THE STATE OF INTEGRATED MARKETING 2025

Spiegel Research Center
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Executive Summary

The Spiegel Research Center conducted a nationwide survey of 161 experienced marketing professionals to uncover the most pressing challenges and trends in Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC). The findings reveal a marketing landscape in transition, where rising quality expectations collide with increasing operational complexity.

The Generalist Reality

Modern marketers function as tactical generalists rather than specialists. Survey participants averaged responsibility for seven different marketing tactics, with most managing "everything" rather than specializing in specific channels. Only one tactical specialist was identified in the entire survey, highlighting how contemporary marketing roles demand broad competency across multiple functions and platforms.

Strategic Implications

The research reveals an industry at a critical juncture. While IMC execution quality has reached new heights, the coordination challenges that define integrated marketing have become more complex and consequential. Success increasingly depends on bridging the gap between technological capability and human expertise, particularly in mid-market organizations where growth pressures are most intense.

For marketing leaders, three priorities emerge: developing AI and data analysis capabilities within teams, strengthening coordination processes that scale with organizational complexity, and recognizing that resource allocation alone cannot solve structural integration challenges. The future belongs to organizations that can match their rising execution standards with equally sophisticated coordination and talent development strategies.

Introduction

Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) remains a vital strategy in every marketer's toolkit, yet significant challenges and concerns continue to emerge. To address these, the Spiegel Research Center conducted this study, inspired by the Association of National Advertisers' (ANA) surveys, to uncover the most pressing issues marketers anticipate in the current times. The findings gained will inform the development of tailored resources, actionable insights, and programming designed to support marketers and help brands succeed in an increasingly complex landscape.

Method

A nationwide survey of experienced marketing professionals was conducted to gather insights into current trends and practices in Integrated Marketing Communications. More than 200 professionals participated online. After cleaning the data by removing duplicates, checking response durations, and excluding incomplete entries, 161 valid responses were included in the analysis.

Key Insights

Although marketers feel their IMC quality is at an all-time high, Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC), especially the coordination of IMC efforts, remains a top concern for marketers. More than half (57.2%) of marketing executives rate their IMC efforts as "very good" or "excellent," yet 44.7% still include IMC in their top concerns for 2025. This paradox suggests that while execution quality has improved, the complexity and stakes of coordinated marketing have risen even faster.

Many challenges remain for managing and implementing IMC, particularly budget constraints, producing quality content, and maintaining consistency. The most frequently cited challenge was high-quality content creation (37.3%), followed closely by budget constraints (34.2%) and lack of skillset in-house (33.5%). These operational hurdles persist across all company sizes, indicating fundamental resource and capability gaps in the industry.

Marketing-Tech tools are important, but tech skills are often lacking. While marketers overwhelmingly regard analytics tools (83.9%) and email marketing platforms (77.6%) as essential, the biggest skill gaps are in integrating AI and machine learning (41.6%) and data analysis and interpretation (36%). This disconnect between tool adoption and technical proficiency creates execution barriers.

Mid-market companies ($50M-$500M) face the most acute IMC challenges across multiple dimensions. These firms report the highest rates of content creation struggles (47.1%), lack of standardized measurement (39.2%), vendor skill shortages (41.2%), and functional silos both within the company (33.3%) and with vendors/agencies (35.3%). This suggests a critical inflection point where growth outpaces organizational maturity and available resources.

Experience fundamentally reshapes IMC priorities and challenges. Early-career marketers focus heavily on brand awareness and customer engagement, while senior marketers (16+ years) increasingly prioritize customer retention. Senior marketers (16+ years) also report the highest concern of all groups for embracing emerging technologies (50% rank as a top concern for 2025), which indicates distinct career-stage responsibilities.

Company size dramatically influences both technology adoption and challenge patterns. Smaller firms struggle most with budget constraints (36.6%) and are concerned about embracing emerging technologies (43%), whereas large enterprises struggle the most with a lack of collaboration and support (52.9%) and are most concerned about IMC (58.8%). This suggests different strategic imperatives based on organizational scale.

Brand awareness dominates IMC objectives across all channels, but tactical applications vary significantly. While brand awareness leads across nearly every channel, lead generation clusters around digital advertising and social media, and customer retention focuses on email marketing and digital advertising. This reveals distinct channel-objective pairings.

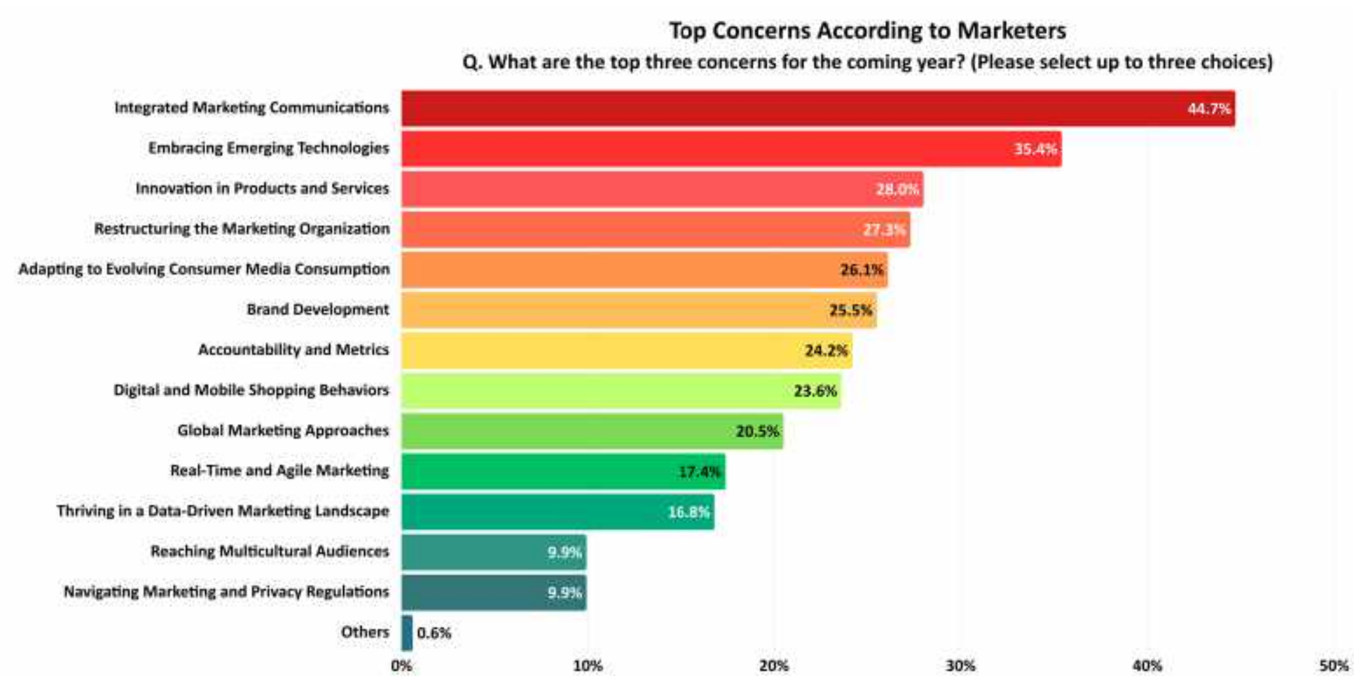
AI and emerging technology skills represent the fastest-growing capability gap. Integration of AI and machine learning into marketing ranks as the top skill shortage (41.6%), surpassing traditional areas like data analysis (36%). This reflects the rapid pace of technological change outpacing workforce development in marketing organizations.

Topline Results

IMC Remains Top Concern for Marketers

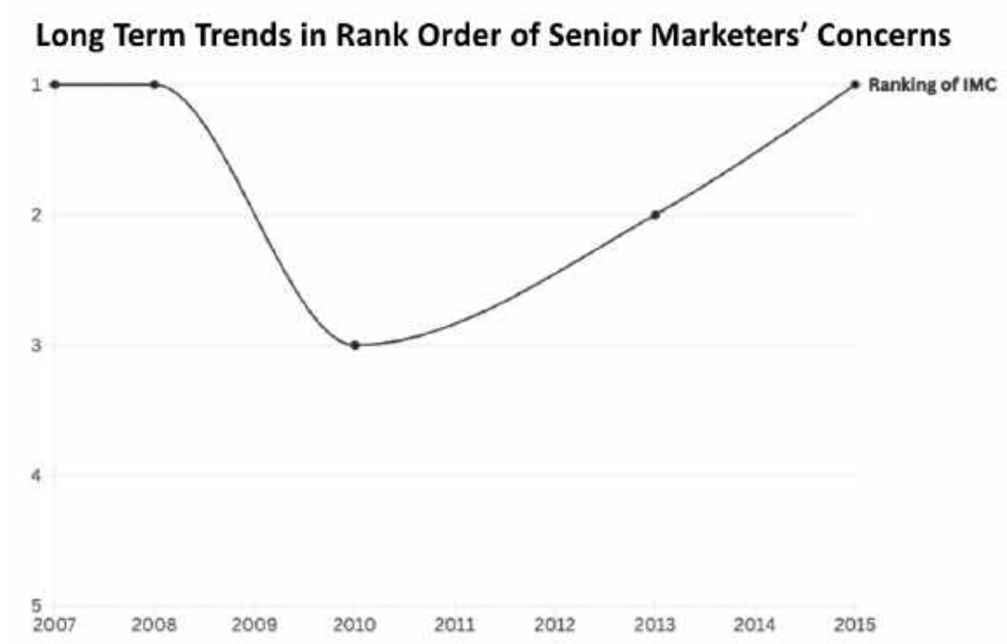
Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) continues to be marketers' top priority, with nearly half (44.7%) of marketing executives in our survey identifying it as a top concern—being the most cited concern amongst the 13 areas that were measured.

IMC outpaces all other concerns, ranking nearly 10 percentage points higher than the second top concern, 'Embracing Emerging Technologies'. This highlights that, regardless of how advanced tools become, executives view effective integration as the foundation of marketing success.



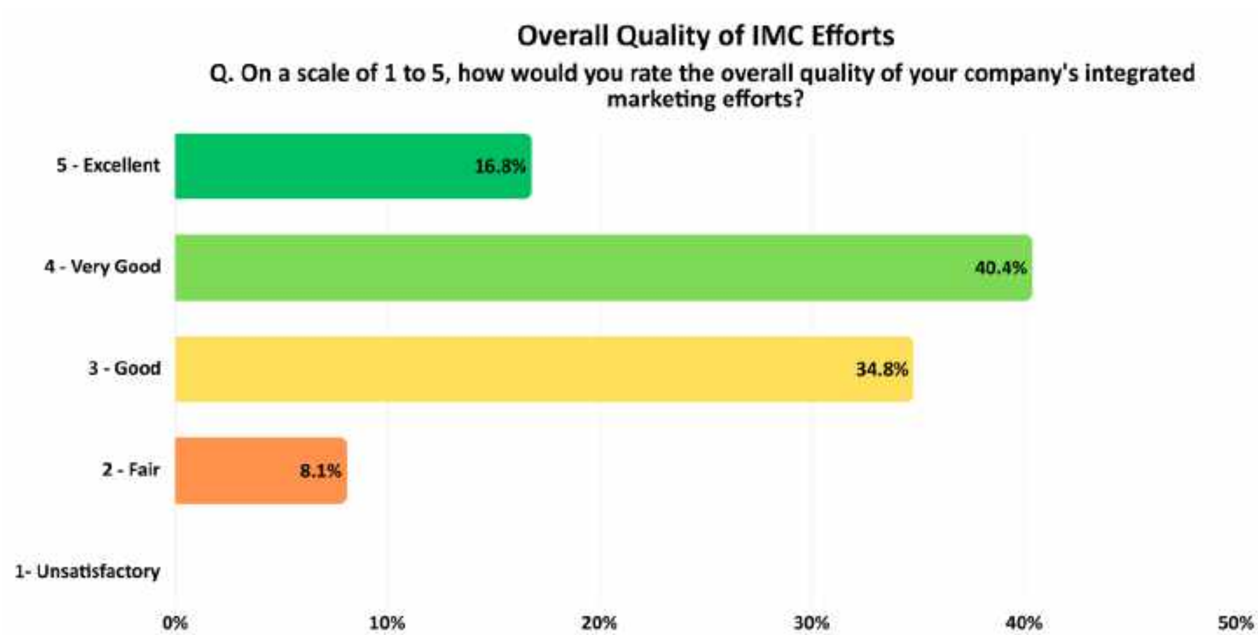
IMC Over the Years

This isn't new. In previous research conducted by the ANA from 2007-2015, IMC was consistently ranked as among the top concerns for marketers. This steady trend demonstrates that IMC is not merely a passing concern, but a structural and enduring challenge within the marketing industry.



Overall Quality of IMC Efforts at an All-Time High

More than half of marketing executives in our survey (57.2%) rated their company's IMC efforts as "very good" or "excellent." This is a noticeable increase from the results of previous research conducted by the ANA from 2003 to 2011.

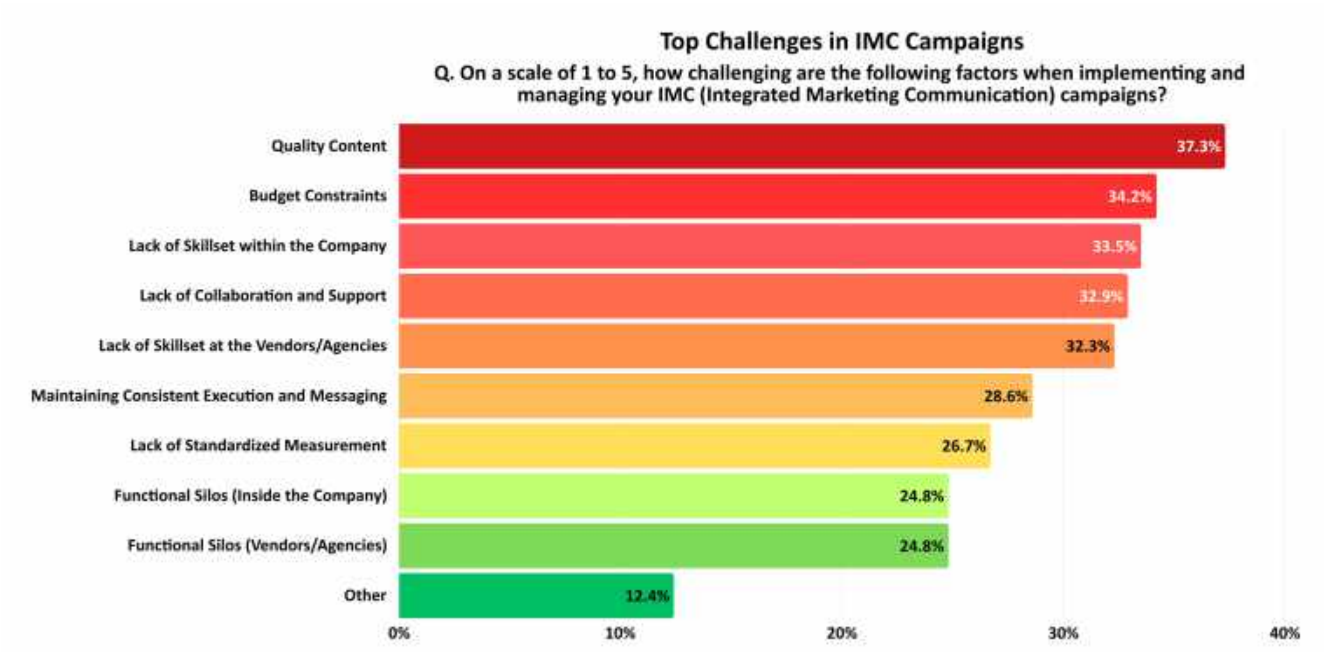


Many Challenges remain for Integrated Marketing Communications

While recent marketer evaluations suggest that integrated marketing communications (IMC) performance is at an all-time high, respondents in the survey note that significant challenges remain across all phases: planning, implementation, and measurement.

The most frequently cited challenge was high-quality content (37.3%), followed closely by budget constraints (34.2%) and a lack of skillset in-house (33.5%).

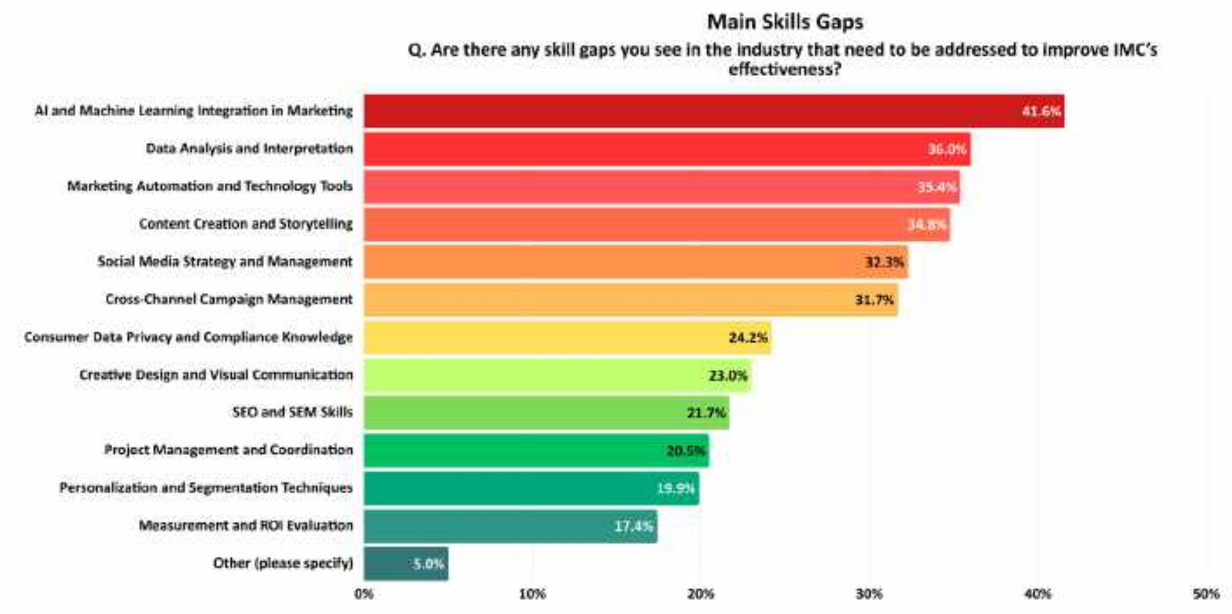
In addition, marketing executives face management and staffing challenges. A lack of Skillsets at vendors/agencies (32.3%) and a lack of Collaboration and Support (32.9%) were cited as challenges by approximately one-third of the respondents. Furthermore, functional silos were similarly problematic with Vendors (24.8%) and in-house (24.8%).



Note. Percentages represent the proportion of respondents who ranked each factor as a 4 or 5.

Skill Gaps: Tech Proficiency is Lacking

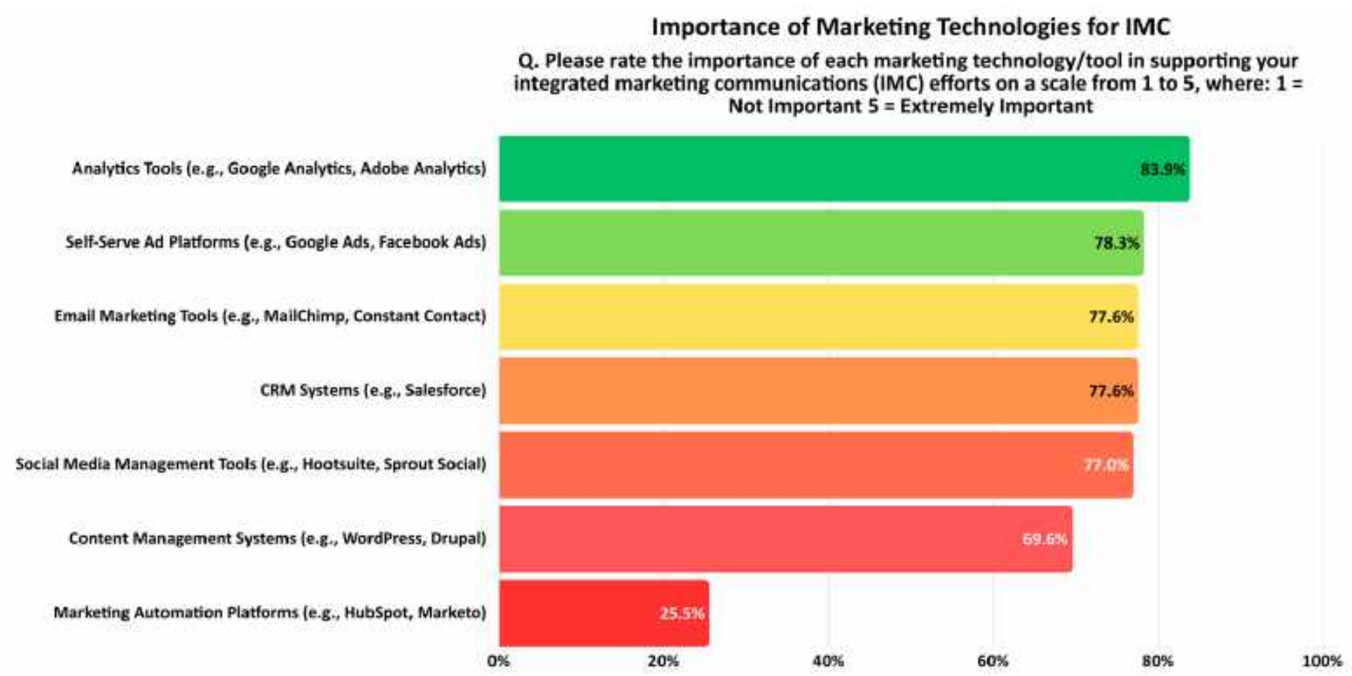
The most significant skill gaps identified by marketers are integrating AI and machine learning into marketing (41.6%) and data analysis and interpretation (36%). These trends show that there is a growing interest in data-driven technologies, which demands that workers be more skilled at integrating new technologies.



Importance of Marketing Technology

Marketers in our survey overwhelmingly regard marketing technology tools as essential, with analytics tools (e.g., Google Analytics, Adobe Analytics) receiving the highest importance ratings; around 84% of the respondents placed them within the top two most important categories. Other tools, such as Ad platforms, email marketing, CRM, and social media management also come close, with 77% or more of the respondents labelling them as highly important.

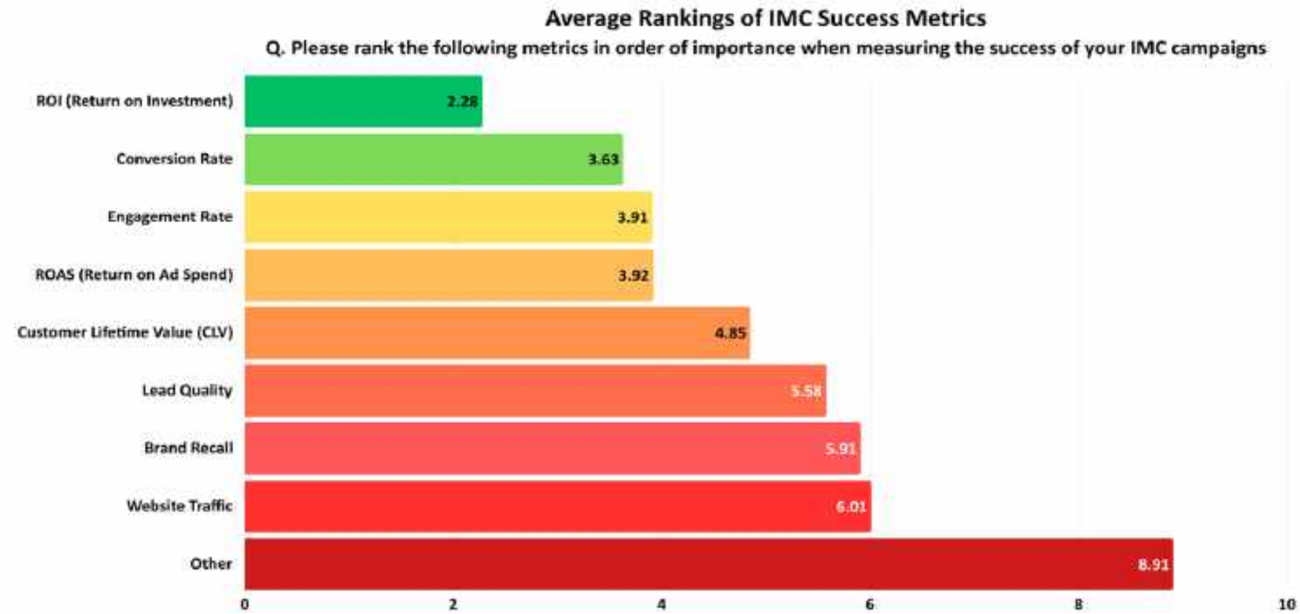
These high importance ratings demonstrate that there is a widespread reliance on marketing technology tools that enable data-driven and coordinated IMC applications.



Note. Percentages represent the proportion of respondents who ranked each marketing technology/tool as a 4 or 5.

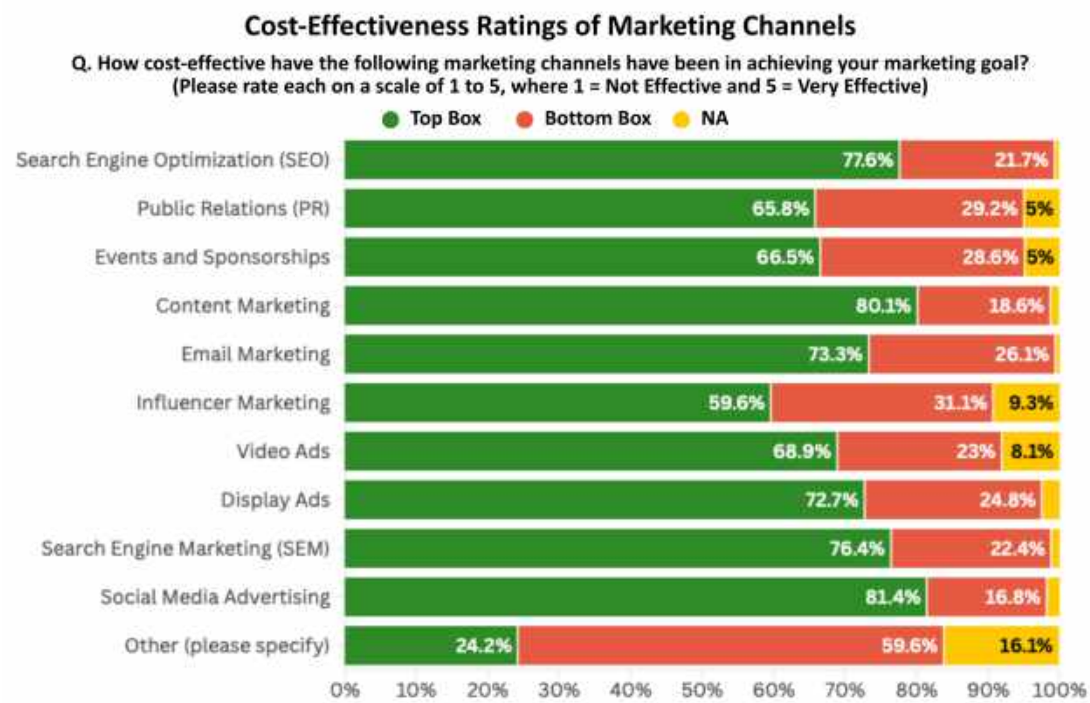
Performance-Driven Metrics Dominate IMC Success Measurement

ROI (2.28) ranks as the top success metric, reflecting pressure on marketers to deliver financial outcomes. Conversion rate (3.63), engagement (3.91), and ROAS (3.92) follow, underscoring the focus on efficiency and immediate impact over longer-term measures like customer lifetime value (4.85), brand recall (5.91), or website traffic (6.01).



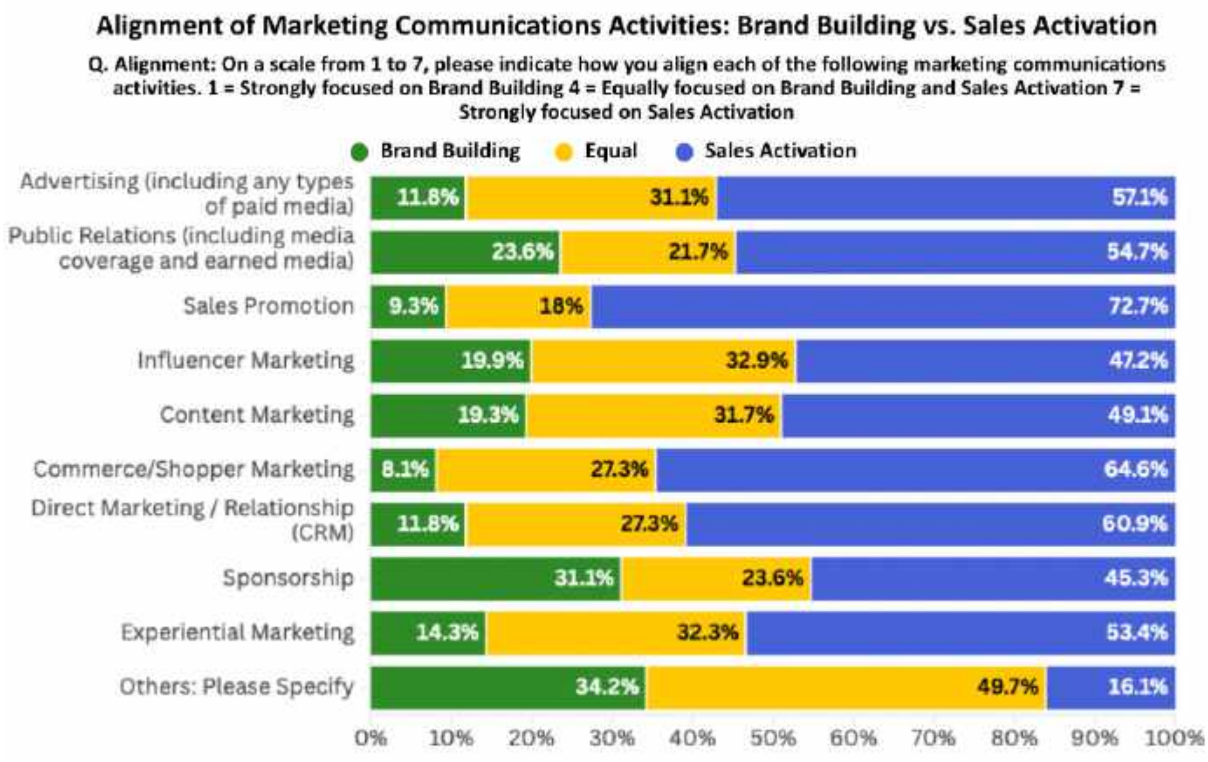
Where Marketers See the Best ROI

Digital channels like **Content Marketing (80.1%)**, **Search Engine Optimization (77.6%)**, and **Social Media Advertising (81.4%)** are the most cost-effective in achieving marketing goals, showing the prevalence and power of an online presence for IMC campaigns.



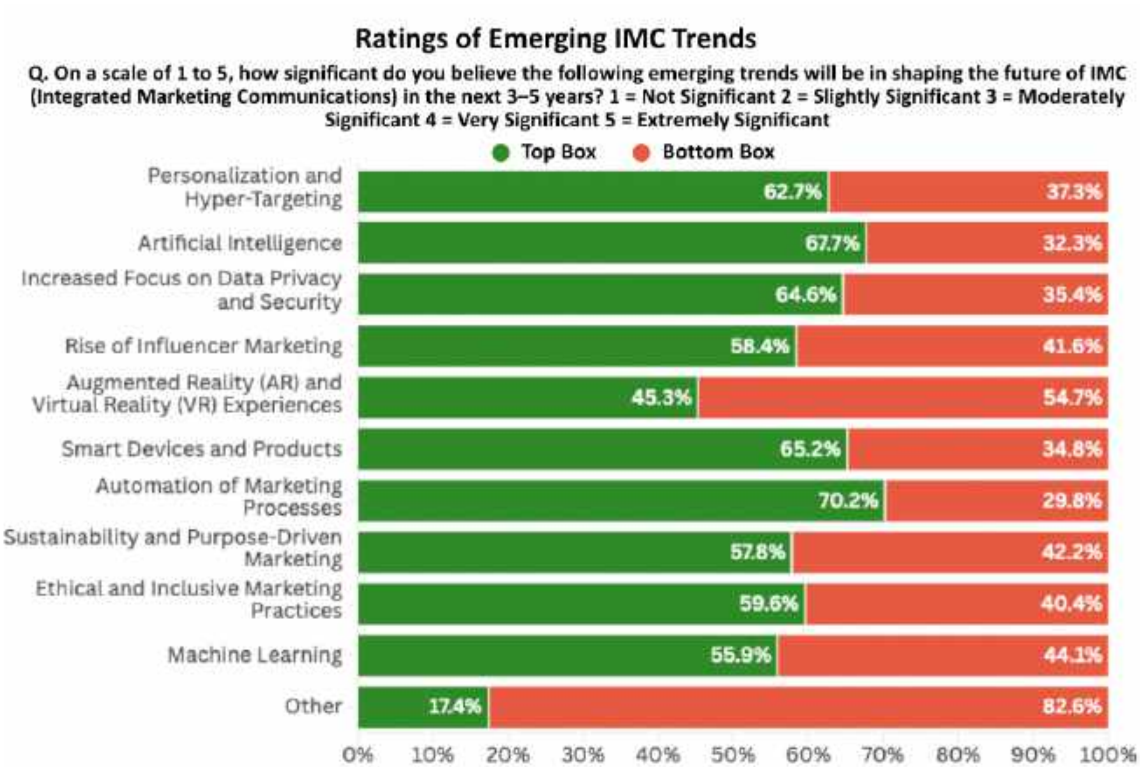
Sales Activation is the prevailing focus of IMC activities

Across nearly all marketing activities, Sales Activation dominates—showing that many tactics are still primarily leveraged to drive short-term outcomes like conversions and purchases. Equal alignment between sales activation and brand building tends to trump brand building alone; however, for activities like public relations and sponsorships, brand building alone is valued more.



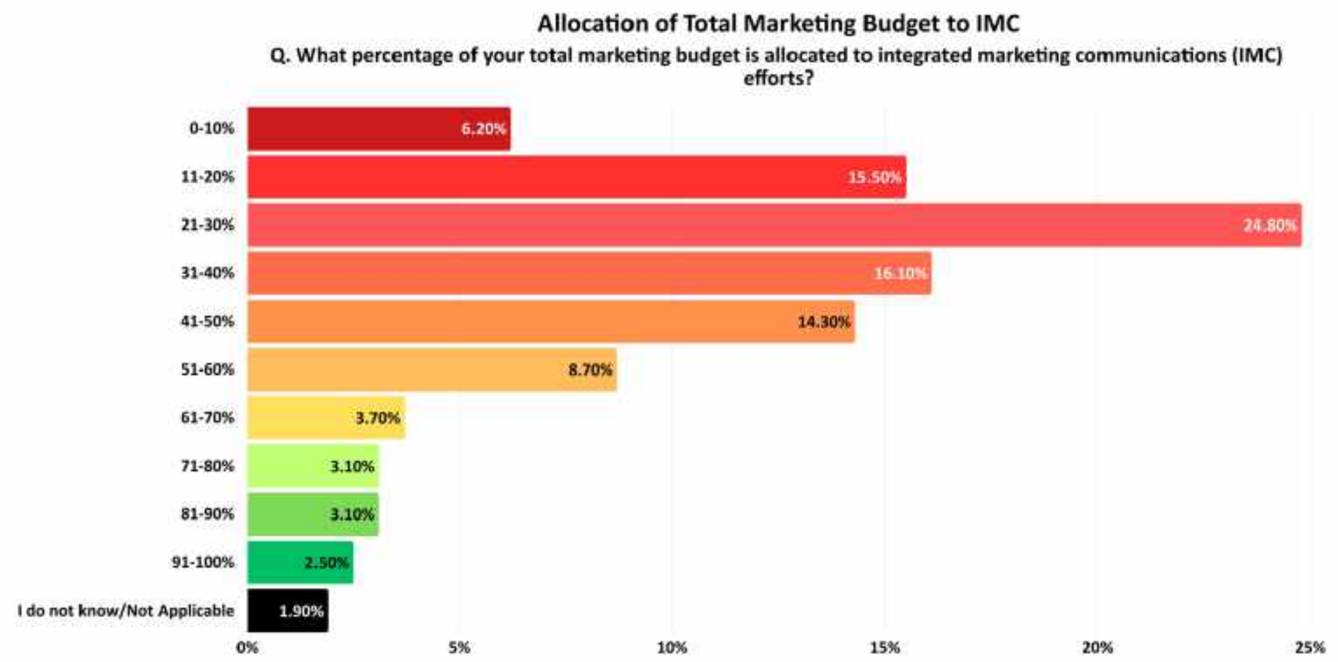
Emerging Trends: Automating Marketing Processes is on the Horizon

According to these results, innovation is seen as a critical trend that will shape IMC in the future. Automation (70.2%) and AI (67.7%) rank the highest in Top Box scores, showing a need to get more fluent with new technologies.



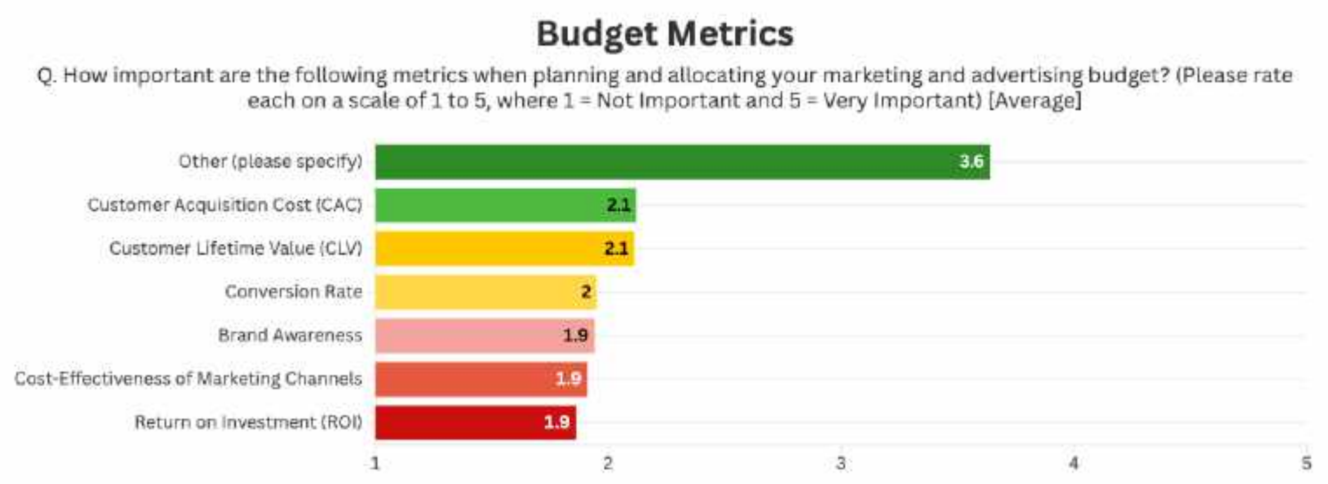
Most Firms Dedicate 30%+ of Their Budgets to IMC

A **majority of firms (51.5%) allocate more than 30% of their marketing budget to IMC**, positioning it as a core budget priority rather than a side investment. Additionally, this survey reveals that **one in five companies (21.1%) dedicate over 50% of their budget to IMC**, underscoring its role as a core marketing approach for a significant segment. The importance of IMC efforts is further reinforced by the rarity of very low allocations, with only **6.2% of respondents** reporting that they allocate **0–10%** of their budget to IMC.



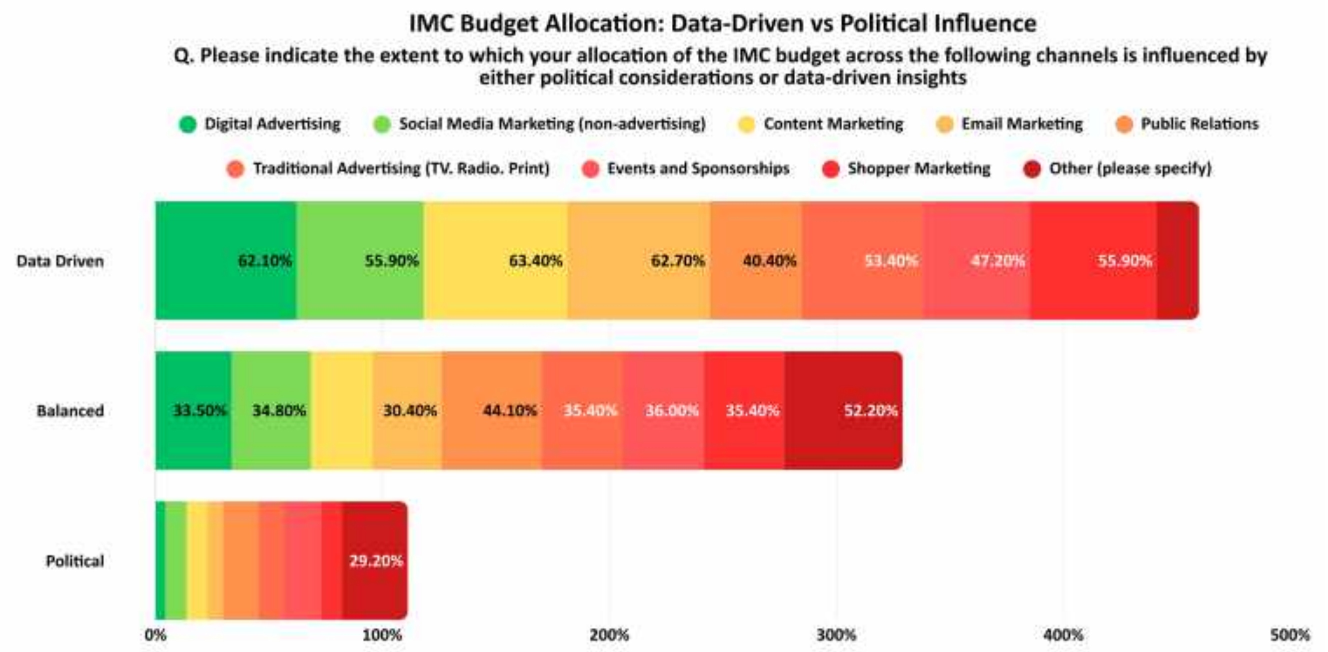
Low Weight in Planning, High Weight in Evaluation

Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC) and Customer Lifetime Value (CLV) received the second and third highest average ratings (2.1/5). The highest rated was the Other category, suggesting that the listed metrics are not as helpful to marketers. The findings contrast the IMC success evaluation, where financial and performance-driven metrics like ROI and ROAS play a much stronger role.



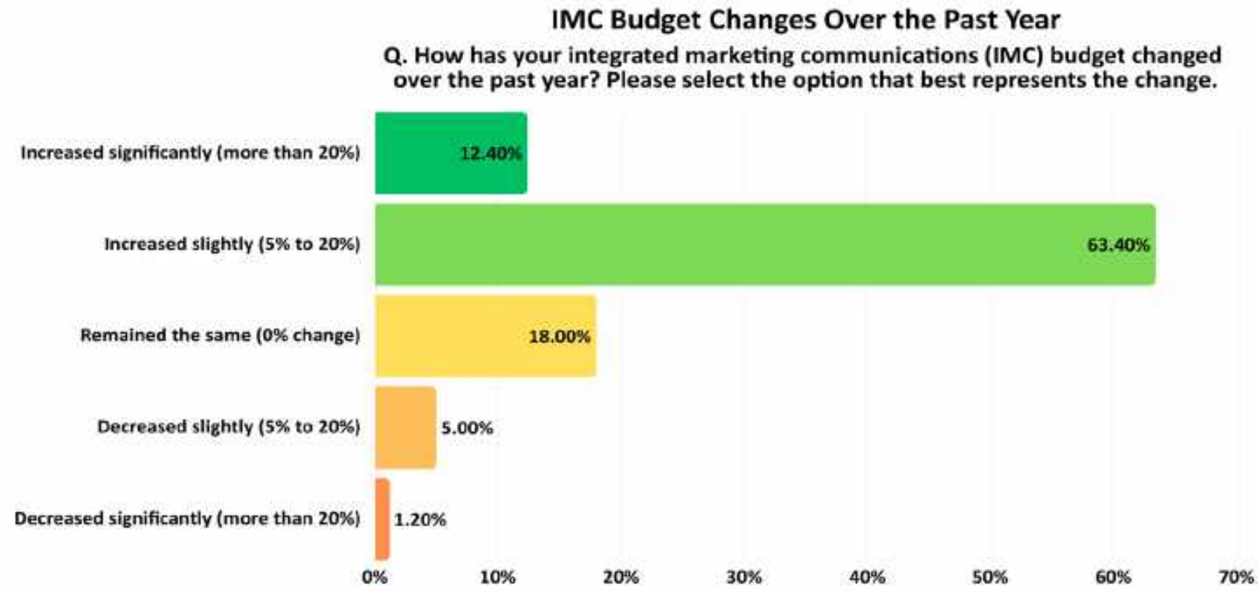
IMC Budget Allocation Is Largely Data-Driven Across Channels

Most IMC budget decisions are **data-driven across channels**. Marketers report leaning on data especially for **content (63.4%)**, **email (62.7%)**, **digital advertising (62.1%)**, **shopper marketing (55.9%)**, and **social (55.9%)**—and even for **traditional advertising (53.4%)**. **Public relations is the outlier**, with the **lowest data-driven share (40.4%)** and the **highest "balanced" share (44.1%)**, reflecting that reputation and stakeholder objectives make purely data-led allocation harder.



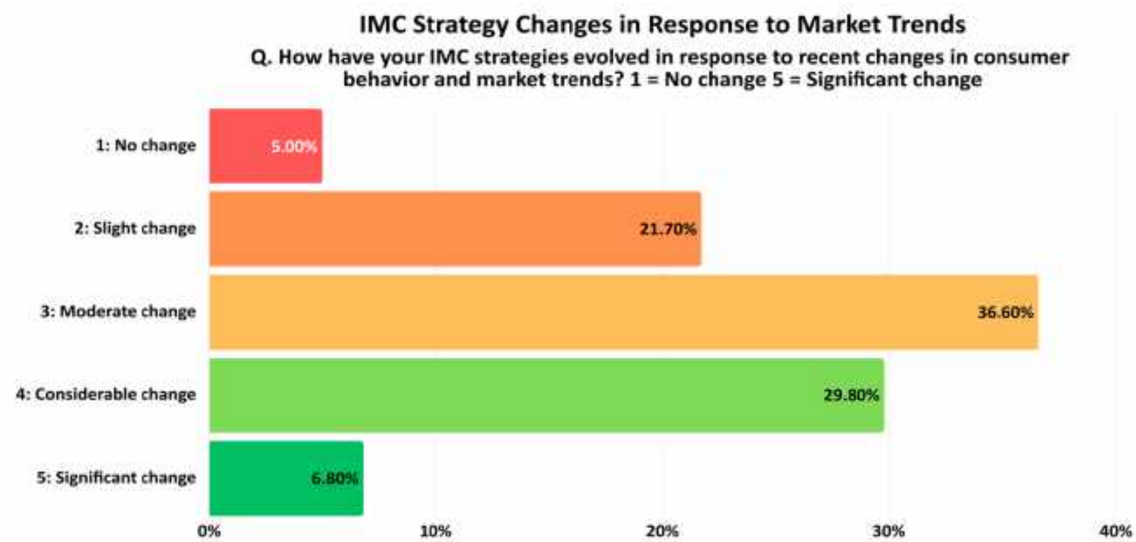
Companies are Beginning to Invest More to IMC

IMC budgets are rising. 75.8% of organizations report an increase (63.4% slight, 12.4% significant). Cuts are rare, with only 6.2% reporting decreases (5% slight, 1.2% significant). Overall, this upward trend underscores IMC's strategic importance and suggests companies are investing to strengthen integration capabilities, measurement, and coordination across channels.

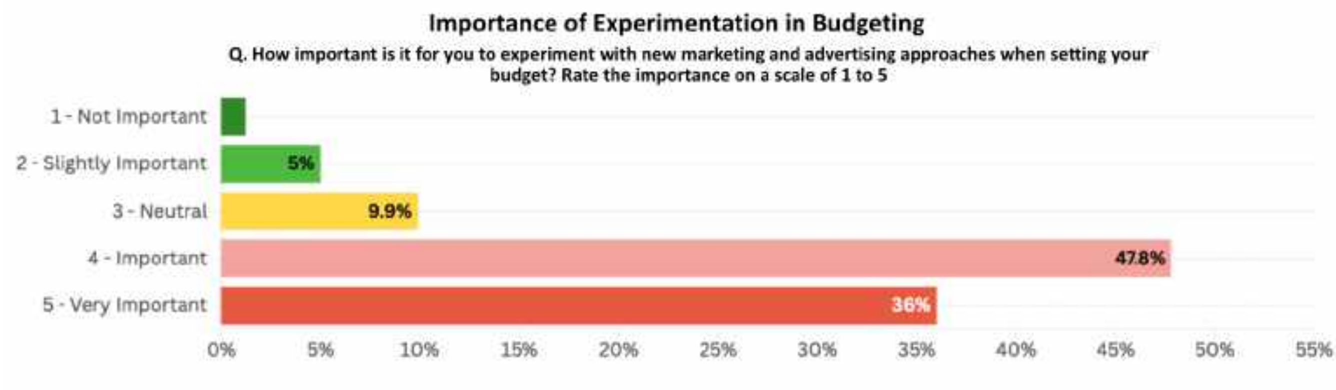


Change Is the Norm for IMC Strategy

Only 5% of respondents reported no change to their IMC strategies, while 95% described at least some shift. This underscores the dynamic nature of IMC and the need for marketers to continually adapt—testing, refining, and updating plans to keep pace with evolving consumer behavior and market conditions.

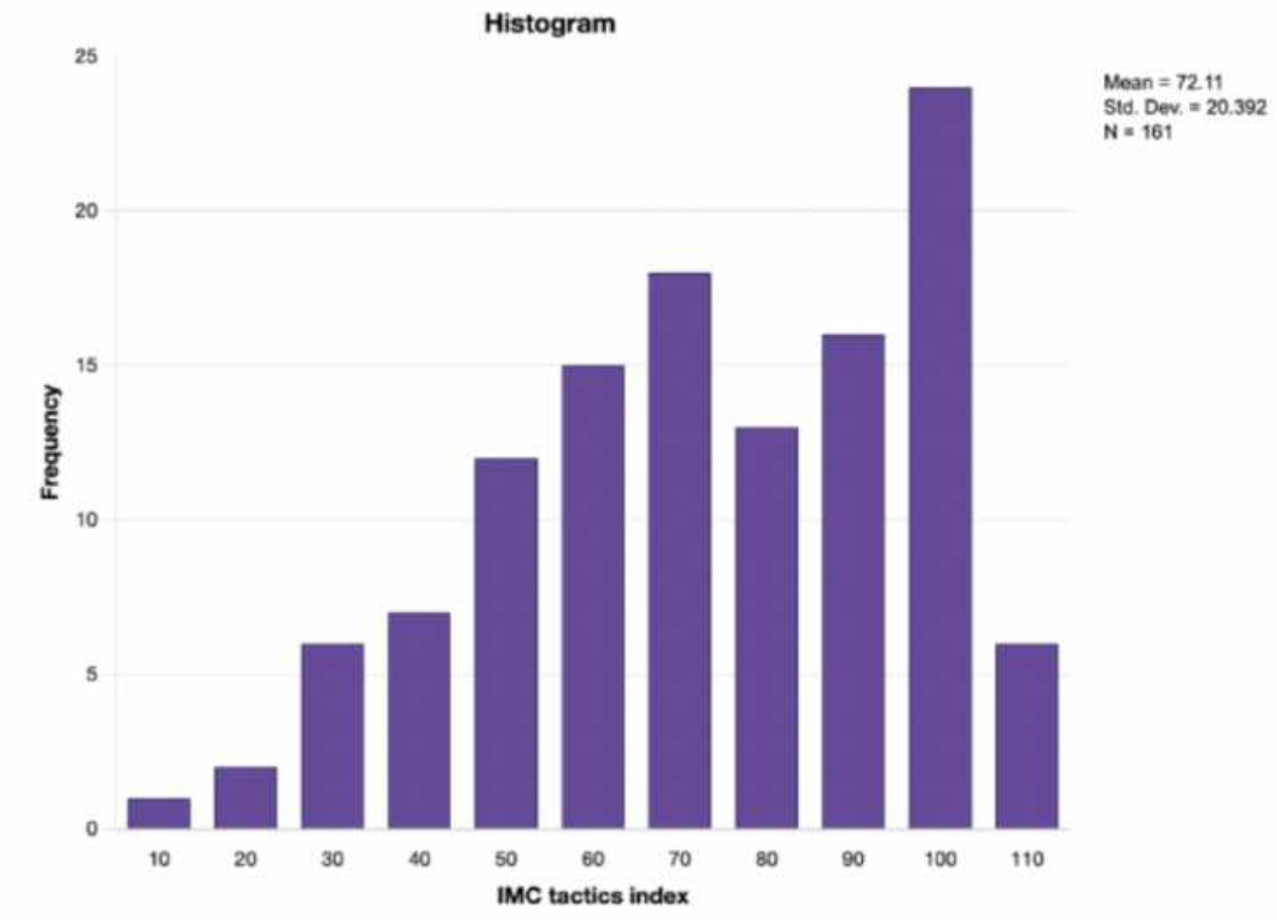


A large majority (83.8%) of respondents rate experimentation as Important or Very Important, showing that innovation is essential in IMC strategy. Only 6.2% of respondents placed experimentation in the bottom two boxes.



Marketers have responsibility for a broad range of tactics

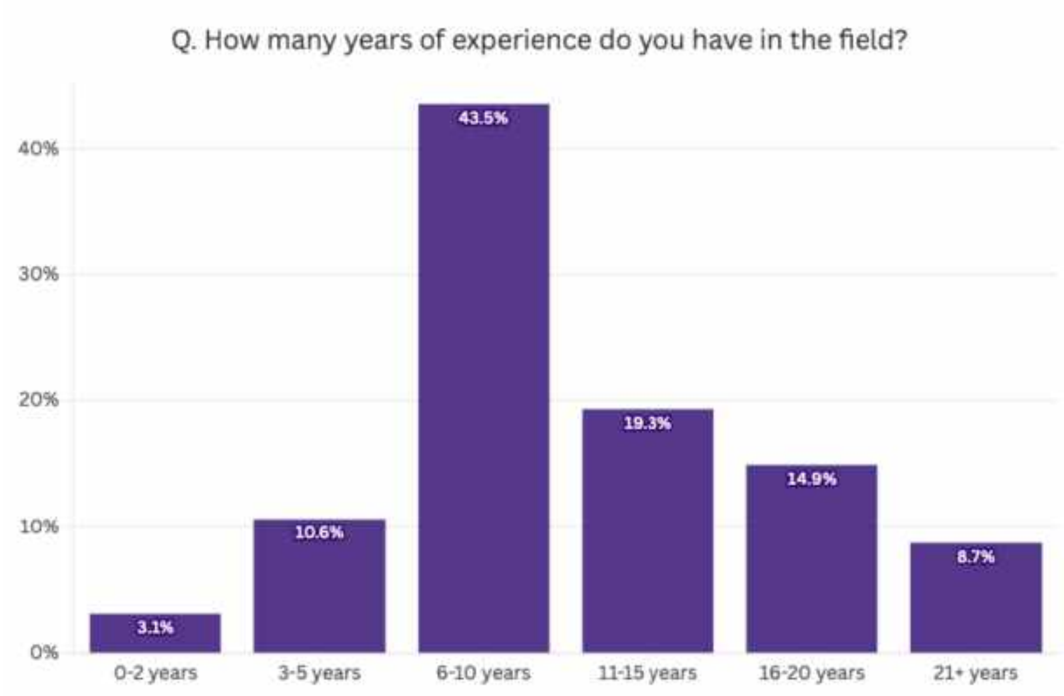
We have 10 different marketing tactics. Primary responsibility for each tactic is worth 10 points, involvement is 5 points. Marketers in our survey averaged the equivalent of primary responsibility for 7 different tactics. We had only one tactical specialist in the entire survey.



Sample Characteristics

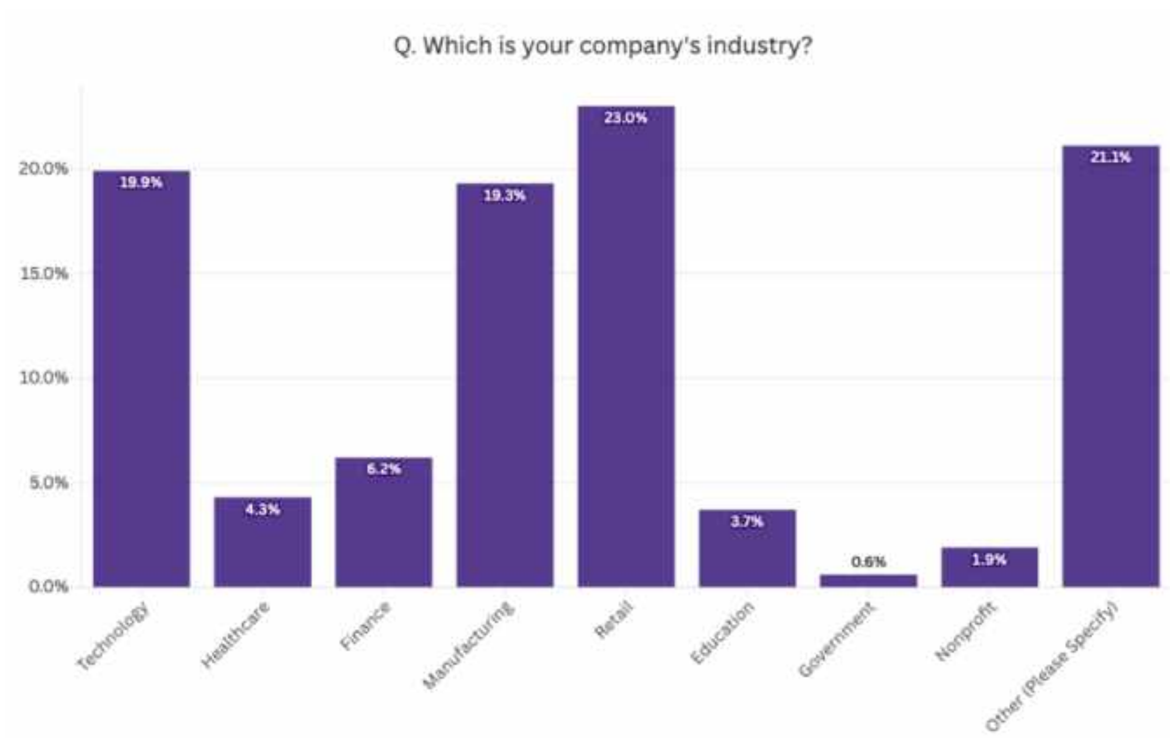
Years of Experience

Most participants had more than 6 years of experience, with 23.6% having over 15 years of experience.



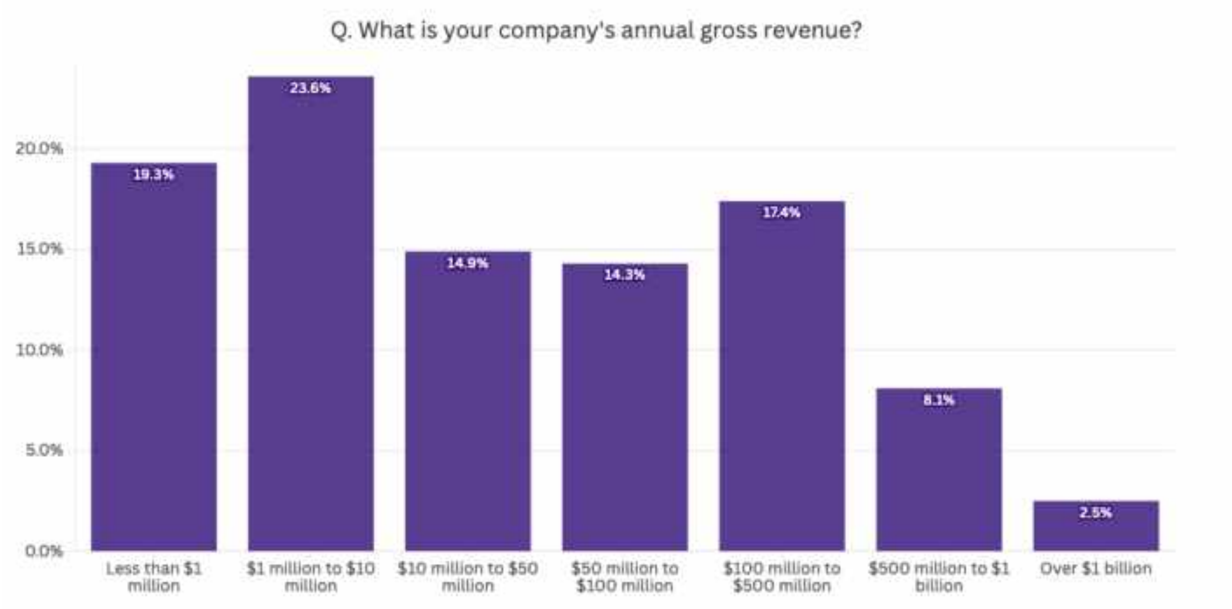
Industry

The top 3 industries include Retail (23%), Technology (19.9%), and Manufacturing (19.3%).



Revenue

23.6% of participants reported a yearly revenue between $1 million and $10 million, followed by 19.3% with revenues under $1 million, and 17.4% with revenues between $100 million and $500 million.



Deep Dive

IMC Primary Objectives by Channel

Cross-Channel Patterns

Brand Awareness dominates across nearly every channel and has the greatest lead over other objectives for Traditional Advertising, Social Media Marketing, and Digital Advertising.

Customer Retention stands out in Email Marketing, which makes sense since it is a highly targeted, relationship-driven channel.

Consumer Research is the most niche objective, but clusters around Thought Leadership, Public Relations, and Shopper Marketing, where dialogue and insights are easier to capture.

Channel-Specific Highlights

Digital Advertising → Primarily Brand Awareness + Lead Generation, but also plays a significant role in Customer Retention.

Social Media Marketing → Heavy on Lead Generation + Engagement in addition to Brand Awareness, showing it's seen as both a demand driver and a relationship channel.

Content Marketing → A balanced mix of Brand Awareness, Lead Generation, and Customer Retention, suggesting it supports multiple funnel stages.

Email Marketing → Strongly aligned with Customer Retention, Lead Generation, and Customer Engagement, reflecting its direct-response nature.

Public Relations → Nearly synonymous with Brand Awareness, but also linked to Customer Retention.

Events & Sponsorships → Most distinctive in Brand Awareness and Lead Generation.

Shopper Marketing → Stands out for Sales Conversion and Brand Awareness.

Thought Leadership → Skewed toward Brand Awareness, Lead Generation, and Retention, as well as Research and Engagement.

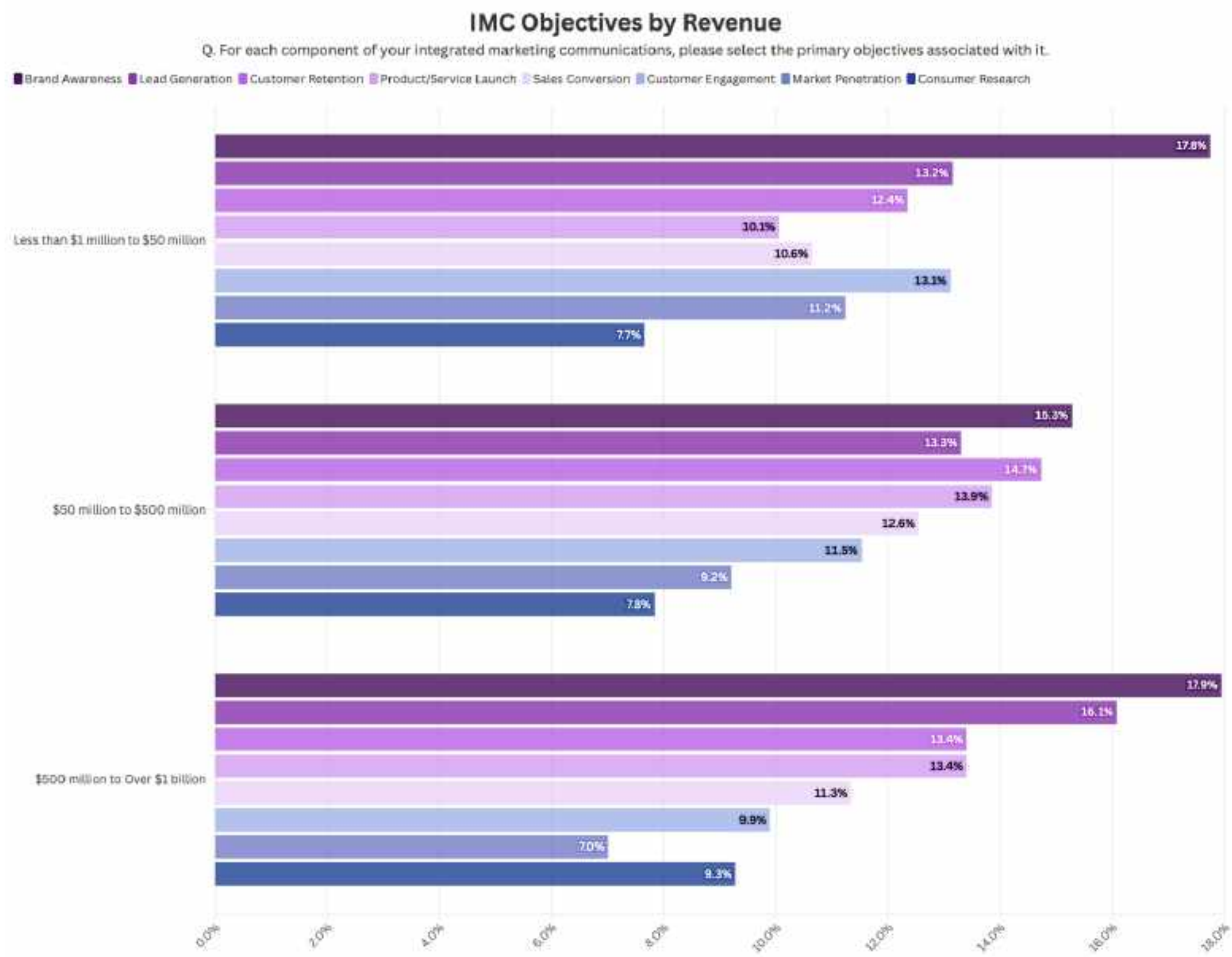
Full Funnel Marketing: Mapping objectives to tactics

Upper Funnel (Awareness): Digital Advertising, Social Media Marketing, and Traditional Advertising are clear leaders — best leveraged for visibility and trust-building.

Mid Funnel (Consideration & Demand): Social, Digital, and Events Advertising bridge awareness with lead generation.

Lower Funnel (Conversion & Retention): Email and Shopper Marketing are key, essential for sustaining relationships and repeat purchases.

IMC Primary Objectives by Revenue Tier



Note. Respondents selected primary objectives for each IMC component, and percentages reflect these selections aggregated across all components.

IMC priorities shift from awareness to growth and retention as companies scale

Brand Awareness emerges as the most important objective across all revenue groups. No matter the size of the company, visibility remains the foundation of integrated marketing communications.

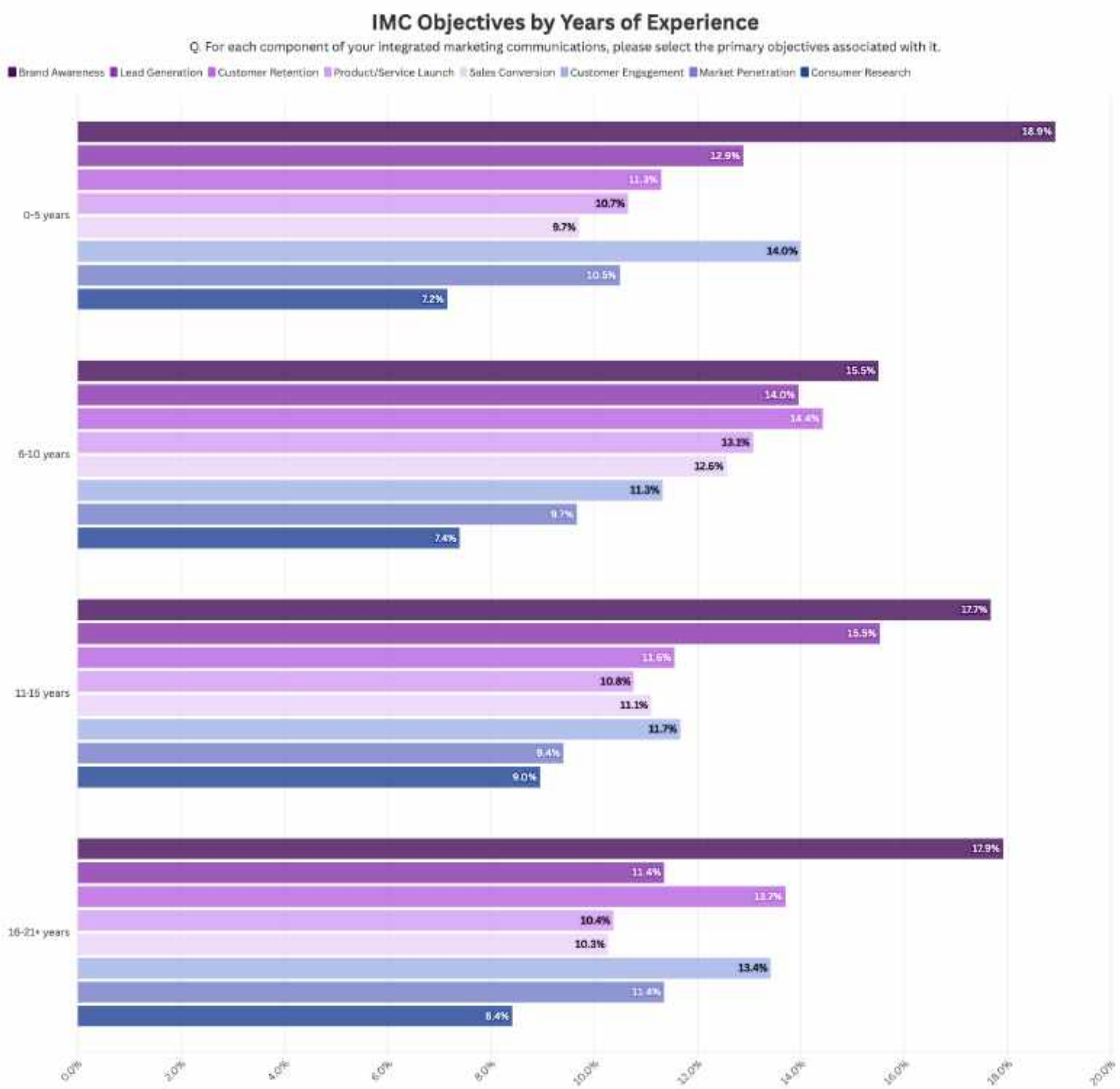
For **smaller companies (< $50M)**, the focus is on building presence and growing a customer base. Their top objectives are Brand Awareness, Lead Generation, and Customer Engagement, reflecting the need to attract new customers while holding onto early adopters.

Mid-market firms ($50M–$500M) show a more balanced approach. While awareness remains important, Customer Retention and Product Launches gain prominence, signaling a focus on scaling operations and driving monetization.

Large companies ($500M+) emphasize Brand Awareness and Lead Generation, ensuring a constant pipeline of prospects. At the same time, they balance this with Customer Retention and Product Launches, reflecting the dual need to maintain their market position while continuing to evolve.

Across all groups, **Consumer Research ranks the lowest or second lowest.** This suggests that while companies invest heavily in execution, from awareness to retention, they are underweighting investments in insight and feedback gathering.

Experience Matters: How IMC Priorities Shift Across Career Stages



Note. Respondents selected primary objectives for each IMC component, and percentages reflect these selections aggregated across all components.

Brand Builders Early On, Retention Strategists Later

Early career marketers (0-5 years) lean heavily on brand awareness, reflecting a focus on visibility and establishing presence. They also emphasize customer engagement more than any other group, suggesting familiarity with social media and direct-to-consumer channels.

By mid-career (6-10 years), objectives become more balanced. Marketers in this group place nearly equal weight on retention, lead generation, product launch, and sales conversion, signaling a stronger push toward measurable growth outcomes.

Among those with 11-15 years of experience, brand awareness remains critical, but lead generation rises sharply, underscoring the value placed on growing a customer base.

For the most experienced marketers (16+ years), brand awareness continues to dominate, but customer retention and customer engagement gain prominence, reflecting an emphasis on interactions with customers.

Social Media Penetration: Where Juniors and Veterans Align

An interesting convergence emerges around brand awareness: it dominates both the least experienced group (0-5 years: 18.9%) and the most experienced (16+ years: 17.9%). While younger marketers see awareness as essential for establishing credibility, veterans continue to prioritize it as a means of sustaining visibility and brand strength in mature markets.

Email Marketing: The Retention Champion

Customer retention becomes particularly important from mid-career onward. Marketers with 6-10 years of experience score it at 14.4%, surpassing lead generation, and the highest among all groups. This progression suggests that as marketers gain experience, they increasingly view loyalty and lifetime value as key IMC outcomes.

Balance in Mid-Career

The mid-career segment (6-10 years) shows the most balanced spread of objectives, giving nearly equal weight to retention, lead generation, and product launch alongside brand awareness. This balanced distribution reflects their role in driving both growth and measurable outcomes during a formative stage of professional responsibility.

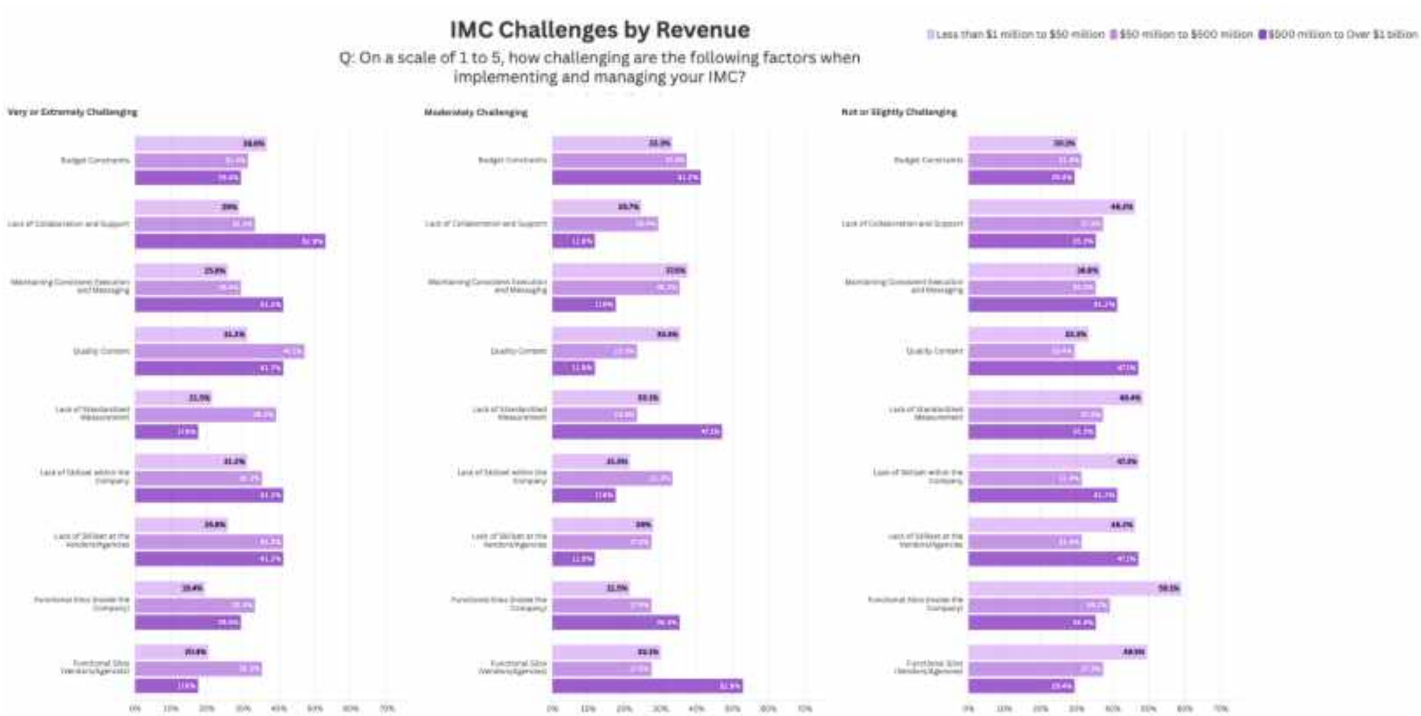
Shopper Marketing: A Middle-Management Favorite

For marketers with 6-10 years of experience, sales conversion rises to 12.6%, higher than in other groups, signaling that this stage of a career often comes with heightened accountability for performance metrics. By contrast, among the most senior professionals (16+ years), conversion drops back to 10.3%, suggesting their focus shifts away from tactical results toward broader strategic priorities.

Traditional Advertising Retains Influence Among Veterans

Despite changes in focus, brand awareness remains consistently strong across all levels of experience and is the top-ranked objective even among the most senior marketers (16+ years: 17.9%). This persistence may reflect both the enduring importance of visibility and the perspective of seasoned professionals who are gradually stepping back from day-to-day tactical decision-making.

Challenges in IMC Execution Vary Sharply by Company Size



Budget Constraints Hit Small Firms Hardest

Smaller firms (<$50M) report the greatest struggle with budget limitations (36.6%), while the challenge drops to 31.4% among mid-sized firms and just 29.4% at the enterprise level. Funding pressure eases as resources scale.

Collaboration Challenges Grow with Scale

Only 29% of small companies cite collaboration as a top challenge, but this rises to 52.9% among firms in the $500M–$1B range, showing how silos and coordination issues expand with organizational complexity.

Message Consistency Worsens as Firms Expand

Maintaining consistent execution and messaging becomes harder at scale, increasing from 25.8% in smaller firms to 41.2% at the enterprise level. Cross-functional alignment is a bigger hurdle for large organizations.

Quality Content Pressures Peak in Mid-Market Firms

Content creation is a challenge for all, but mid-sized firms ($50M–$500M) struggle most (47.1%), compared with 31.2% for small firms and 41.2% for large enterprises. Pressure to scale content outpaces capacity in this group.

Internal Skill Gaps Peak in Mid-Sized Companies

Internal IMC skill shortages are reported most in the $500M+ bracket (41.2%), versus 31.2% for small firms and 35.3% for mid-size ones. Enterprise growth often outpaces available talent.

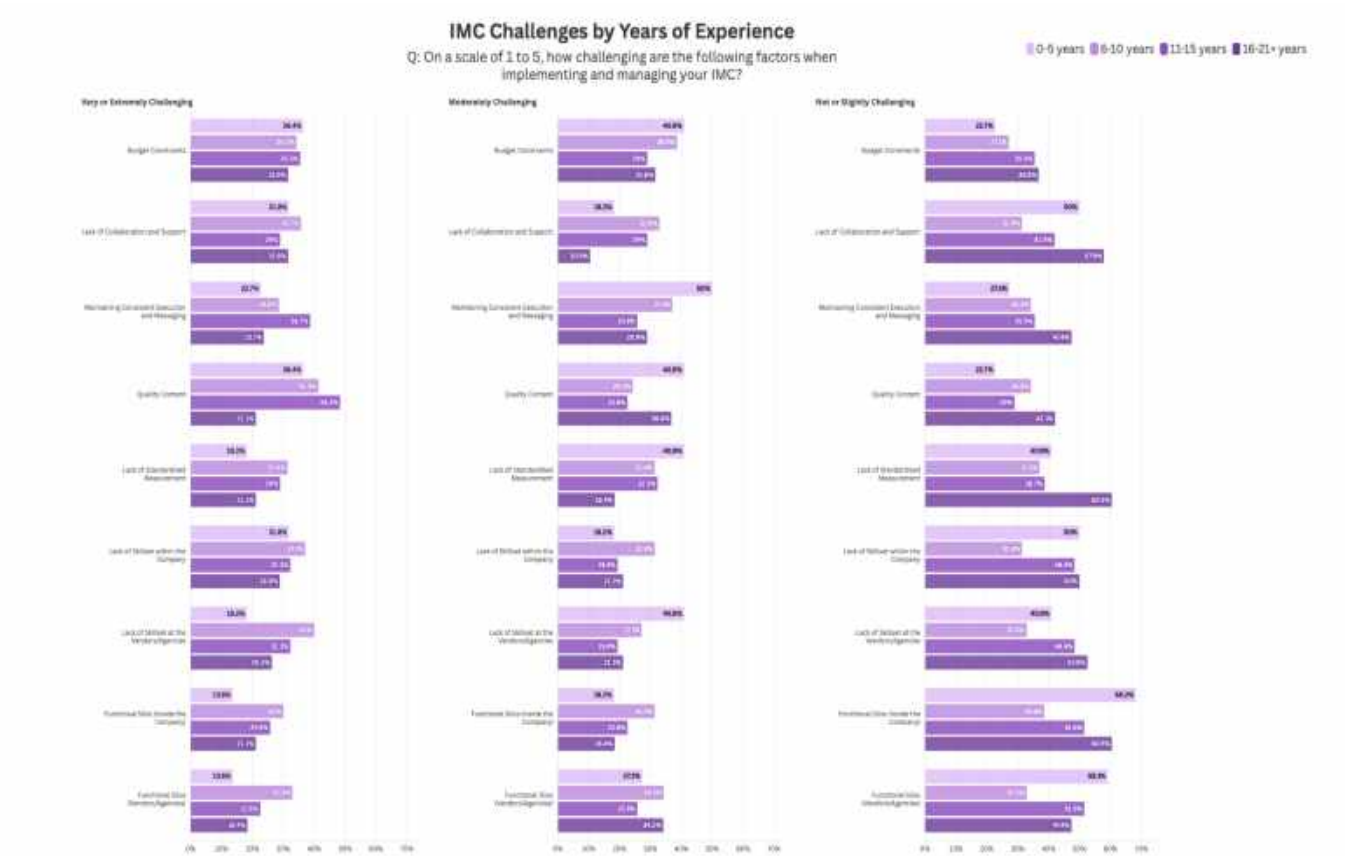
Vendor/Agency Skill Gaps Most Acute Mid-Market

External partner skills spike is the same for mid-market and large companies (41.2%), indicating firms in transition lack reliable outside expertise compared to smaller organizations.

Functional Silos Disrupt Mid-Market Firms Most

Internal silos are cited as highly challenging by 33.3% of $50M–$500M firms, compared to 19.4% of smaller and 29.4% of larger firms. Mid-market firms often lack the mature structures needed for integration.

Experience Shapes Perception: How IMC Challenges Evolve Across Career Stages



Budget Constraints Ease with Seniority

Budget limitations are a shared challenge across all experience groups, with all groups having at least 31% rate them as very or extremely challenging.

Collaboration Struggles Persist Across Career Stages

Collaboration and support challenges remain significant across all career stages, with early-career marketers (0–5 years) reporting 31.8% and those with 6–10 years peaking at 35.7%. The rate diminishes slightly for mid-career professionals (11–15 years, 29%) but rises again among the more experienced marketers (16–21+ years, 31.6%). This pattern suggests that collaboration struggles remain consistent throughout a career, whether due to limited authority in early roles or the complexity of navigating cross-functional teams and entrenched systems at senior levels.

Consistency in Messaging is Prevalent

Maintaining consistent execution and messaging is less of a concern early in a career (22.7%) but becomes slightly more challenging for senior professionals (23.7% for 16-21+ years). This rise reflects the greater complexity of managing integrated campaigns at scale, where leaders must align multiple channels, teams, and brand narratives.

Quality Content: A Universal Challenge

Quality content creation remains an issue across all groups but is least challenging for senior marketers. Marketers with 0–16 years of experience report increasing difficulty with content creation, peaking at 48.4% for 11-15 years. The rate of those finding it highly challenging dips for senior marketers, falling to 21.1% for 16+ years. This suggests that expectations for impactful and differentiated content are shared broadly, and peak mid-career, rather than being concentrated at senior levels.

Measurement Standardization Hurts Newcomers the Most

For early-career professionals, the lack of standardized measurement is only a slight barrier, with only 18.2% identifying it as highly challenging. However, concern rises with tenure, peaking at 31.4% for the 6-10 years group, before declining for veterans.

Skill Gaps Inside Companies Impact Early Careers

Internal skill shortages are reported as challenging across all groups, but weigh heaviest on marketers with 6-10 years of experience, where 37.1% cite them as a major obstacle. The challenge then declines with experience, reaching only 28.9% among the most seasoned professionals, reflecting greater institutional expertise and established teams at higher levels.

Vendor Skill Gaps Become a Leadership Concern

Similarly to in-house skills, vendor and agency capability gaps lessen with seniority after peaking at 6-10 years (40%). They are least concerning for early-career and senior professionals, who report 18.2% and 26.3%, respectively.

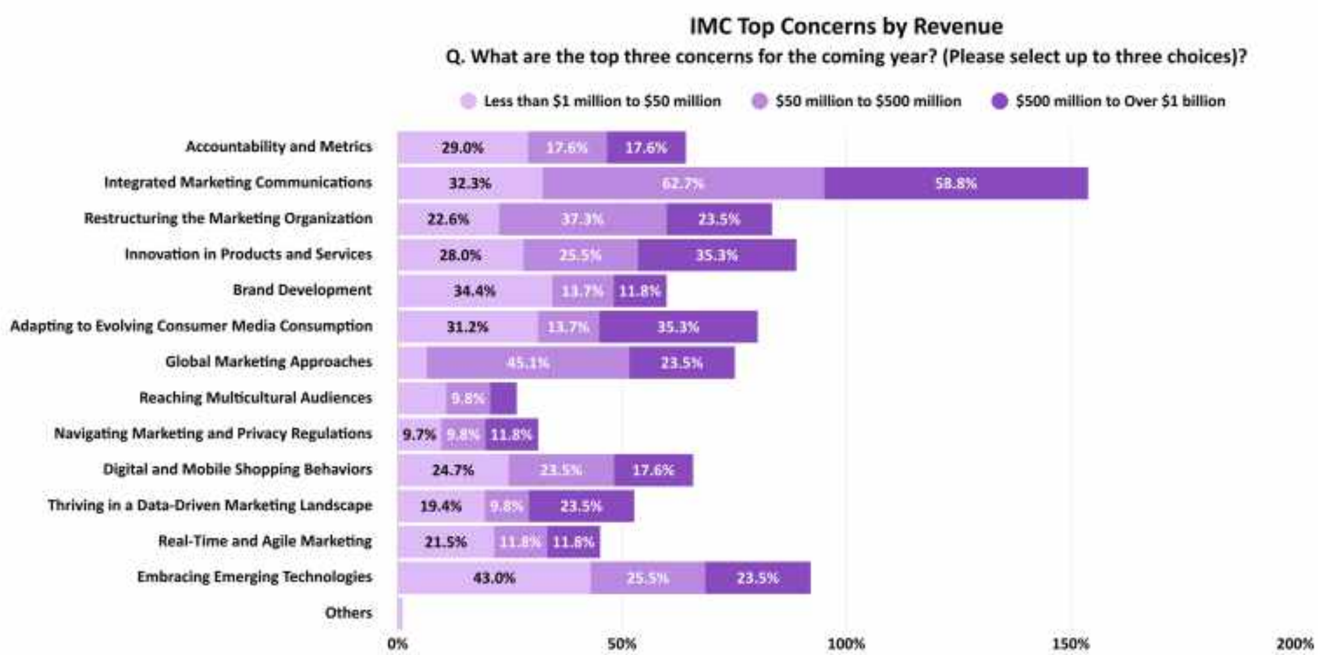
Organizational Silos Surface Mid-to-Late Career

Functional silos within companies are felt most strongly by professionals with 6-10 years of experience (30%), compared to just 13.6% for newcomers and 21.1% for marketers with 16-21+ years of experience.

Vendor Silos Burden Mid-Career Marketers

Functional silos with vendors and agencies are also most challenging for those with 6-10 years of experience (32.9%). New professionals (0-5 years) face fewer such issues, while the most experienced leaders also report them at lower levels (18.4%), possibly due to stronger governance or long-term relationships with trusted partners.

Key IMC Concerns Across the Revenue Spectrum



Integrated Marketing Communications is a Consistent Priority

IMC is the one of the most cited concerns across all revenue brackets. It is especially pronounced among mid- to large-sized firms, with 62.7% of $50M–$500M and 58.8% of $500M+ companies naming it as a top three challenge.

Emerging Technologies Are a Priority for Smaller Firms

Embracing emerging technologies, such as AI, automation, and related tools, is most emphasized by 43% of <$50M firms, compared to 25.5% of $50M–$500M and 23.5% of $500M+ firms.

Innovation in Products and Services Matters More at Scale

Concern is relatively low among <$50M firms (28%), decreases for $50M–$500M (25.5%), and rises for $500M+ companies (35.3%), showing its importance for competitive edge at higher tiers.

Accountability and Metrics Pressure Larger Firms

While 29% of <$50M companies list accountability as a top concern, the percentages are lower for mid-sized and large firms (17.6% each). This indicates that smaller firms struggle more with proving ROI.

Global Marketing Approaches Are a Mid-Market Priority

45.1% of $50M–$500M firms cite global strategy as a concern, compared with 23.5% of $500M+ companies and very few of the small firms, suggesting international ambitions are concentrated in mid-market companies.

Adapting to Shifts in Media Consumption Affects Enterprises Most

Concern is highest among $500M+ companies (35.3%), compared with 31.2% <$50M and 13.7% $50M-$500M.

Restructuring the Marketing Organization Peaks in Mid-Market

37.3% of $50M-$500M firms see restructuring as a key issue, compared with 22.6% <$50M and 23.5% $500M+.

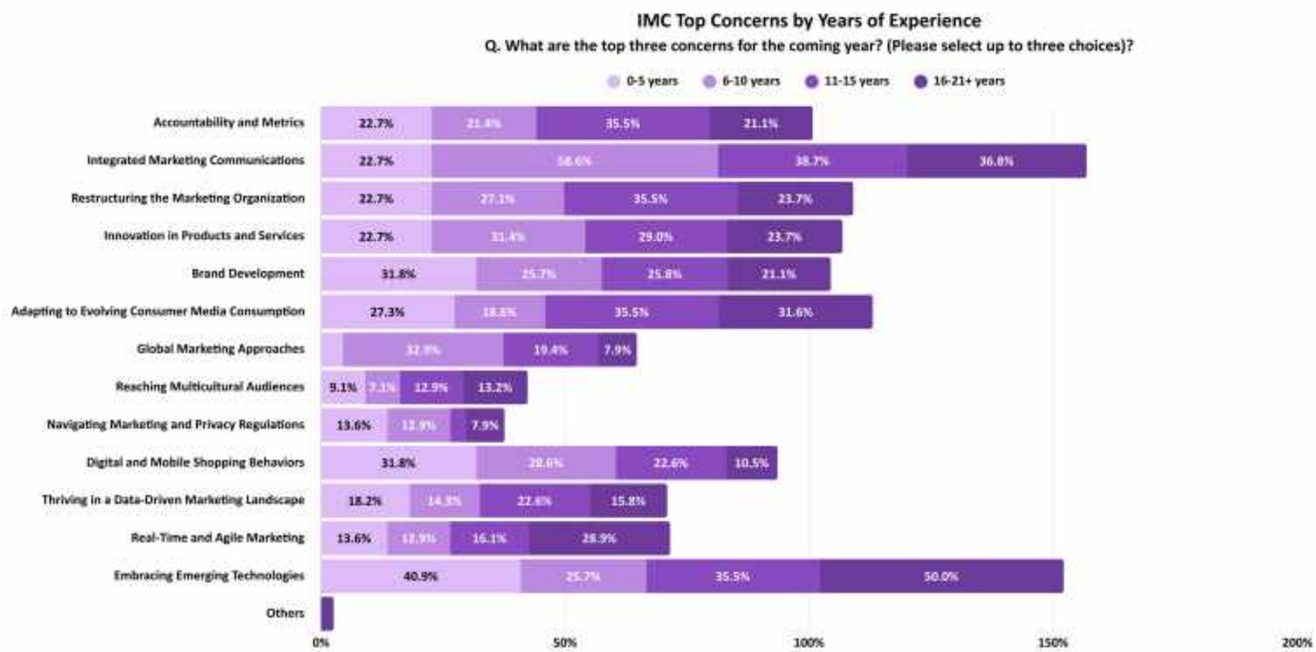
Other Notable Patterns

Brand development is disproportionately a <$50M firm concern (34.4%), dropping off sharply at higher revenue levels.

Data-driven marketing is most emphasized by $500M+ enterprises (23.5%) rather than mid-market firms.

Reaching multicultural audiences and privacy/regulations rank consistently low across all tiers (<12%).

Priorities Shift with Experience: How Marketers' Top Concerns Evolve Over Time



Emerging Technologies Gain Traction with Senior Professionals

The most experienced professionals (16-21+ years) place the greatest emphasis on Embracing Emerging Technologies (50%), signaling their leadership in driving adoption of AI, automation, and advanced tools.

Early-Career Marketers Focus on Brand and Consumer Behaviors

Marketers with 0-5 years of experience are most concerned with Brand Development (31.8%) and Digital and Mobile Shopping Behaviors (31.8%) in addition to Embracing Emerging Technologies (40.9%). These priorities highlight the importance of mastering consumer-facing fundamentals at the start of their careers.

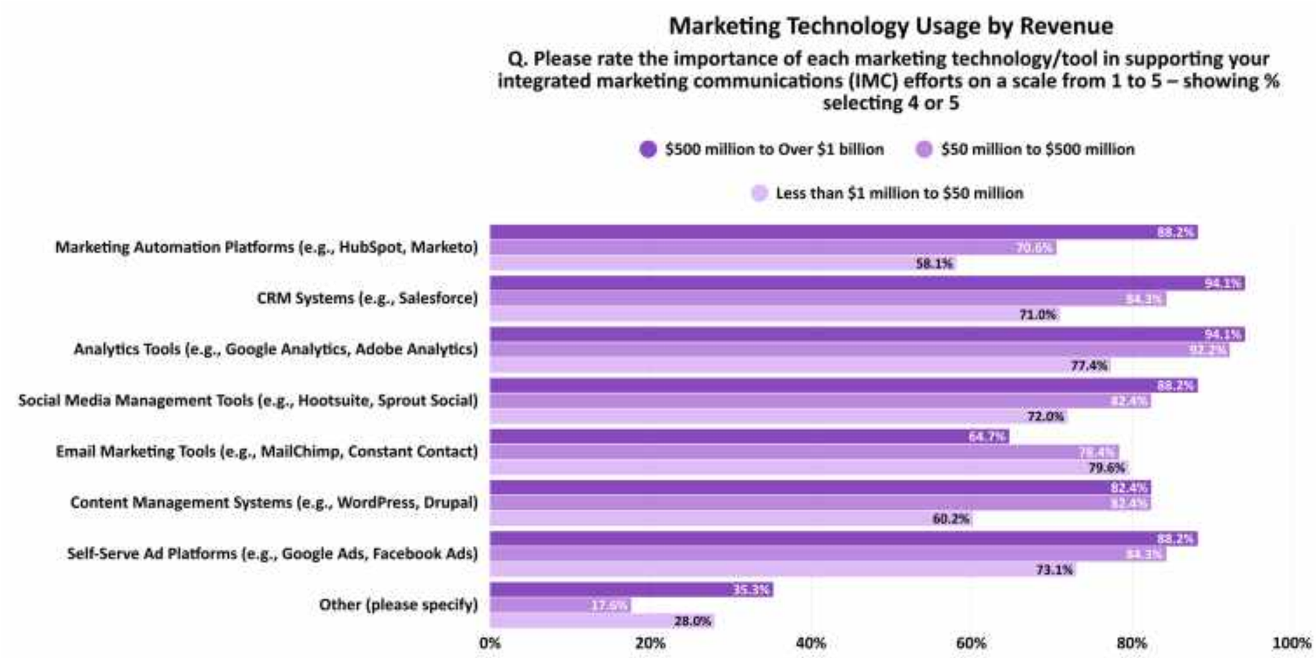
Integrated Marketing Communications Is a Middle-Career Priority

For professionals with 6-10 years of experience, Integrated Marketing Communications emerges as the dominant challenge (58.6%). This reflects the operational complexity of coordinating campaigns across channels, a responsibility that becomes central as marketers move into managerial roles.

Agile Marketing Grows in Importance with Experience

Concern with Real-Time and Agile Marketing builds steadily across career stages from 13.6% among those with 0-5 years to peaking at 28.9% among senior leaders. This suggests that agility and responsiveness are increasingly valued as marketers advance into strategic leadership.

Marketing Tech Usage Scales with Budget



CRM Systems Dominate Across Segments

CRM platforms, such as Salesforce, are nearly universal as revenue grows, peaking at 94.1% adoption among $1B+ firms. This confirms their role as the backbone of customer relationship management at scale.

Analytics Tools Are Non-Negotiable

Analytics platforms (e.g., Google Analytics, Adobe Analytics) are among the most indispensable tools, starting at 77.4% adoption for <$1M firms and climbing to 94.1% for the largest enterprises. Data-driven decision-making is clearly central across all tiers.

Self-Serve Ad Platforms Maintain Broad Appeal

Google Ads and Facebook Ads see strong, steady adoption—from 73.1% among <$1M companies to 88.2% at $1B+. Their accessibility and ROI potential make them a universal element of the marketing tech stack.

Email Marketing Tools Remain Steady but Shift at Scale

Email platforms (e.g., MailChimp, Constant Contact) are consistently popular, and have above 78% adoption across the <$50M and $50M-$500M revenue brackets. However, usage dips to 64.7% among larger ($500M-$1B+) firms, likely reflecting a shift toward integrated enterprise solutions.

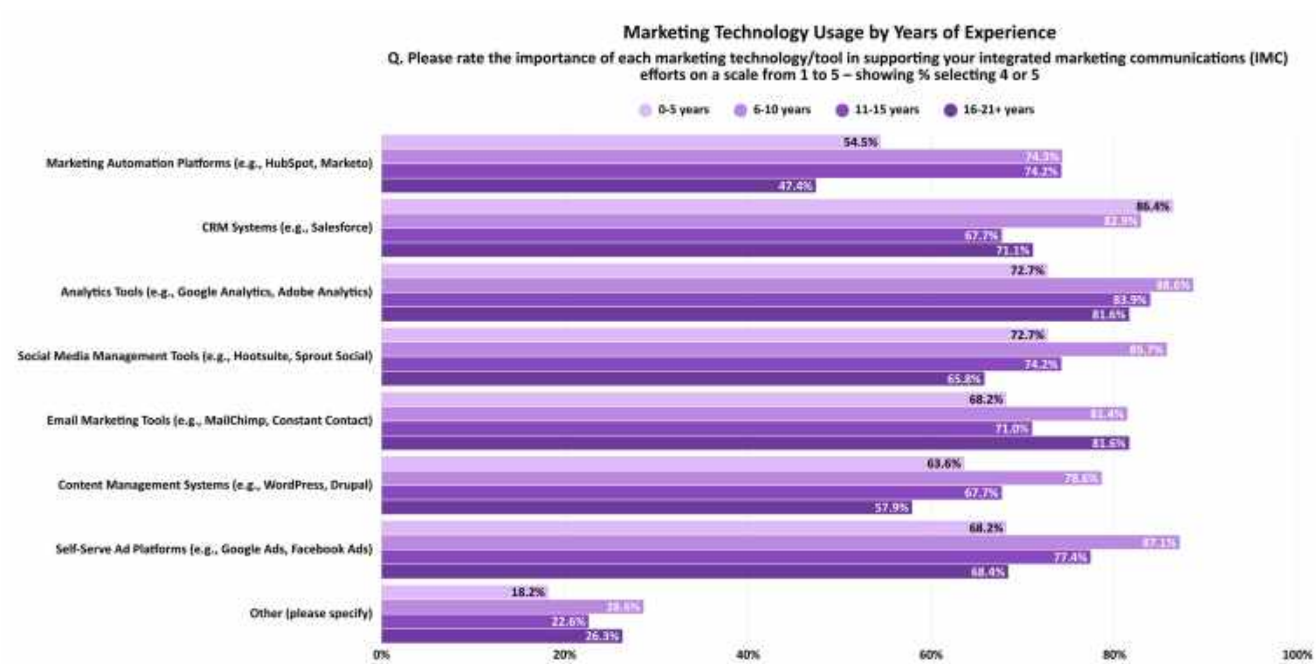
Content and Social Media Tools Gain with Size

Content Management Systems and social media management platforms (e.g., WordPress, Hootsuite) rise sharply with company size, reaching >80% adoption among larger ($500M-$1B+) firms. This underscores the importance of coordinated content and channel management at scale.

Marketing Automation Platforms Signal Operational Maturity

Automation platforms (e.g., HubSpot, Marketo) expand from 58.1% adoption in <$50M firms to 88.2% among the largest firms, highlighting automation as a key marker of marketing sophistication and scalability.

Tech Tools in IMC: Usage Evolves with Experience



CRM and Analytics Dominate Across the Board

CRM systems (e.g., Salesforce) and analytics tools (e.g., Google Analytics, Adobe) are consistently rated highly across all experience levels. CRM importance peaks at 86.4% for professionals with 0–5 years of experience and remains above 67% across all other groups, underscoring their central role in managing customer relationships. Analytics tools are even stronger, climbing from 72.7% (0–5 years) to 88.6% (6-10 years), reflecting their critical role in data-driven IMC strategies.

Email Marketing Is the Most Universally Valued Tool

Email platforms (e.g., MailChimp, Constant Contact) maintain solid importance across experience levels, ranging from 68.2% (0–5 years) to 81.6% (16–21+ years). Mid-career professionals (6-10 years) also report high reliance (81.4%), reflecting email's scalability and persistence as a trusted channel.

Marketing Automation Sees a Mid-Career Peak

Marketing automation platforms (e.g., HubSpot, Marketo) gain traction mid-career, with importance rising from 54.5% (0–5 years) to just above 74% (6–10 years and 11–15 years). This suggests automation becomes essential as professionals take on more complex, scaled campaign management.

Social Media Management Tools Appeal Most to Mid-Level Professionals

Importance for social media tools climbs from 72.7% (0–5 years) to 85.7% (6-10 years) and dips to 65.8% for the most experienced professionals (16+ years). This reflects strong but uneven reliance, with more seasoned marketers valuing social media for broad reach but balancing it with other strategic tools.

"Other" Tools Remain Peripheral

Custom or niche tools remain secondary, never exceeding 28.6% (6–10 years). Senior professionals (16–21+ years) report only 26.3%, suggesting consolidation around standardized, core marketing tech stacks.

Additional Insights

- Sales Promotion emerges as the most sales-focused channel with 72.7% of practitioners viewing it purely for activation, followed by Commerce/Shopper Marketing at 64.6% and Direct Marketing at 60.9%. Influencer Marketing (32.9%) and Content Marketing (31.7%) show the most balanced perspectives between brand and sales objectives, while Sponsorship demonstrates the strongest brand-building orientation at 31.1%, with Experiential Marketing showing more mixed results (32.3%) despite some sales-activation preference.
- Mid-career professionals between 6-15 years show the strongest sales-conversion bias across all channels, likely driven by performance pressure and quarterly targets. Senior marketers show relatively more balanced perspectives and slightly higher brand-building recognition.

- Professionals earlier in their careers tend to see more significant change in their IMC strategy evolutions (72.9%). By contrast, more experienced professionals tend to see less evolution in their current strategy (58.1%).

- In contrast with bigger enterprises, smaller firms overwhelmingly see less evolution in their IMC strategy (83.7%), which could be explained by limited access to resources and budget limitations.

Conclusion

The state of integrated marketing in 2025 reveals an industry transformed by its own success, where unprecedented quality in IMC execution has unveiled new layers of complexity that demand equally sophisticated solutions. The research reveals three critical imperatives for marketing organizations: developing coordination as a core competency through dedicated processes and systems, systematically closing the >35% skills gap in AI and data analysis that represents both the industry's greatest vulnerability and opportunity, and redesigning organizational structures around customer experiences rather than functional silos. Mid-market companies face particular urgency at this inflection point, where growth ambitions must be balanced with operational maturity and resource constraints. The emergence of marketing generalists—with survey participants averaging responsibility for seven different tactics—reflects the industry's evolution toward broader capability requirements while technology adoption continues to outpace human expertise. The organizations that make strategic investments in coordination capabilities, human expertise development, and structural alignment will not only achieve better marketing integration but also establish the foundation for sustained competitive advantage in an increasingly complex marketing landscape.