

Performance Marketing From the Leadership Perspective

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Research series conducted in partnership with Ascend2

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METHODOLOGY



For this research, Acronym and Ascend2 benchmarked the performance of marketing strategies, tactics, and the technology that drives them with a standardized online questionnaire and a proprietary 3-Minute Survey format.

This survey was conducted by a panel of marketing professionals and marketing research subscribers.

SURVEY RESPONDENTS

N = 142 Marketing Leaders

Primary Marketing Sector

B2B	28%
B2C	47%
B2B and B2C equally	25%

Performance Marketing From the Leadership Perspective



The performance marketing industry landscape has evolved drastically over the past year, impacting strategic objectives and how marketers execute to achieve their goals.

But what have marketing leaders learned and how are they proactively adapting to these shifts now and in the year ahead?

To help you answer this question, Acronym and Ascend2 conducted *Performance Marketing From the Leadership Perspective*.

This report, titled *Performance Marketing From the Leadership Perspective*, represents the opinions of the 142 marketing professionals responding to the survey who hold a top leadership role at their organization – owner, C-suite executive, or partner.

This research has been produced for your use. Put it to work in your own marketing strategy. Clip the charts and write about them in your blog or post them on social media. Please share this research credited as published.

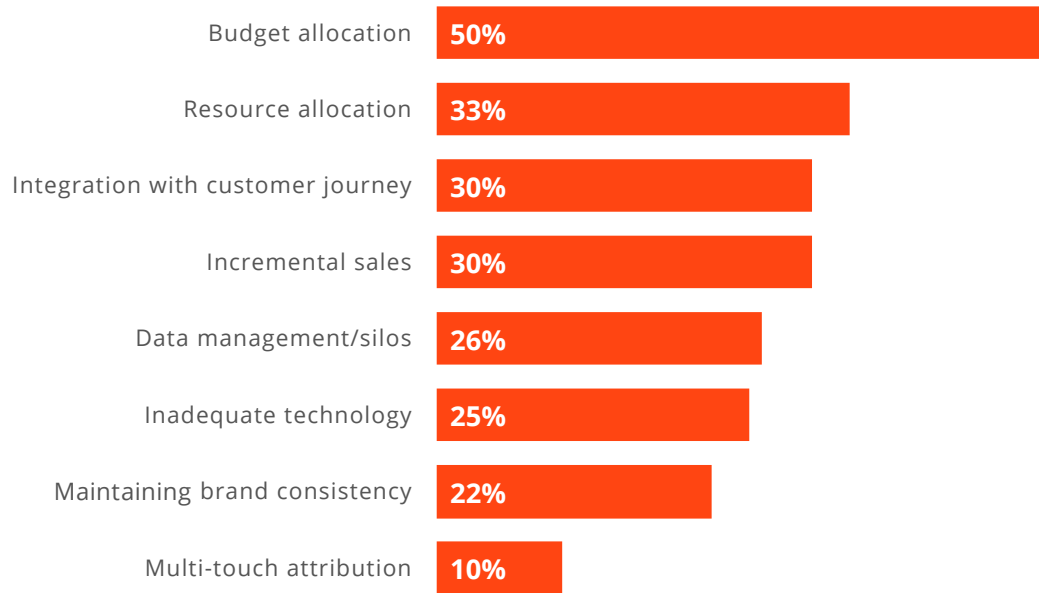


Challenges With Execution



Successfully executing performance-based marketing initiatives requires an in-depth strategy that can span many channels throughout the marketing funnel. Half (50%) of marketing leaders report that budget is an issue when executing such a strategy. One-third (33%) of respondents are challenged by finding and allocating an appropriate amount of resources to carry out performance marketing efforts.

What are the top challenges associated with executing a performance marketing strategy?



“Effective pricing and budget allocation is about more than just the bottom line – it drives the Client-agency relationship from the start. While many contracts are made on pricing first, Clients and agencies need to be aligned on what goes into that pricing and this is where the service model takes center stage. Service models reveal the partnership health. For example, do you know who is working on your account? Or are they faceless names on an email string? What is each person’s contribution to your account’s performance and who takes ownership of the success or failure of the strategies and operations? When you and your agency are aligned on targeted goals and the service levels required to achieve those goals, you can develop pricing models and resource allocations that fit the ask.”

Kristen Gonzalez | EVP, Agency Operations



ACRONYM POV

“Performance marketing is exactly what it sounds like: marketing based on performance. The budgets and resource allocations are predicated on the specific (and aligned upon) metrics achieved; however, these can change rapidly, which requires that brands work with teams who are agile enough to be data-informed - meaning they leverage the real-time performance results to drive their planning, platforms, and process.”

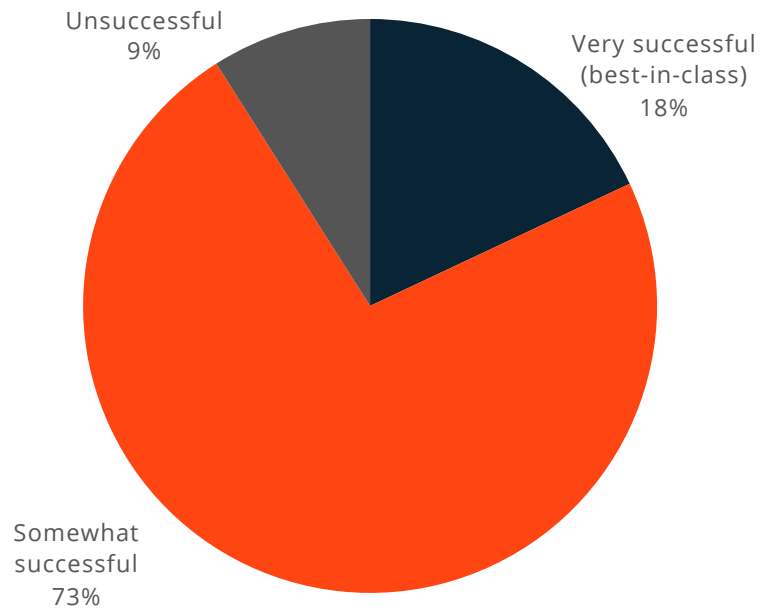
David Rollo | CEO

Overall Strategic Success



The vast majority (91%) of marketers in leadership roles report experiencing at least some success from their performance marketing strategy, but there is still room for improvement. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of marketing leaders describe their performance initiatives as somewhat successful at achieving strategic goals, while 18% rate their success as “best-in-class.”

Which best describes the success of your (or your typical Client’s) performance marketing strategy at achieving goals set for it?



“Performance marketing is not just about aligning the many moving parts of data-informed campaigns to achieve specific goals targeting very specific audiences. It also helps brands improve their reach and engagement, while allowing for scaled and layered programs that deliver better conversion rates with lower risk and a higher ROI – all in a way that empowers both marketers as well as consumers. The past 18 months have taught us all how digital transformation has changed everything: awareness, consideration, even conversions happen simultaneously. In short, performance marketing empowers brands through data-informed campaigns that will yield more successful outcomes.”

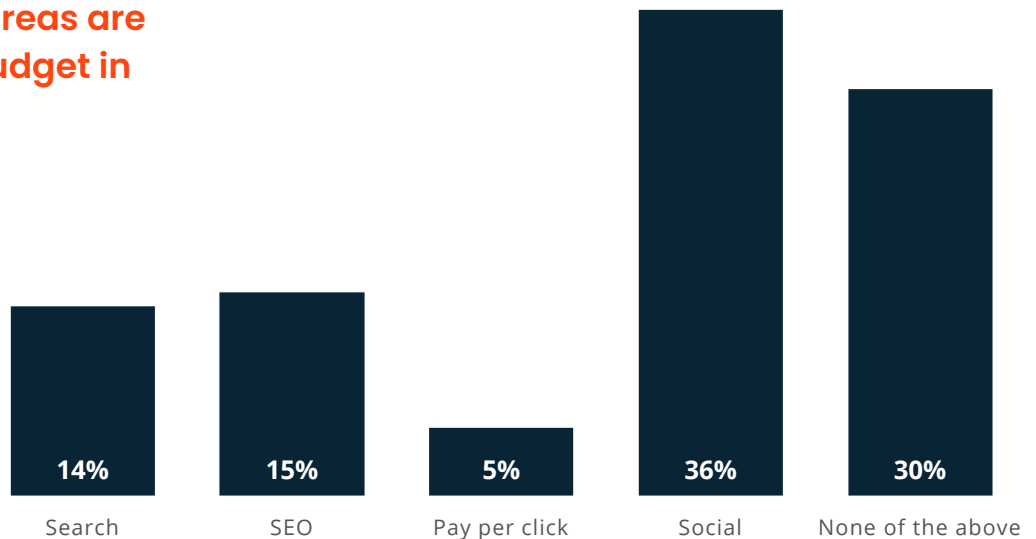
David Rollo | CEO

Budget Allocation



Thirty-six percent of marketing leaders say they will focus a significant portion of their budget on social media performance efforts. Paid search and search engine optimization (SEO) will be areas demanding the most budget for 14% and 15% of marketers in leadership positions, respectively.

To which of the following areas are you allocating the most budget in the year ahead?



“While the low cost of paid social relative to other channels is likely attractive to advertisers, agencies should emphasize the importance of a full funnel strategy – beginning with upper funnel channels (like paid social) to reach their target audience at a lower cost and then moving toward lower funnel channels (like paid search) to drive conversions.”

Maureen Anderson | VP, Client Services

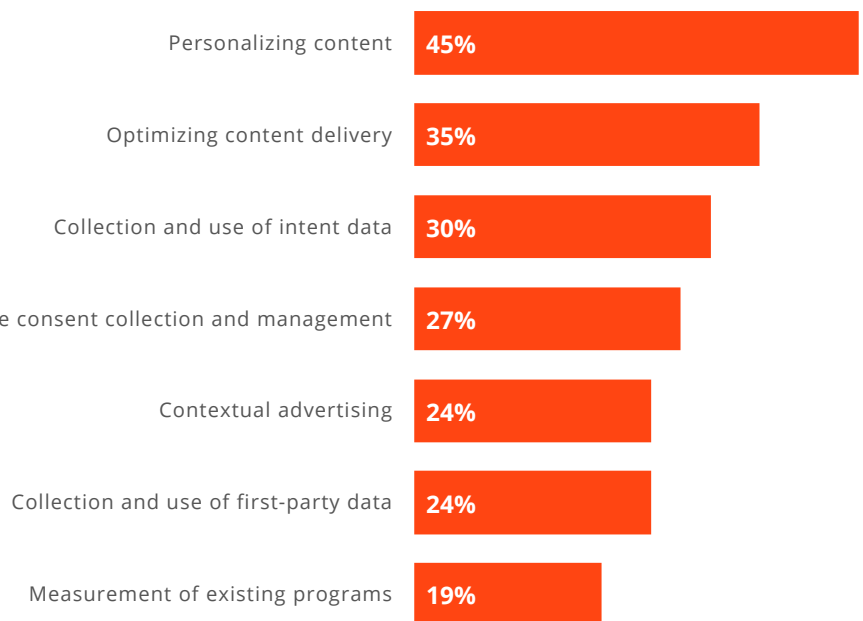
“It’s great that marketers are seeing the engaged and qualified nature of social. Recently, we have seen more scale/spend pushed to social platforms because of the key performance both from an awareness and direct response lens. Marketers need to look at all their digital channels holistically and when they do, they should correlate the data as social is an integral part of the user journey.”

Gellena Lukats | Director, Paid Social Media

Third-Party Cookies and Personalized Content

Marketing leaders report that personalizing content (45%) and optimizing content delivery (35%) are the most essential areas to improve to mitigate the impact of the deprecation of third-party cookies.

What are the most essential areas to improve to mitigate the impact of the deprecation of third-party cookies?



ACRONYM POV

"When we think of content creation, we really must think about its life span when mapping the creative efforts to the appropriate channel, which is the secret sauce to personalized content distribution. Performance content takes the form of the platform and thus meets the personalities of the users on it. So, when we think of personalizing content for an audience, we should be doing it platform to platform and not creative to creative."

Ryan Pitcherelle | VP, Content Strategy

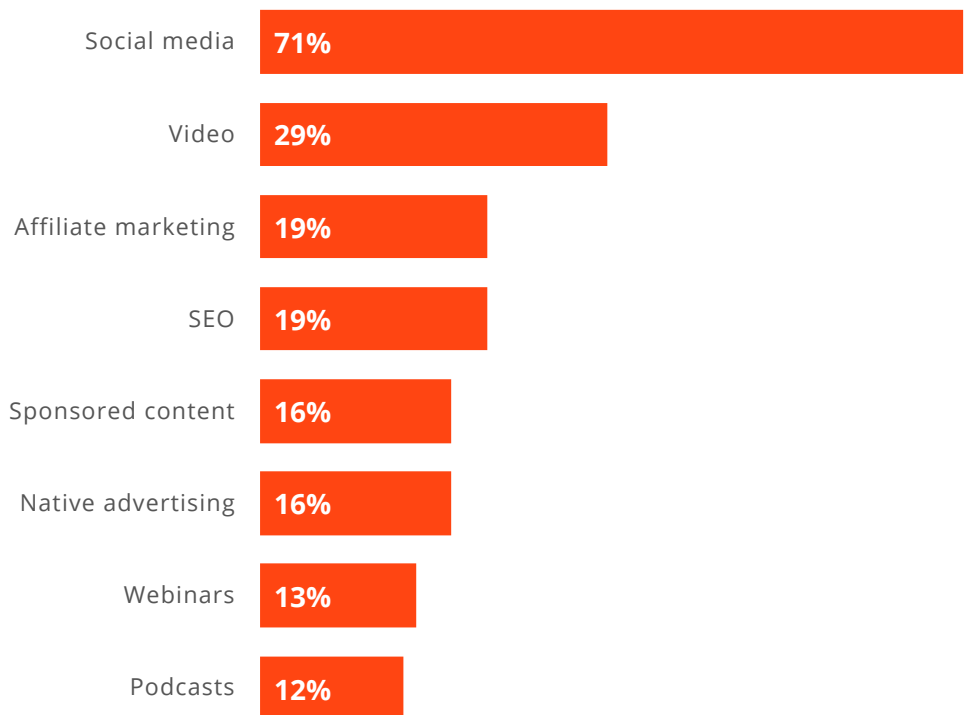
"In our recent collaboration with our APAC Clients, we have seen how personalizing content drives impactful shifts in organic performance. To stay competitive in today's digital environment, brands need to start engaging their customers with targeted and optimized content delivery. Their customers expect nothing less than targeted content, tailored to their immediate questions and moment of intent."

Pearlyn Kua | GM, Acronym Asia

Content Creation

Nearly three-quarters (71%) of marketers in leadership positions will be creating the most content for social media, while video and affiliate marketing will be key channels for content creation for 29% and 19% of those surveyed, respectively.

Which channels will you be creating the most content for in the year ahead?



“While it is no surprise to see most of the content (71%) being created is for social media activities, the complete results are even more telling than at first glance. Take, for example, the top three venues for content creation. Video comes in at a solid second (29%), but think of its function - video is social and social often requires video. Moreover, affiliate is tied for third with SEO. Consider that the top-performing affiliate channels are all dependent on social amplification. As a result of this logic, SEO remains a more static channel in comparison with how content lives on after its immediate effect.”

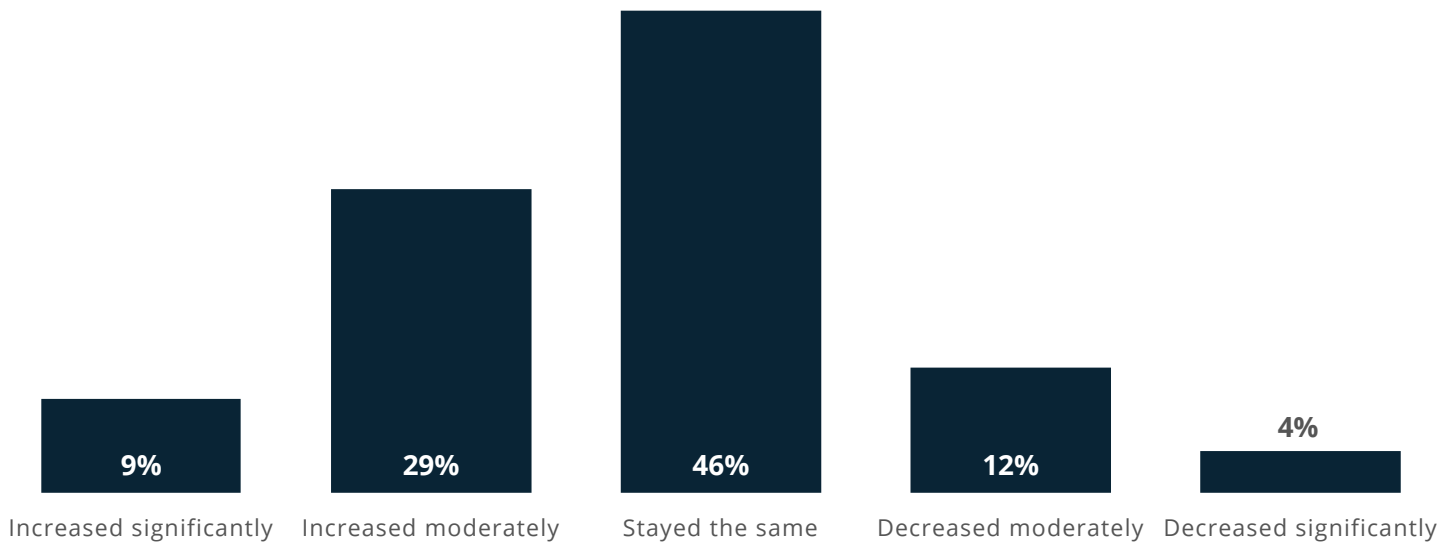
Ryan Pitcherale | VP, Content Strategy

Conversion Rate Optimization



While 38% of marketers in leadership roles report an increase to some extent in the effectiveness of these programs, in the past year, nearly half (46%) of survey respondents have seen the effectiveness of these programs plateau.

How has the effectiveness of your conversion rate optimization programs changed in the past year?



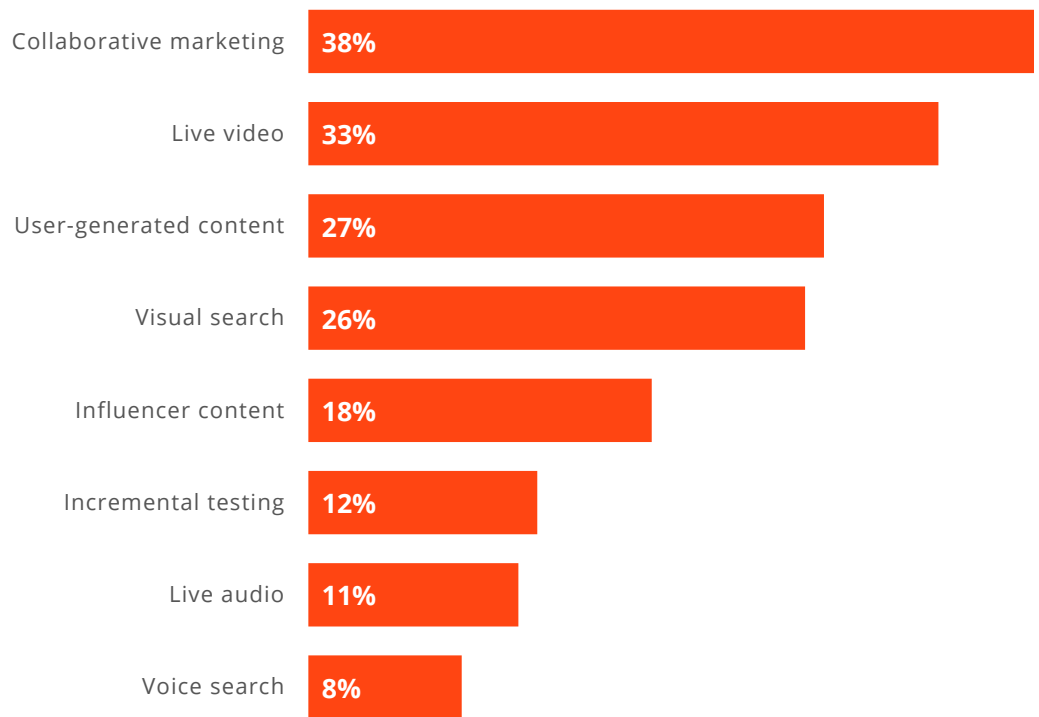
"As paid media costs increase every year, it is integral for agencies to place a priority on ensuring that the most efficient strategies are in place, so conversion rates increase along with the costs."

Maureen Anderson | VP, Client Services

Emerging Trends

Marketing leaders report that emerging trends, including collaborative marketing (38%), live video (33%), and user-generated content (27%), will be areas of focus in the next year.

Which emerging trends will you be allocating the most resources to in the year ahead?



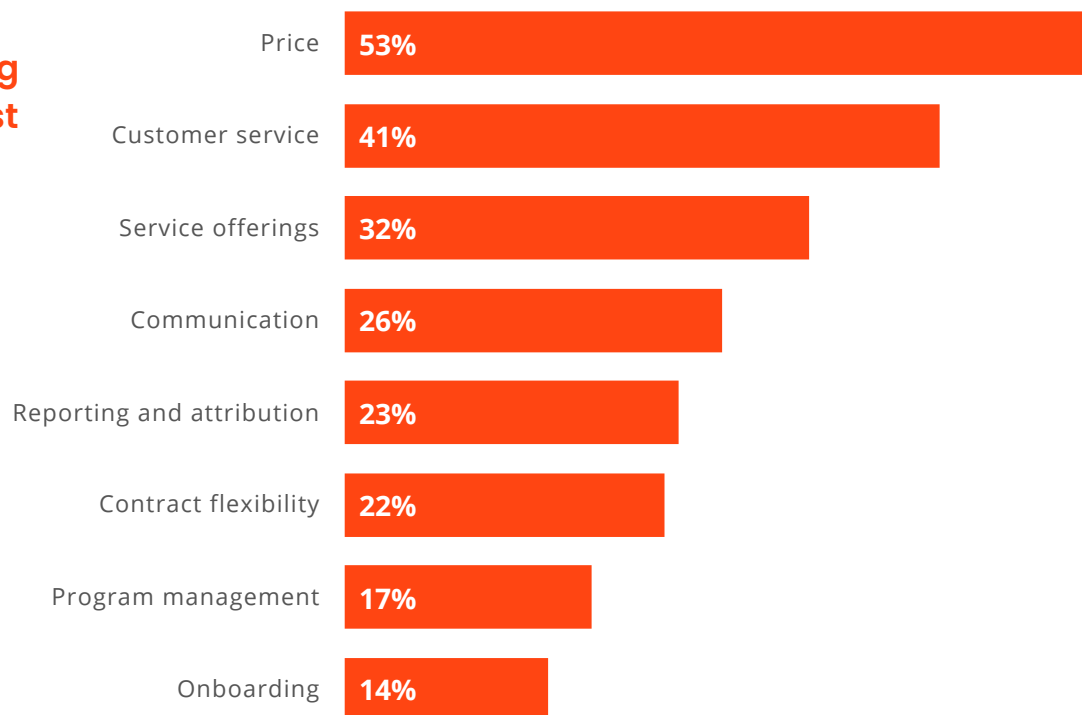
"One of the biggest advantages of collaborative marketing is the ability to break into new markets by tapping into loyal fans of the partner brands. Brand collaboration has also taken the form of working with celebrities and influencers to develop awareness and transactional value by tapping into loyalty fan base. More recently, value-based partnerships are fueling these collaborations as brands can collectively make a genuine connection with a new generation of customers that places emphasis on core values and ethics as part of their buying decision."

Farah Sadiq | EVP, GM International

Agency Improvements

With budget allocation as a major challenge for half of those surveyed, it is no surprise that price is reportedly the top area where performance marketing agencies need to improve according to 53% of marketing leaders. Customer service, as well as the services offered by performance agencies, also top the list of areas that need improvement for 41% and 32% of marketing leaders, respectively.

In which areas do performance marketing agencies need the most improvement?



"This indicates the need for agencies to be fully transparent when it comes to their pricing and service offerings. Agencies should also continuously reinforce the value their Clients receive by promoting the great results they are generating through clear and consistent reporting."

Maureen Anderson | VP, Client Services

ABOUT THE RESEARCH PARTNERS



Established in 1995, Acronym is an international search and performance marketing agency. We didn't just develop the technology behind our solutions; we own the algorithm that feeds it, enabling us to solve for any marketing problem our clients have. With experience in nearly every vertical marketplace, Acronym manages campaigns in over 70 countries and in dozens of languages. With offices in New York City, Toronto, London, Berlin and Singapore, we have the global reach to service clients of all sizes all over the world. And, as an independent agency, we have the agility our clients require to lead them to new levels of performance, turning insights into action and action into results. In short, we connect the dots between data, technology, and marketing to lower your cost of acquisition, better engage with your customers and achieve your business goals.

Learn more about [Acronym »](#)



Marketing technology companies and digital marketing agencies partner with Ascend2 to supplement their marketing content, generate leads, and engage prospects to drive demand through the middle of the funnel.

Learn more about [Ascend2 »](#)

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