



# The 5 best practices of leading marketing teams.

Exceed your marketing automation goals with these top takeaways from Adobe's *The State of Marketing Automation* research report.



These days, everyone is talking about marketing automation. But what do the best of the best B2B marketing teams do differently? Adobe asked them.

The responses from more than 600 organizations were distilled into a value-packed, 29-page research [report](#), the highlights of which you can find below. Read on for essential advice on how to approach your marketing strategy plan.

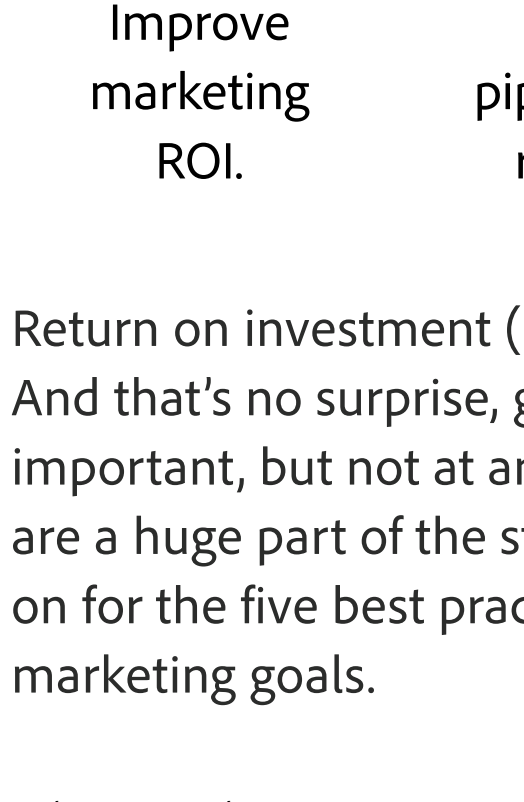
## A quick definition.

### Marketing automation platform:

A software-as-a-service (SaaS) application designed to drive growth by orchestrating personalized cross-channel engagement.

### Example sentence:

"We rely on our marketing automation platform to hit pipeline, revenue, and ROI targets predictably (and at scale)."



98% of marketers say that marketing automation is very important or extremely important to success.

## Four key objectives\* that define marketing success.

We talked to marketing leaders from more than 600 organizations to find out what best practices separate leading marketing teams from everyone else. To start, here are the goals leaders prioritize:

98%

Improve marketing ROI.

97%

Grow pipeline and revenue.

97%

Provide great buyer/customer experiences.

93%

Keep pace with marketing tools and techniques.

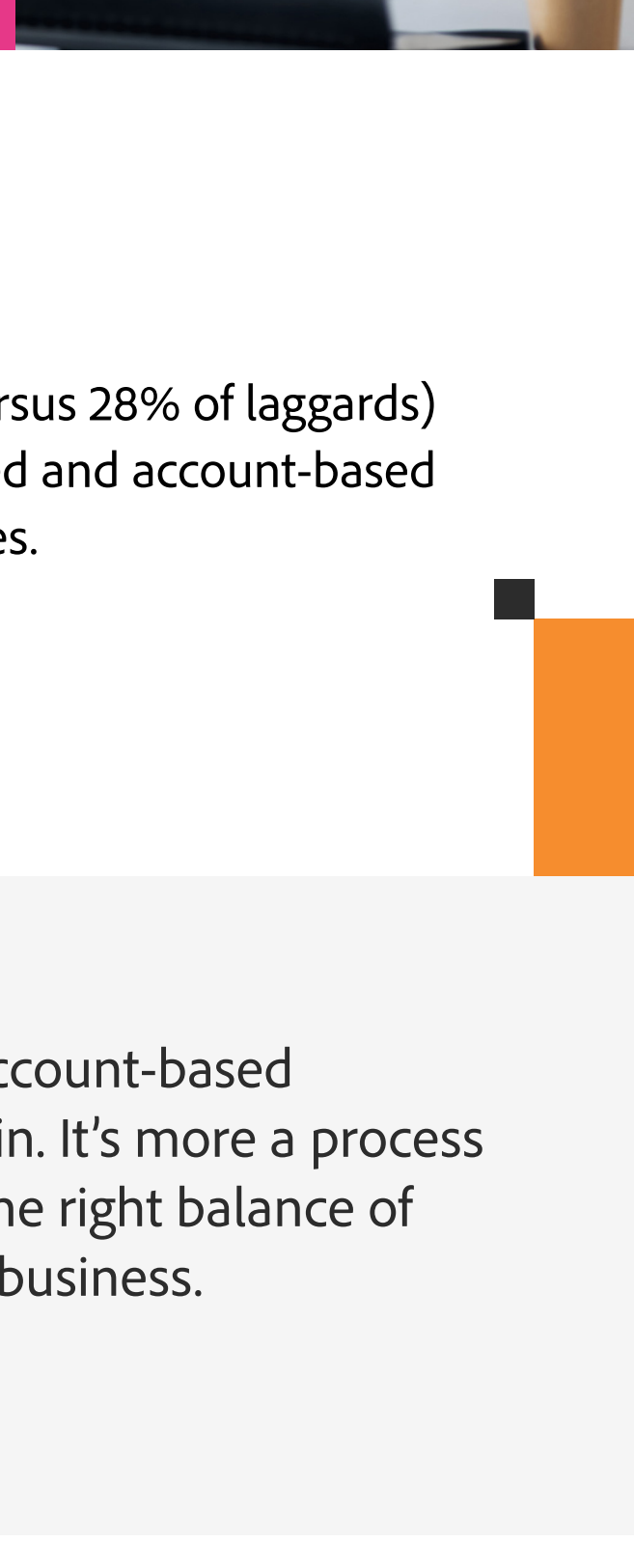
Return on investment (ROI) rose to the top (for the first time in years). And that's no surprise, given recent economic disruptions. Growth is still important, but not at any cost. Of course, great customer experiences are a huge part of the strategy that leads to both growth and ROI. Read on for the five best practices that will help you meet and exceed these marketing goals.

\* Objectives rated very important or extremely important by 90% or more of respondents.

### BEST PRACTICE #1

## Be purposeful.

The leaders we surveyed embrace experimentation, but their strategies are also always grounded in the needs of the business. In practice, this looks like defining and engaging prospects through a healthy balance of people-based and account-based strategies. So if you find yourself choosing between a prolific blog and company-driven targeting, the answer is both.

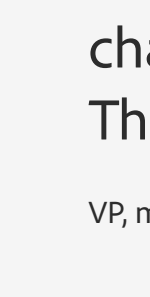


45% of leaders (versus 28% of laggards) use both lead-based and account-based marketing strategies.

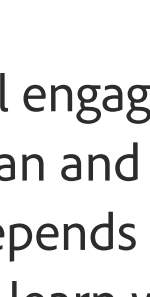
“ Person- or lead-based marketing and account-based marketing are two sides of the same coin. It's more a process of knowing your buyers and choosing the right balance of inbound and outbound tactics for your business.

Director, demand center of excellence, technology industry

The right marketing automation platform can manage and improve both strategies by doing two things:



Providing seamless digital journeys for users through automating marketing campaigns

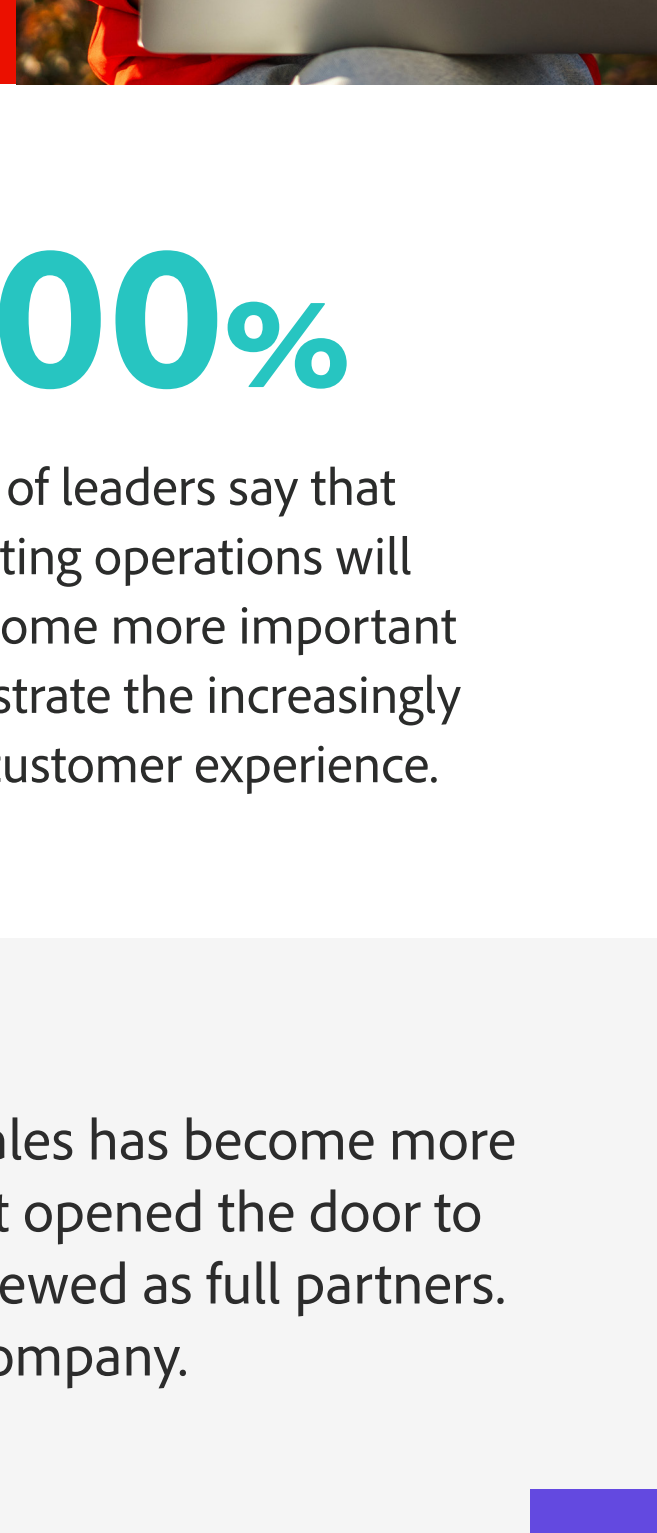


Using customer data to find high-value accounts and more precisely target your customers with personalized content

### BEST PRACTICE #2

## Align marketing and sales.

Whether your organization is just now emerging from purely sales-driven growth or marketing has been central to driving growth for years, it might be time to bring those two lanes even closer. Remember, one of marketing leaders' main objectives is stellar customer experience, and as this journey becomes ever more digital, disjointed experiences are no longer tolerated.



98%

98% of leaders believe that closer alignment between sales and marketing will be needed now and in the future.

100%

100% of leaders say that marketing operations will only become more important to orchestrate the increasingly digital customer experience.

“ COVID has definitely changed things. Sales has become more dependent on the marketing team. That opened the door to changing our relationship. Now we're viewed as full partners. That's great for marketing and for the company.

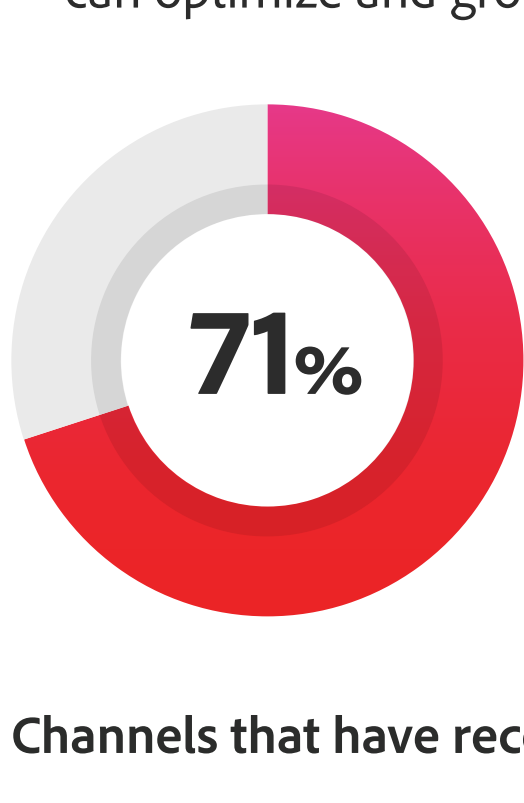
VP, marketing, financial services industry

All engagements—sales and marketing—need to tie back to one plan and one measurement system. Exactly how you strike this balance depends on what works best for your business. Dive in to [the full report](#) to learn what leaders consider when aligning these two teams.

### BEST PRACTICE #3

## Personalize at scale.

B2B buyers and customers expect the same great personalized experiences in their work lives that they enjoy as online consumers. Because of this, almost every company in our research performed some level of personalization.



64% of leaders have high level of content personalization\* in their marketing versus 7% of laggards.

\*Person-specific, deep data on all or most channels.

Leaders don't just test the waters—they jump in with both feet by addressing all the aspects of great personalization, including:

- Centralized customer data
- Omnichannel customer journeys
- Content creation
- Measurement

### How to create personalized content using technology.

Leaders are careful to ensure that the solutions they're implementing can handle the complexities of B2B, including associations between people, opportunities, and accounts. Here's how they use technology to solve their top content personalization challenges:



73%

Serving the right personalized content to the right person at the right time



72%

Streamlining internal content creation workflows



72%

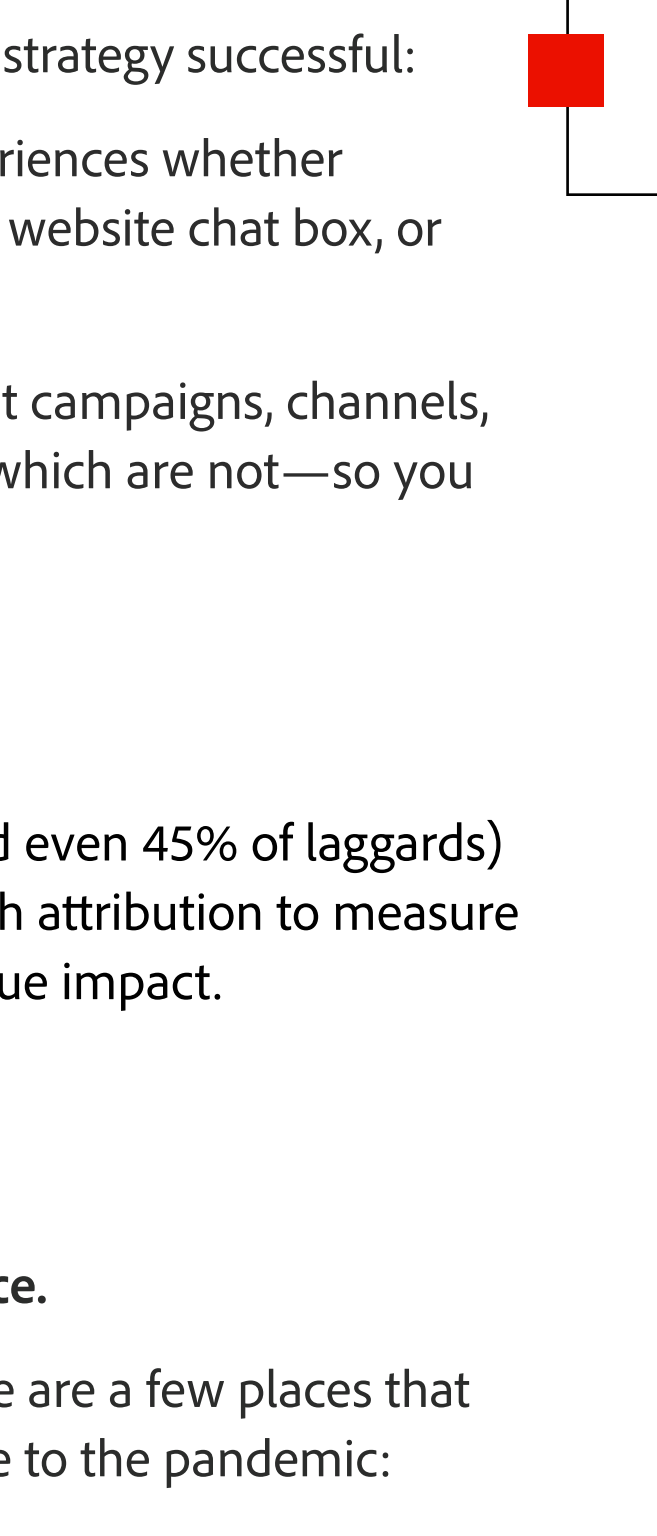
Using automation and AI wherever possible as content creation can be extremely labor-intensive

The takeaway here is that leaders are using person-specific, deep data on all or most of their marketing channels. Learn from the best and go all in on your [personalization strategy](#).

### BEST PRACTICES #4 AND #5

## Orchestrate and measure.

Cross-channel engagement is another area where leaders invest more than others—and they're seeing the benefit. By activating more channels and utilizing data to optimize those channels, these businesses are meeting customers where they already are, providing them a seamless brand experience.



There are two keys to making your cross-channel strategy successful:

- Using automation to orchestrate coherent experiences whether your customer reaches out through email, your website chat box, or anywhere else.
- Using multi-touch attribution to determine what campaigns, channels, and content are having business impact—and which are not—so you can optimize and grow your ROI.



71% of leaders (and even 45% of laggards) now use multitouch attribution to measure pipeline and revenue impact.

### Channels that have recently grown in importance.

If you're not sure which channels to prioritize, here are a few places that our experts say have become more important due to the pandemic:



The most important thing to remember here is that automation is your friend. We're long past the point where it was possible to do all of this manually—which brings us to one final bonus tip.

### BONUS TIP

## Use the data available to you.

If you follow the best practices laid out above, you'll be well on your way toward successful B2B marketing campaigns. The best leaders' success is underpinned by smart martech management, artificial intelligence (AI), and a relentless focus on data.

Rather than succumbing to an unwieldy martech stack, these leaders:

- Prioritize managing their tools.
- Get the most out of the martech they're already using.
- Put the necessary resources in place to escape being in full-time reactive mode.

Follow in the footsteps of our marketing automation experts by setting up a system that helps you set and exceed your marketing goals.

## Take the next step.

Be a leader, not a laggard. For even more essential advice on how to approach your marketing automation strategy plan in 2023, download the full report.

[Download the full report](#)

