etc.....	79
Email Marketing.....	52	Notes from the Field: Rethink Your Search Marketing to Boost ROI.....	80
4.01 Effectiveness of Email Marketing Tactics Rated.....	52	Offline Marketing	83
4.02 Email Marketing Tactics Rated Effective, by Organization Size	53	4.23 The Quality and Quantity of Leads Generated by Offline Marketing Tactics	83
4.03 Email Marketing Tactics Rated Effective, by Industry Sector	54	4.24 High Quantity Versus High Quality Leads Generated by Offline Marketing Tactics	84
4.04 Which Email Tactics Are Being Put to the Test?.....	55	Public Relations	85
Notes from the Field: Testing Results in 1000% Increase in Opt-Ins.....	56	4.25 The Quality and Quantity of Leads Generated by Public Relations Tactics	85
4.05 Performance Metrics for Email Campaigns to House Lists.....	58	4.26 High Quantity Versus High Quality Leads Generated by Public Relations Tactics	86
4.06 Performance Metrics for Ads in Third-Party Emails and Enewsletters.....	59	4.27 The Quality and Quantity of Leads Generated by News Release Tactics.....	87
Social Media Marketing	60	4.28 High Quantity Versus High Quality Leads Generated by News Release Tactics.....	88
4.07 B2B Marketers Using Social Media Tactics....	60	Notes from the Field: Five Steps to Implementing PR 2.0	89
4.08 Effectiveness of Social Media Tactics and Web 2.0 Technologies Rated	61	Trade Shows.....	91
4.09 Social Media Tactics and Web 2.0 Technologies Rated Effective, by Organization Size	62	4.29 Organizations Spending Less on 2009-2010 Trade Show Plans	91
4.10 Social Media Tactics and Web 2.0 Technologies Rated Effective, by Industry Sector.....	63	4.30 The Quality and Quantity of Leads Generated by Trade Show Tactics.....	92
Notes from the Field: Generating Leads with Social Media Strategy	64	4.31 High Quantity Versus High Quality Leads Generated by Trade Show Tactics	93
Website.....	68	Notes from the Field: On-Site Conference Doubles Attendance Virtually	94
4.11 Management of Website Capabilities Rated..	68	Notes from the Field: Stealth Product Launch at Trade Show Generates 374% More Leads	97
4.12 Managing Website Capabilities at a High Level, by Organization Size	69	Pricing Information	100
4.13 Managing Website Capabilities at a High Level, by Industry Sector	70	4.32 Marketer Attitudes About Access to Pricing Information.....	100
4.14 Web Metrics Tracked by B2B Marketers	71	4.33 How the Internet has Changed Access to Pricing Information, by Industry Sector	101
4.15 Web Metrics Tracked Regularly, by Organization Size.....	72	Notes from the Field: Integrated Marketing 2.0 Tactics Boosts Lead Generation and Reduces Cost-per-Lead	102
4.16 Web Metrics Tracked Regularly, by Industry Sector.....	73	Chapter 5: Lead Management and the B2B Marketing-to-Sales Process	105
4.17 Buyers are Open to Providing a Website With Professional Contact Information.....	74	5.01 A Long Road From Lead Generation to Sales Conversion	105
4.18 What Buyers Expect Once They Have Registered on a Website.....	75	5.02 Average Marketing-to-Sales Process Conversion Rates.....	106
Search Marketing.....	76	5.03 Comparing Average Closure Rates of Sales Force and Channel Partners.....	107
4.19 The Quality and Quantity of Leads Generated by Search Sources	76	5.04 How Organizations are Managing Their Marketing-to-Sales Process	108
4.20 High Quantity Versus High Quality Leads Generated by Search Sources	77		
4.21 How Often do Business Technology Buyers Use			

5.05 Marketing-to-Sales Process Best Practices, by Business Technology Marketers.....	109
5.06 Marketing-to-Sales Process Best Practices, by Industrial / Manufacturing Marketers	110
5.07 Marketing-to-Sales Process Best Practices, by Marketers in Other Sectors.....	111
Notes from the Field: Seven Tips for Effective Lead Nurturing Now	112
5.08 Information Obtained Before Hand-Off to Sales, by Large Organization	117
5.09 Information Obtained Before Hand-Off to Sales, by Medium Organization	118
5.10 Information Obtained Before Hand-Off to Sales, by Small Organization.....	119
Notes from the Field: Six Strategies for Partnering with the Sales Team on Lead Scoring	120
5.11 After Lead Generation, Which Stage in the Process Challenges Marketers Most?	124
Marketer Insights: Key Challenges of Lead Management and the Marketing-to-Sales Process	125
Chapter 6: Social Media's Role in Building B2B Brands.....	127
B2B is Leading the Adoption of Emerging Social Media Tactics	127
6.01 The Adoption of Social Media Tactics – B2C Versus B2B	127
6.02 The Most Effective use of Social Media is Achieving B2B Branding Goals.....	128
6.03 Planning and Executing Social Media Programs	129
“Conversation” is Driving the use of Social Media for Branding	130
6.04 Where Customers get the Information They Share with Peers about Your Brand Online	130
6.05 Responding When the Conversation about Your Brand is Negative	131
7.06 A Social Media Policy is Needed to Manage B2B Brand Communications	132
What Prevents a B2B Organization from Adopting Social Media?	133
6.07 “Lack of Knowledgeable Staff” a Significant Barrier to Social Media for B2B Marketers	133
6.08 “Lack of Knowledge” Leads to Misconceptions about Measurability and Effectiveness.....	134
6.09 “Lack of Knowledge” Leads to Missed Opportunities, like Social Media Releases	135
Notes from the Field: Creating and Distributing a Social Media Release	136
Integrating Social Media Tactics into the B2B Marketing Mix.....	139
6.10 Marketers are Integrating Social Media with Online and Offline Tactics.....	139
6.11 How Social Media Fits with Other Tactics in the B2B Marketing Mix	140
Notes from the Field: Generating B2B Leads with Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Blogging	141
Chapter 7: The Buying Process for Large and Complex Purchases	145
Factors for Aligning the Selling Cycle with the Buying Process	145
7.01 How Technology Budgets are Changing Compared with Same Quarter of Previous Year .	145
7.02 How the Economy has Changed the Buying Process for Purchases Over \$25,000	146
7.03 How the Economy has Changed the Buying Process, by Purchase Amount	147
7.04 The Length of the Buying Process Today, by Purchase Amount	148
7.05 The Number of People Involved in the Buying Process Today, by Purchase Amount	149
7.06 The Importance of Factors Involved in the Purchase Decision have Changed	150
7.07 How the Economy has Affected Relationships with Vendors	151
7.08 How the Economy has Affected Relationships with Vendors, by Purchase Amount	152
Technology Buyer Insights: The Impact of the Economy on Purchasing	153
Information Resources Relied Upon During the Buying Process	155
7.09 Which Information Resources Buyers Use in Key Stages of a Purchase	155
7.10 How Trusted is the Accuracy of Information Found on the Following Resources?	156
7.11 To What Extent does Information from Resources Influence Selection of the Vendor?	157
7.12 Changes in the Use of These Information Resources in the Past Six Months	158
Chapter 8: Marketing Trends for the Business Technology Sector	159
The Challenge of the Unpredictable Sales Cycles	159
8.01 Fewer Technology Companies Experiencing Short Sales Cycle of Less Than 3 Months	159
8.02 Sales Cycle Shifting to 3-6 Month Range for More Technology Companies.....	160
8.03 Technology Companies With 7-12 Month Sales Cycles Trending Downward.....	160
8.04 Bumpy Trend for Organizations With Long Term Sales Cycles	161

Business and Budget Trends	162	Marketers “Track Regularly”	181
8.05 Share of Revenue Spent on Marketing by Large Technology Organizations	162	8.31 Lead Generation Effectiveness on General Search Engines	182
8.06 Share of Revenue Spent on Marketing by Mid-Size Technology Organizations.....	163	8.32 Lead Generation Effectiveness on Vertical Search Engines	183
8.07 Share of Revenue Spent on Marketing by Small Technology Organizations	163	8.33 Lead Generation Effectiveness of Search Engine Optimization	184
8.08 Share of Marketing Budget Spent Online by Large Technology Organizations.....	164	Trade Show Marketing Trends.....	185
8.09 Share of Marketing Budget Spent Online by Mid-Size Technology Organizations	165	8.34 2008-2009 Spending Plans for Technology Trade Show Marketing	185
8.10 Share of Marketing Budget Spent Online by Small Technology Organizations	165	8.35 2009-2010 Spending Plans for Technology Trade Show Marketing	185
8.11 Outsourcing Tactical Marketing Functions by Large Organizations (>1000 Emp).....	166	Trends in Managing the Marketing-to-Sales Pipeline	186
8.12 Outsourcing Tactical Marketing Functions by Mid-Size Organizations (100-1000 Emp).....	167	8.36 What Technology Marketers Know About Leads Before the Hand-Off to Sales	186
8.13 Outsourcing Tactical Marketing Functions by Small Organizations (<100 Emp).....	167	8.37 What Technology Marketers are Doing With Leads in the Pipeline	187
8.14 Customer Metrics Tracked by Technology Marketers	168	Chapter 9: Marketing Benchmarks for the Industrial Sector.....	188
8.15 Feedback Rate From Technology Channel Partners	169	Challenges for Industrial Marketers Today.....	188
8.16 Closure Rates of Internal Sales Force Versus Channel Partners	170	9.01 Marketing Challenges Most Pertinent to the Industrial Sector	188
Email Marketing Tactics and Trends.....	171	Marketer Insights: Addressing the Challenges with Proven Strategies	189
8.17 Email Tactics Rated ‘Very Effective’ for Targeting Large Organizations (>1000 Emp)	171	Industrial Marketing Tactics	191
8.18 Email Tactic Rated ‘Very Effective’ for Targeting Mid-Size Organizations (100-1000 Emp).....	172	9.02 Website has Become Hub of Marketing Strategy – But How Well is it Managed?	191
8.19 Email Tactic Rated ‘Very Effective’ for Targeting Small Organizations (<100 Emp).....	172	9.03 Primary Strategic Objectives for Industrial Websites.....	192
8.20 Email Design Tests Rated ‘Very Effective’	173	9.04 Capabilities Most Often Found on Industrial Websites	193
8.21 Email Targeting Tests Rated ‘Very Effective’ ..	174	9.05 Effectiveness of Search Marketing Tactics for Generating Industrial Buyer Leads	194
8.22 Average Open Rates of Solo Email Blasts ...	175	9.06 Effectiveness of Offline Marketing Tactics for Generating Industrial Buyer Leads	195
8.23 Average Click Rates of Solo Email Blasts	176	9.07 Effectiveness of Offline PR-related Tactics for Generating Industrial Buyer Leads	196
8.24 Average Conversion Rates of Solo Email Blasts..	176	9.08 Effectiveness of Event-related Tactics for Generating Industrial Buyer Leads	197
8.25 Average Open Rates of Email Newsletters..	177	9.09 Industrial Marketers Reveal Trade Show Spending Plans for 2009 – 2010.....	198
8.26 Average Click Rates of Email Newsletters...	178	The Industrial Lead Management Process	199
8.27 Average Conversion Rates of Email Newsletters	178	9.10 We Have a Process for Nurturing Leads That are not Ready for the Sales Force	199
Website and Search Marketing Tactics and Trends	179	9.11 We Have a Process for Sales to hand Leads back to Marketing.....	199
8.28 Organizations Managing Their Website Capabilities at a “High Level”	179	9.12 We Have a Rating System for how ‘Qualified’ or ‘Warm’ the Lead is	200
8.29 Website Metrics That Technology Marketers “Track Regularly”	180		
8.30 Website Visitor Behaviors That Technology			

9.13 Sales and Marketing Collaborate to Exactly Define a ‘Sales-Ready Lead’ 200

9.14 Marketing ‘Closes the Loop’ on Every Lead, Tracking it From Source to Conclusion.....201

9.15 We use a CRM System (Salesforce.com, Seibel, etc) to Manage Lead Pipeline201

9.16 We are Able to Measure the Revenue Contributions of Lead Generation Programs 202

9.17 We Identify the Source of Leads (Email vs. Search vs. Salesperson, etc) 202

9.18 Information Obtained on a Lead Before Hand-Off From Marketing to Sales..... 203

Chapter 10: Best Practices of B2B Agencies and Marketing Consultants..... 204

Agencies and Consultants Offer Their Specialized Perspective 204

10.01 New Business Outlook Improving for the Rest of 2009 204

10.02 Effectiveness of Email Marketing Tactics for Targeting Clients’ Buyers and Influencers 205

10.03 Effectiveness of Social Media Tactics for Targeting Clients’ Buyers and Influencers 206

10.04 Agencies and Consultants Rate how Well Clients are Managing Website Capabilities 207

10.05 Quantity and Quality of Leads Generated for Clients by Search Marketing Tactics..... 208

10.06 Quantity and Quality of Leads Generated for Clients by Offline Marketing Tactics 209

10.07 Quantity and Quality of Leads Generated for Clients by PR-Related Marketing Tactics.....210

Primary Research211

Methodology.....211

Demographics211

Organization Size211

Industry Sector 212

Professional Title..... 212

Research Partner..... 213

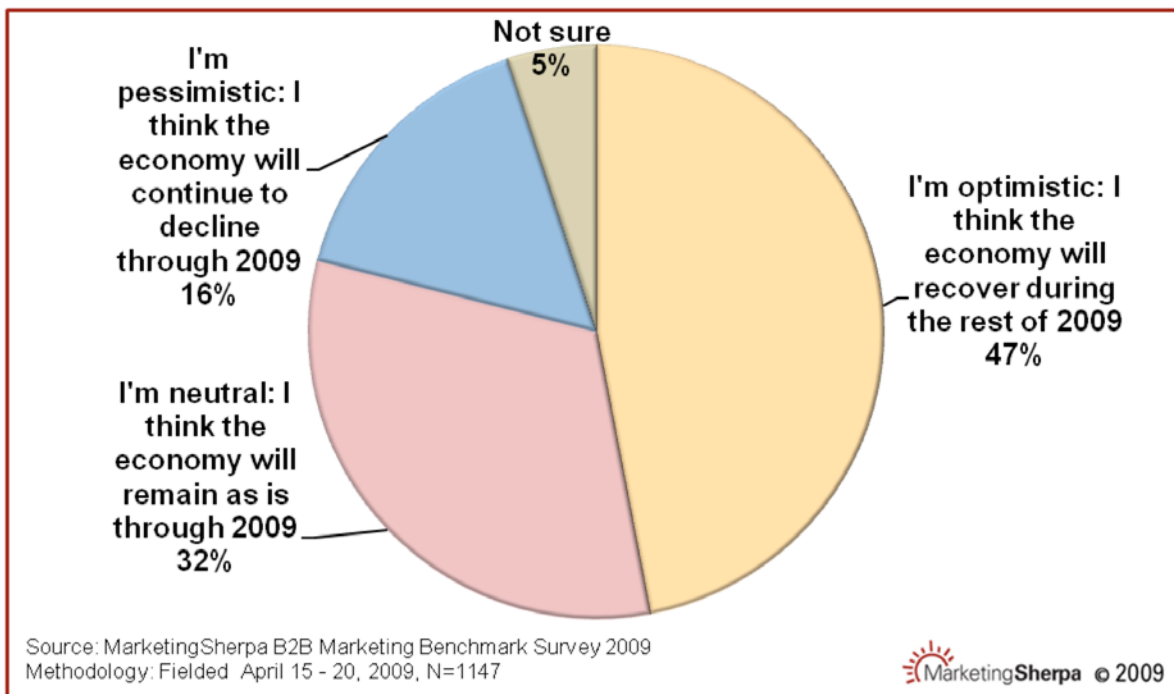
TechWeb Network..... 213

B2B Marketing Research Highlights

The publication of this report coincides with what is expected to be a turning point in the economic cycle – from recession to recovery. Following are highlights from the most comprehensive study available of B2B marketing at a cross roads.

1. Signs of Optimism among Marketers for the Rest of 2009

What is Your Business Outlook in Relation to an Economic Recovery This Year?



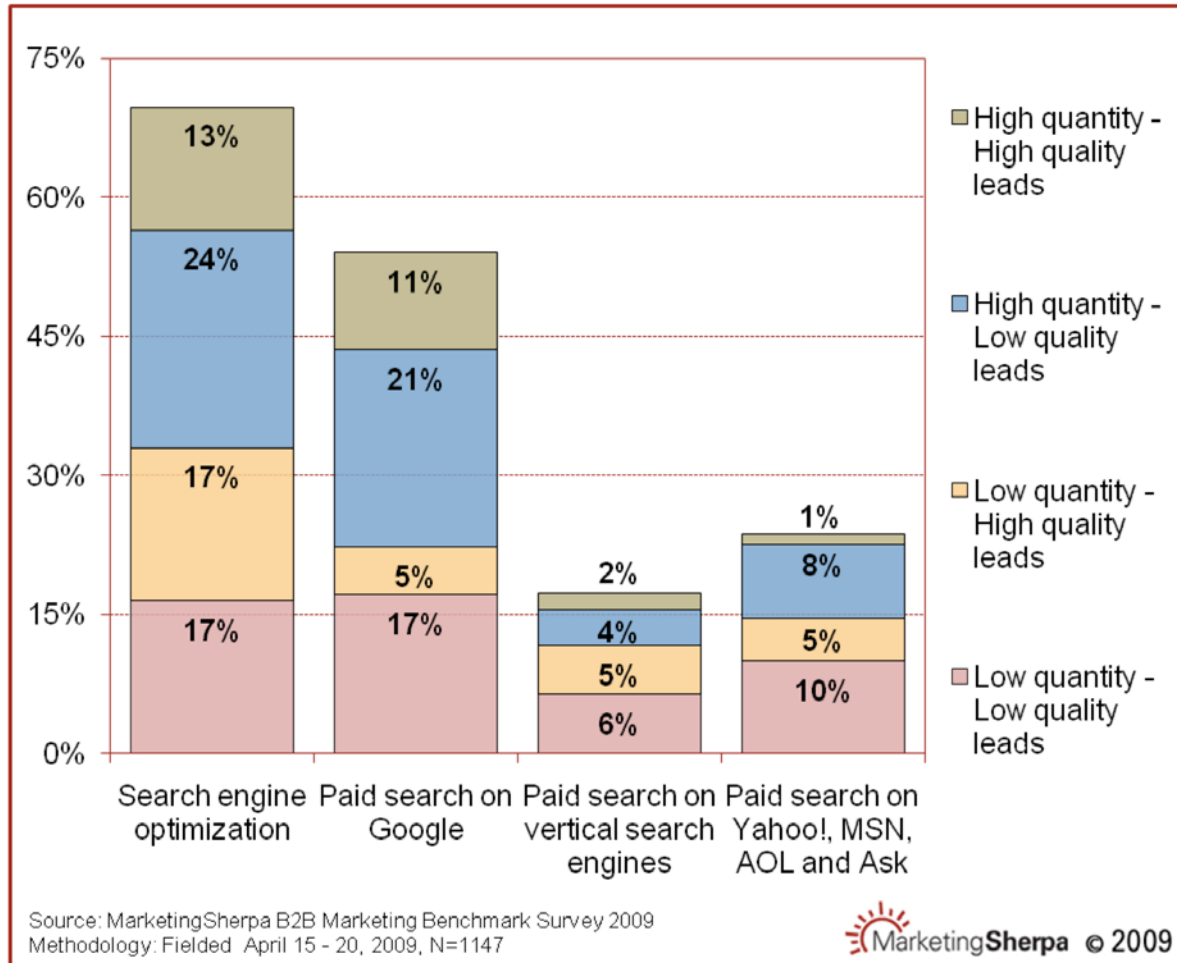
History has repeatedly shown us that the marketing organization is the first and hardest hit during difficult economic times. On the other hand, marketing also has the most to gain from a rebound so it's not surprising that they watch the economic barometer closely.

While 16% of B2B marketers continue to be pessimistic, nearly half of all respondents to this study are optimistic that we will see the economy begin to rebound during the remaining months of 2009.

The expectation of better days ahead will mean a change in marketing objectives and the strategies required to achieve them for 2010. Those organizations that have learned to be efficient marketers on a lean budget, will apply the lessons learned during these difficult times to become even more effective in the future.

2. Search Generating Bulk of B2B Leads – But How Good are They?

The Quality and Quantity of Leads Generated by Search Sources



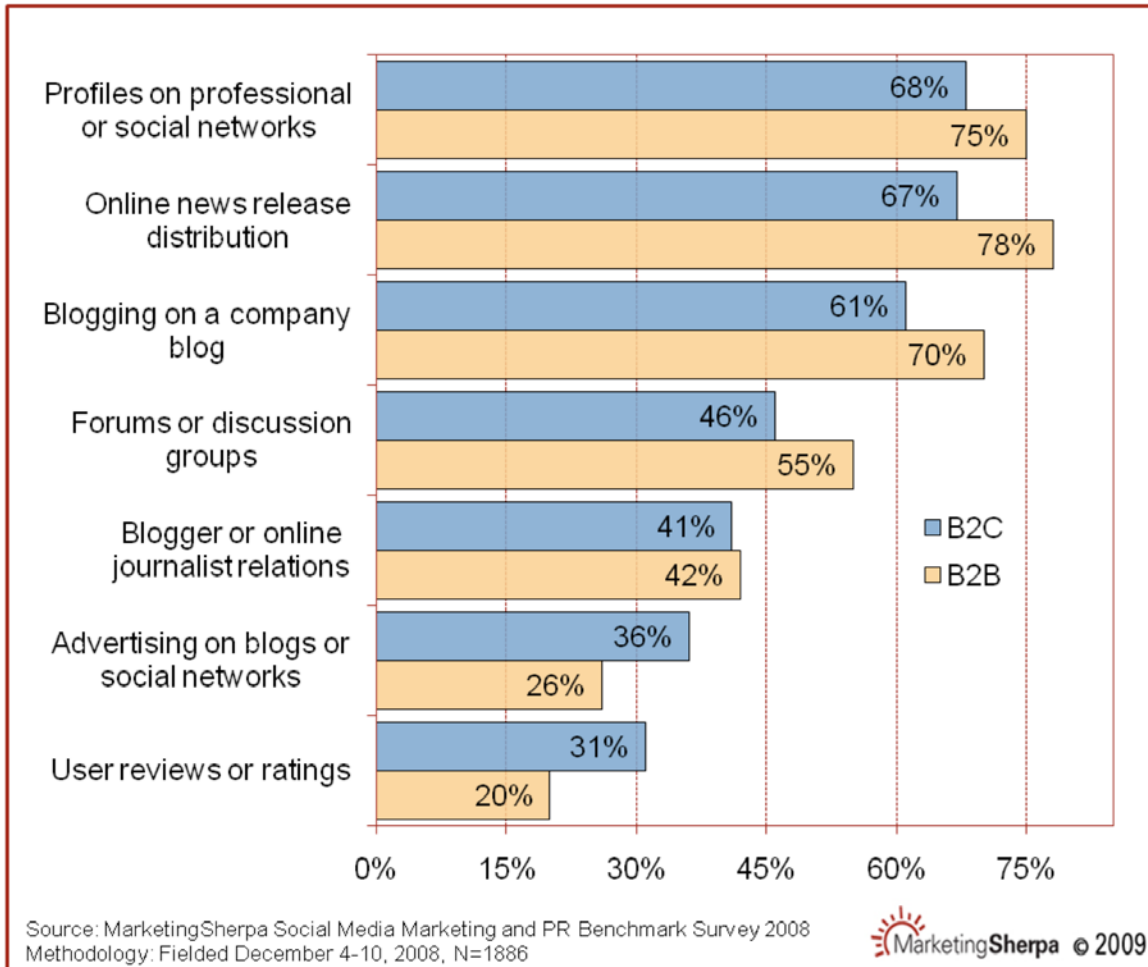
The success of a marketing program is too often judged by the quantity, rather than the quality, of leads produced. But when it comes to converting leads to revenue, the sales force will tell you that more isn't necessarily better – better is better.

Every organization needs to find the right balance between quantity and quality. Too many leads, even of high quality, and an overwhelmed sales team will be forced to allow opportunities to fall through the cracks. Too few leads or leads of low quality and sales force productivity will plummet.

Search has become an ideal solution to balancing lead flow because, in many cases, the spigot can simply be opened or closed to control volume. The more complex challenge is controlling lead quality. This requires a much more strategic approach to optimizing not only web pages for SEO, but in the case of paid search, carefully aligning the sequence of PPC keywords, ad listings and landing pages.

3. B2B Ahead of B2C in the Adoption of a Social Media Strategy

Percent of Organizations Using Some Form of Social Media Marketing and PR



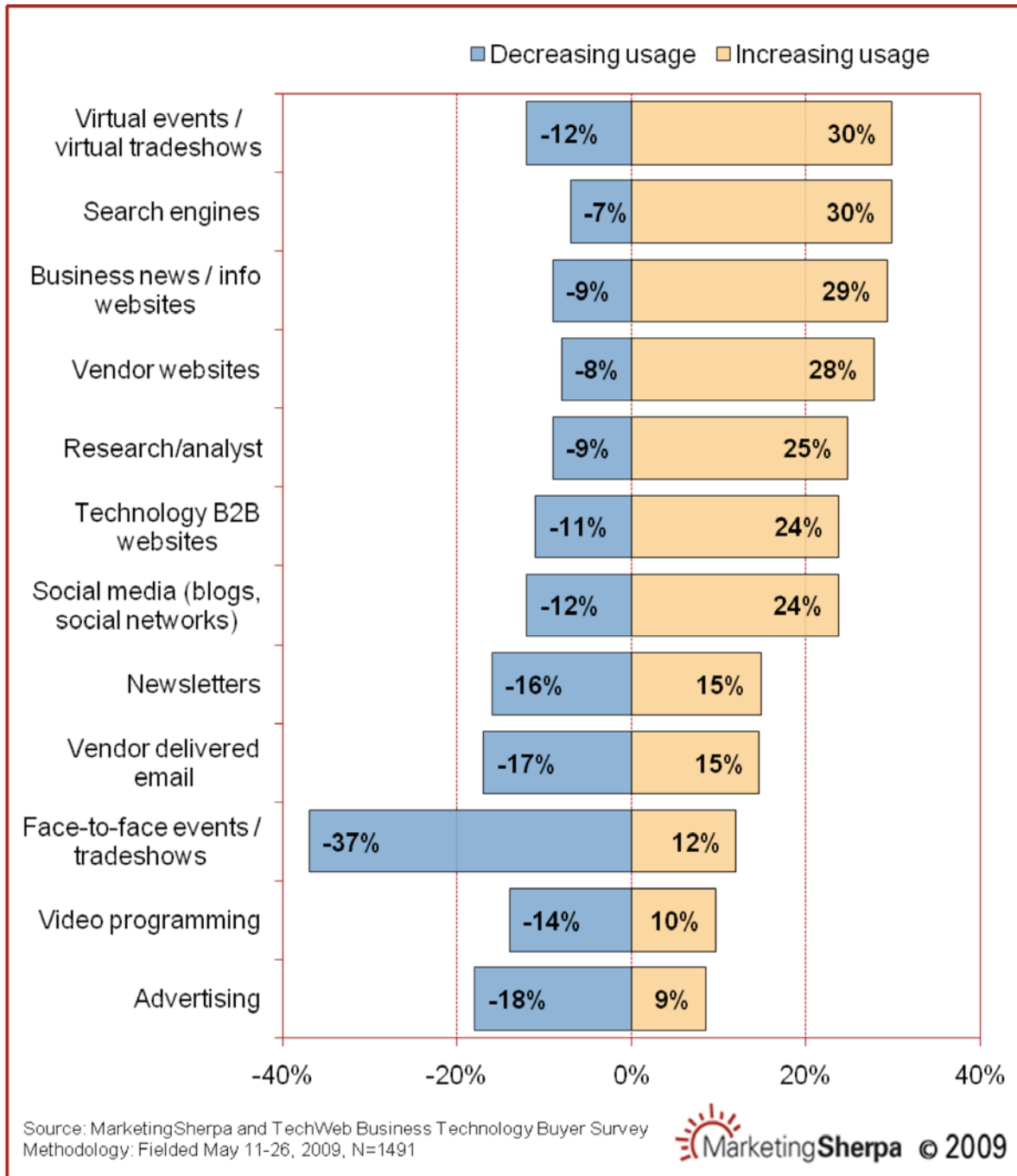
It's no secret that B2B marketing has often lagged behind B2C in the adoption of emerging new strategies. For example, as the World Wide Web first became an increasingly viable channel, B2B organizations would generally wait to see if a tactic worked in the consumer marketplace before implementing it in the business space. But, as this chart shows, B2B marketers have taken the lead in adopting nearly every category of social media.

This role reversal is not surprising when you look at the B2B marketing-to-sales process and its reliance on trusted relationships. After all, the primary purpose of social media is to provide the means for interactions between people to build on these relationships.

Information about your products and services is being shared via social media. Your prospects, customers, the press and other influencers in the marketing process are listening and commenting on what's being said. And your organization is either part of that conversation, or potentially a victim of it.

4. Use of Information Resources in the Complex Purchase Process

Changing Use of Information Resources by Technology Buyers in the Past Six Months

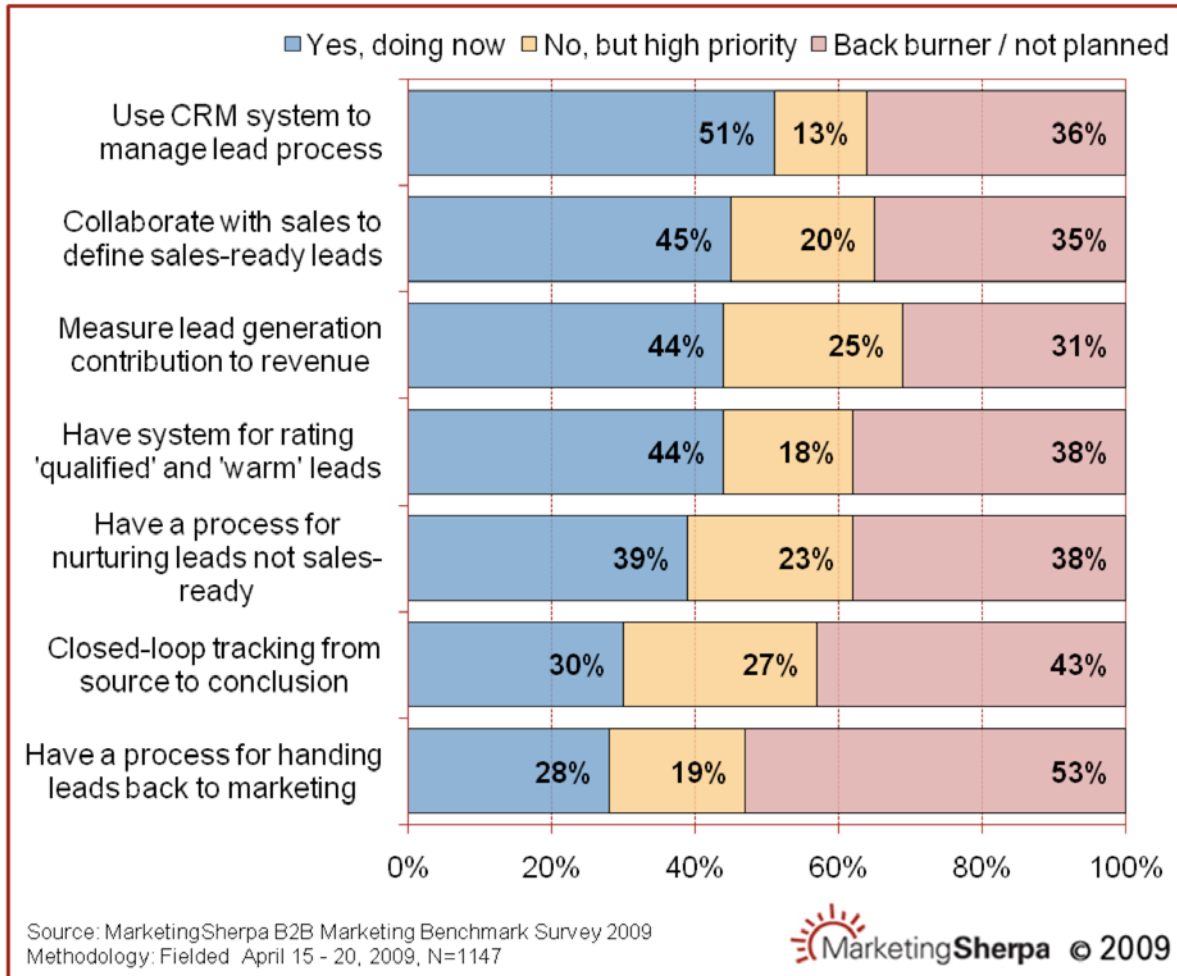


The sources of information relied upon for making large and complex purchases like business technology are changing at a rapid pace. The most dramatic change shown in this chart is the shift from face-to-face events and tradeshows to virtual events and tradeshows.

Use of search engines and websites to obtain the information needed for making large purchase decisions has continued to increase significantly during the past six months.

5. Managing the Pipeline from Lead Generation to Sales Conversion

How Organizations are Managing Their Marketing-to-Sales Process

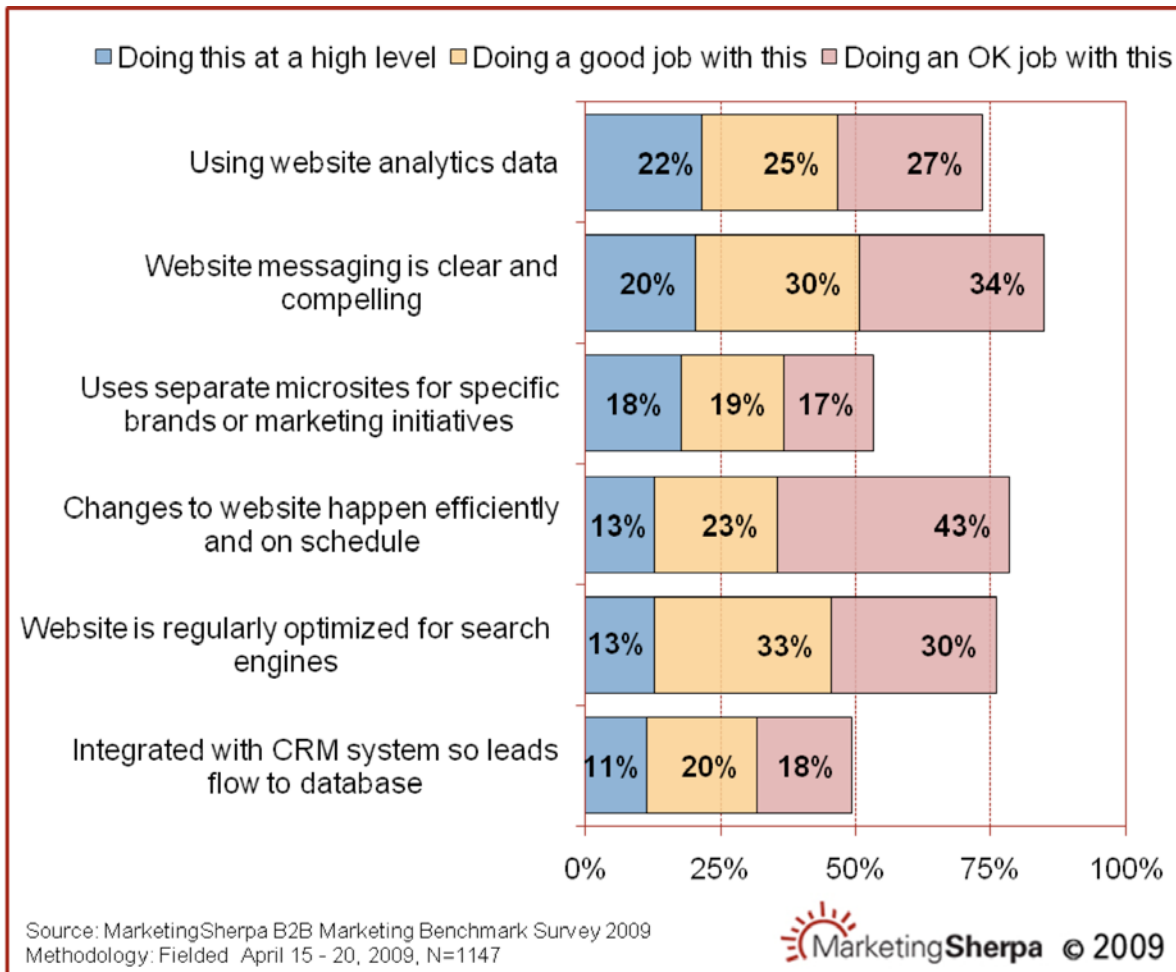


Closely aligning marketing and sales is essential to creating a productive new business pipeline. As this chart demonstrates, many marketing and sales organizations are collaborating at the shallow end of the pool – by mutually engaging in best practices like defining what a sales-ready lead is – but few are diving deeper to make the pipeline flow in both directions.

This two-way flow requires feedback from the sales organization about leads that are not ready for conversion. This feedback results in highly effective practices like the closed-loop tracking of leads from source to conversion. A pipeline flowing in both directions can also enable a process for sales to hand leads back to marketing for re-engagement and continued nurturing – creating opportunities for the sales force to pursue again in the future when the timing is optimal.

6. How Well Managed is the Hub of Your Marketing Strategy?

Agencies and Consultants Rate How Their Clients are Managing Website Capabilities



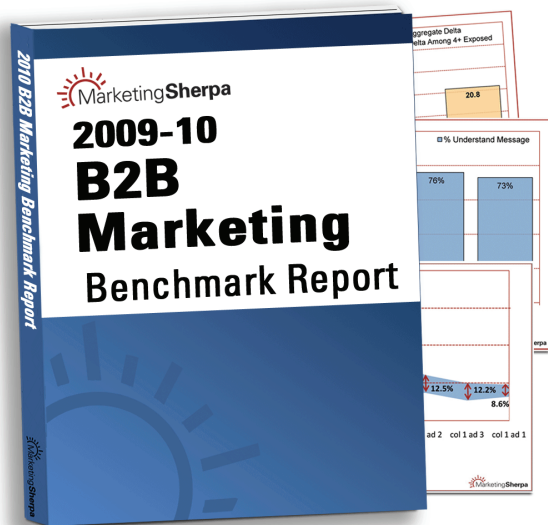
The foremost change in B2B marketing during the past decade or so has been the emergence of a company's website as the primary point of contact with prospects and customers. The website has also become an extremely efficient platform for integrating and automating the lead generation process. As a result, the role of a company's website has been elevated from simply a spoke in the marketing mix wheel to the hub of the marketing strategy.

So how well are B2B websites being managed? Rather than ask client-side marketers to self-evaluate their own performance, we asked their agencies and marketing consultants to provide a more objective assessment.

While many website capabilities are being managed at a high level, or clients were at least doing a good job of managing them, we found that system integration which enables the flow of leads generated on a website to the CRM system was a weak point. As we learn later in this study, the lead management process has become critical to the success of

marketing and sales programs, and it all begins with the timely transfer of leads from their source to the lead management automation.

Get the Data & Best Practices You Need to Capitalize on the Year Ahead



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