Optimizing B2B Buyer Journeys: Strategies for Sales and Marketing Alignment
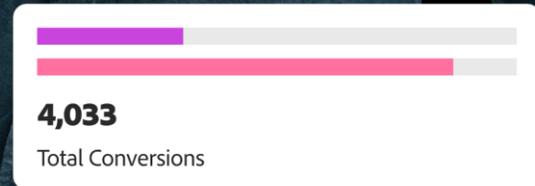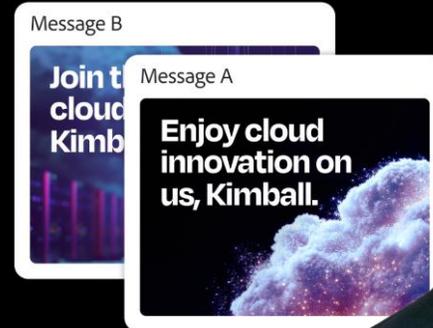
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Message B

Join t
clou
Kimb

Message A

Enjoy cloud innovation on us, Kimball.

4,033
Total Conversions

● A   ● B
2,865   485

Agenda and speakers

John Arnold
Guest Speaker
Principal Analyst,
Forrester

|	
01	Introduction
02	The importance of sales and marketing alignment
03	Addressing the core challenges with B2B alignment
04	Adobe as the trusted partner for B2B transformation
05	Wrap up

Jill Steinhour
Director, Industry Strategy, High Tech,
Adobe

Dusty Garner
Principal Solution Architect,
Adobe

Adobe

Alignment Is Important To Sales And Marketing Executives

Percentage Of C-Level Leaders Who Agree Alignment Across Functions Is Important
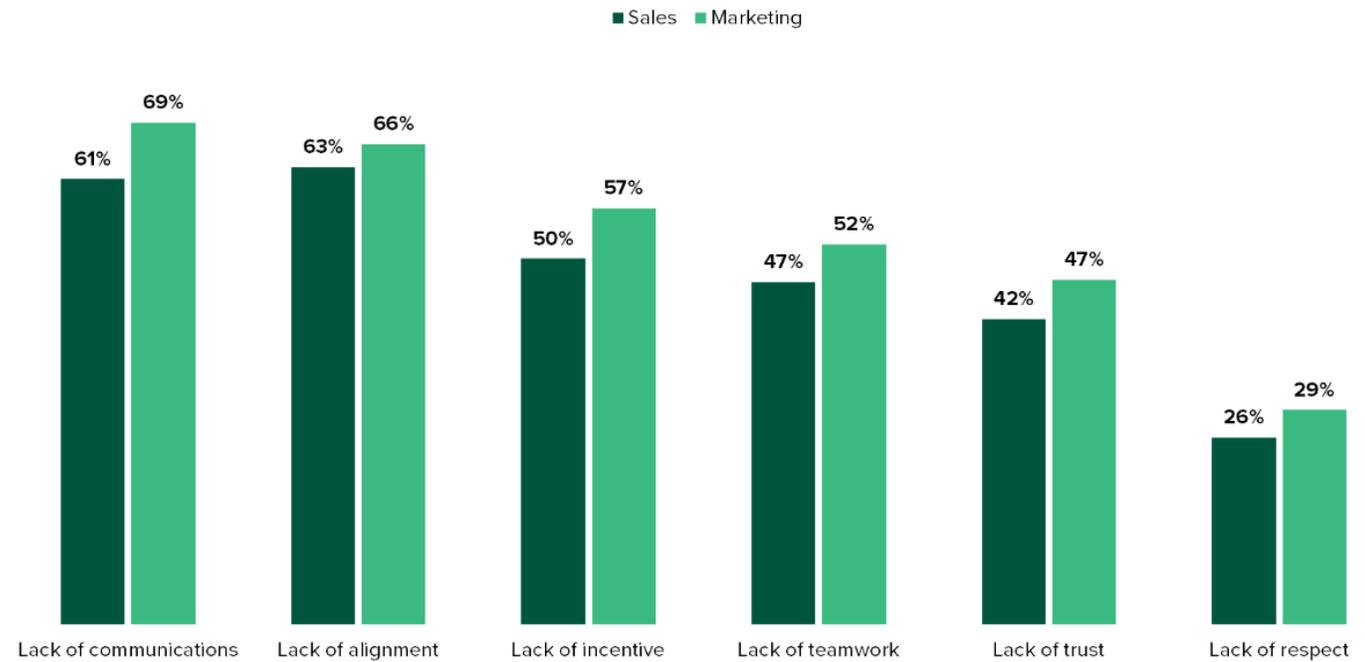
3
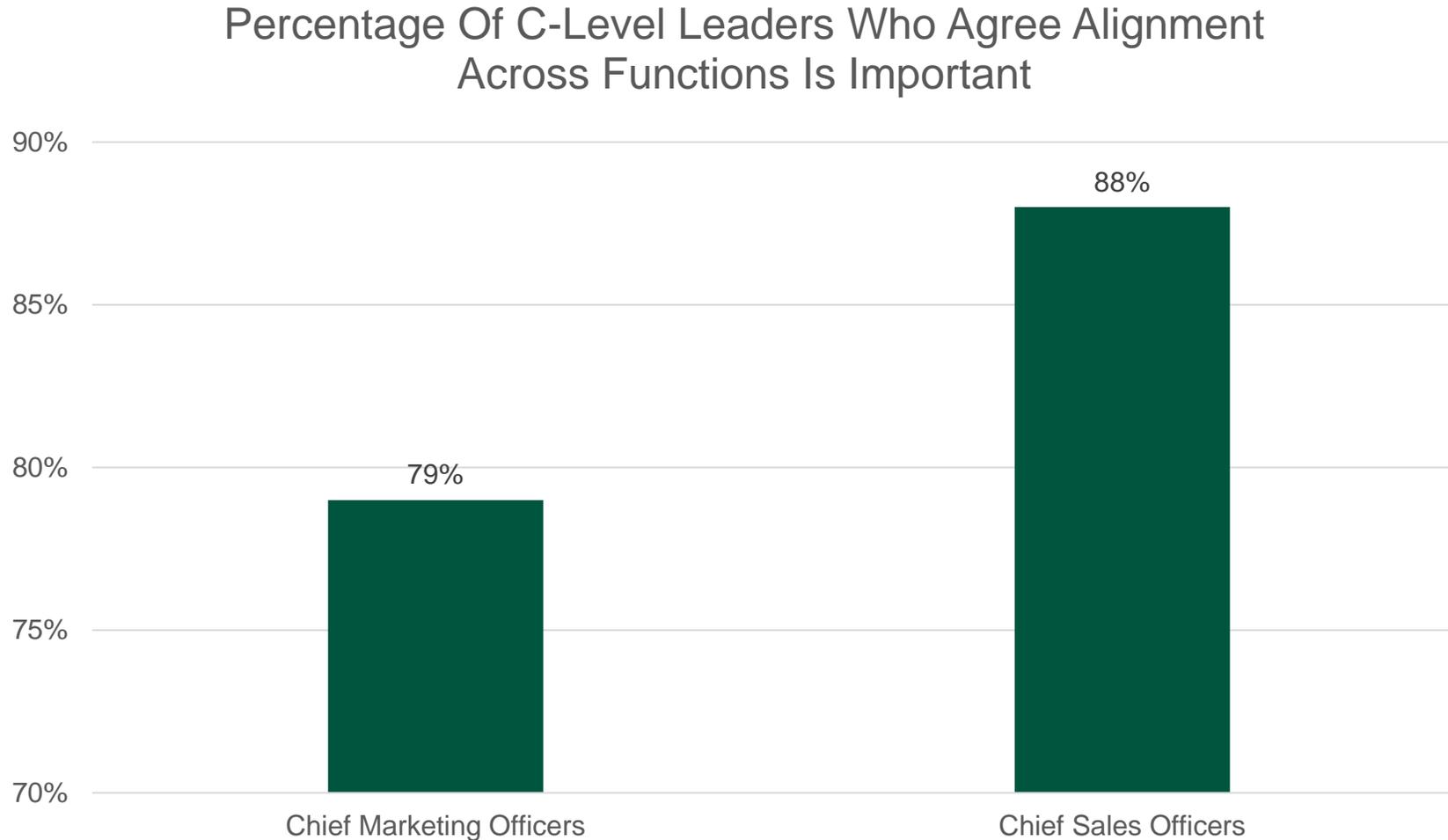
82%

of C-level B2B business and technology professionals say their product, sales, and marketing teams are all aligned.

Marketing and sales lack alignment in several key areas

Percentage of B2B sellers and marketers who say there is a lack in key alignment areas

■ Sales ■ Marketing

Category	Sales	Marketing
Lack of communications	61%	69%
Lack of alignment	63%	66%
Lack of incentive	50%	57%
Lack of teamwork	47%	52%
Lack of trust	42%	47%
Lack of respect	26%	29%

From the Forrester report, "The Future Of Marketing And Sales Alignment." Base: 233 B2B sales and marketing professionals. Source: Forrester's Q2, 2024 Sales And Marketing Alignment Survey.

Lack of functional alignment causes a myriad of challenges
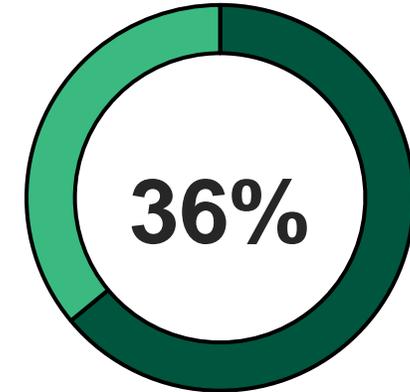
Customer experiences

45%
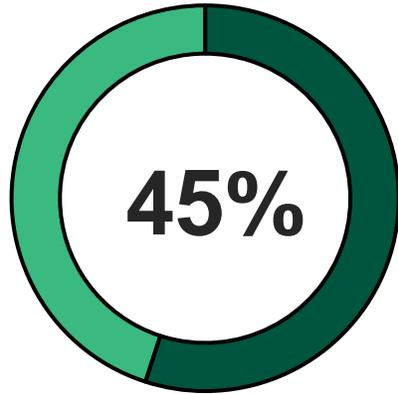
C-level executives who say lack of alignment is causing poor customer experiences

Transforming initiatives

41%
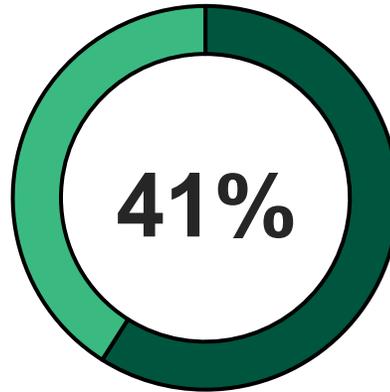
C-level executives who say they are unable to execute on needed transformational initiatives due to lack of functional alignment

Revenue growth

36%

C-level executives who say lack of alignment is challenging their organization's ability to grow

Base: 265 C-suite executives in B2B organizations. Source: Forrester's C-Suite Alignment Survey, 2025

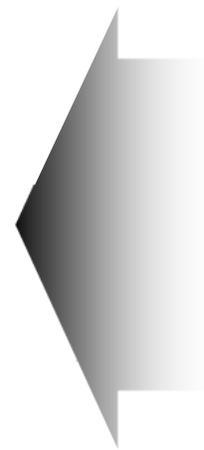Organizations reporting very high levels of strategic and operational alignment report

$ 1.9x

higher revenue than those with no alignment.

Marketing And Sales Alignment Is At Risk In The Future

External disruption

Internal dysfunction

Marketing and
sales misalignment

Marketing And Sales Alignment Is At Risk In The Future

External disruption

Artificial intelligence

Digitization and automation

Self-service buying groups

Partner ecosystems

Hypercompetition

Marketing and sales misalignment

Internal dysfunction

Marketing And Sales Alignment Is At Risk In The Future

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Marketing and sales misalignment

Internal dysfunction

Credit-stealing

Finger-pointing

Ownership disputes

Resource competition

Passive aggressiveness

Marketing And Sales Alignment Is At Risk In The Future

Changes in roles, skills, working groups, reporting relationships, compensation, goals, and performance measurement

External disruption

Artificial intelligence

Digitization and automation

Self-service buying groups

Partner ecosystems

Hypercompetition

Marketing and sales misalignment

Internal dysfunction
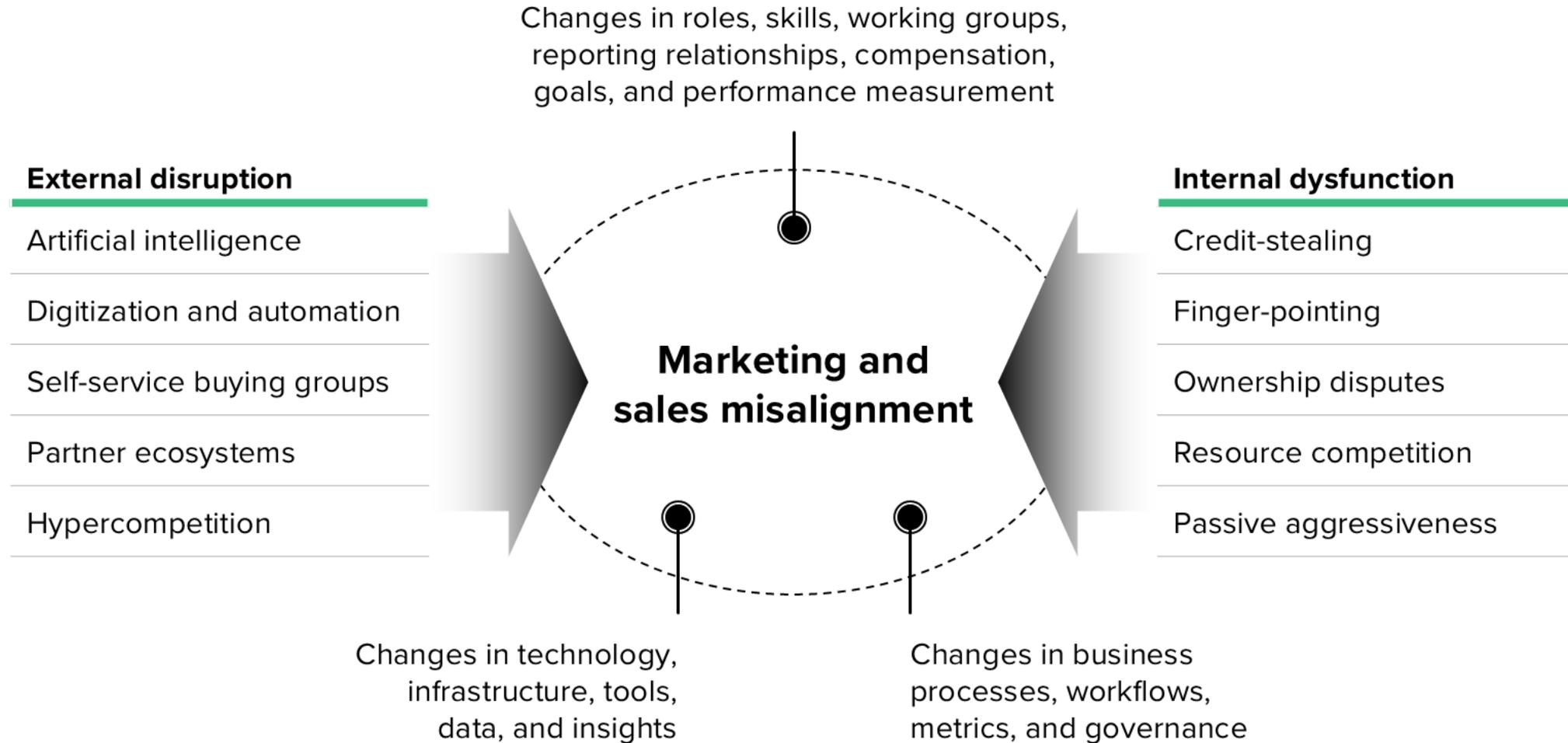
Credit-stealing

Finger-pointing

Ownership disputes

Resource competition

Passive aggressiveness

# Marketing And Sales Alignment Is At Risk In The Future

Changes in roles, skills, working groups, reporting relationships, compensation, goals, and performance measurement

External disruption

Artificial intelligence

Digitization and automation

Self-service buying groups

Partner ecosystems

Hypercompetition

Marketing and sales misalignment

Internal dysfunction

Credit-stealing

Finger-pointing

Ownership disputes

Resource competition

Passive aggressiveness

Changes in technology, infrastructure, tools, data, and insights

Changes in business processes, workflows, metrics, and governance

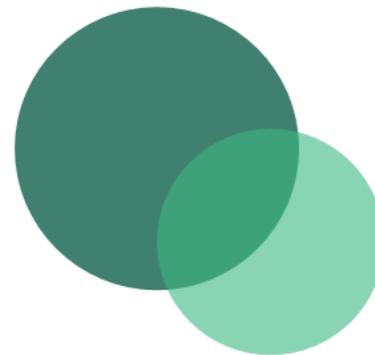# Four marketing and sales partnership paradigms will emerge in the future.

Four partnership paradigms will define high-performing sales and marketing functions
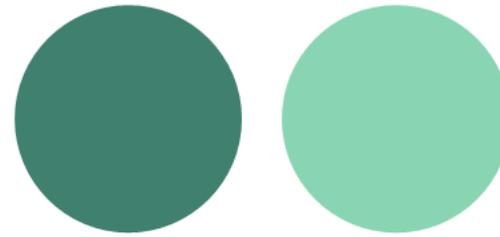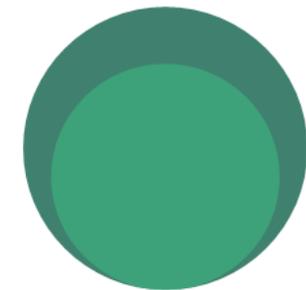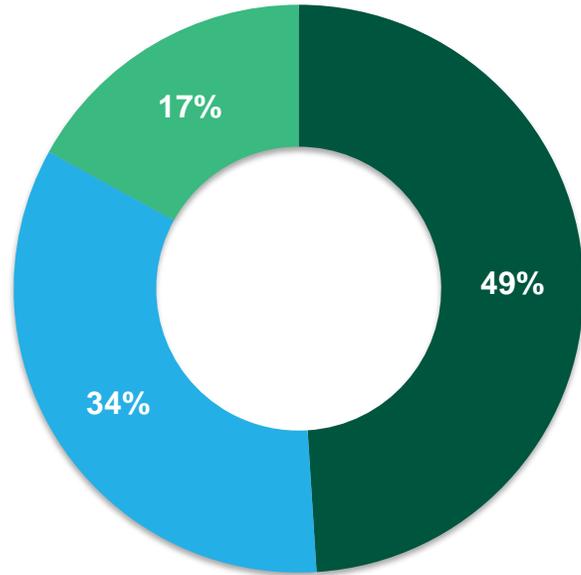

Siloed
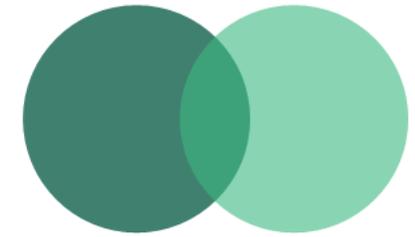
Proportionate

Subservient

Assimilated

B2B buying groups are complex

Buying Scenario

- 49%
- 34%
- 17%

- ■ It was a consensus purchase
- ■ It was an independent purchase
- ■ It was a committee purchase

Base: 9,239 global business buyers (past 12 months) whose organization has 100+ employees

Average number of people involved in the purchasing process:

13 people   Inside the organization

9 people   Outside the organization

Base: 10,324 purchase influencers (past 12 months)

70% of purchases involve **3** or more departments

Base: 11,352 purchase influencers (past 12 months)

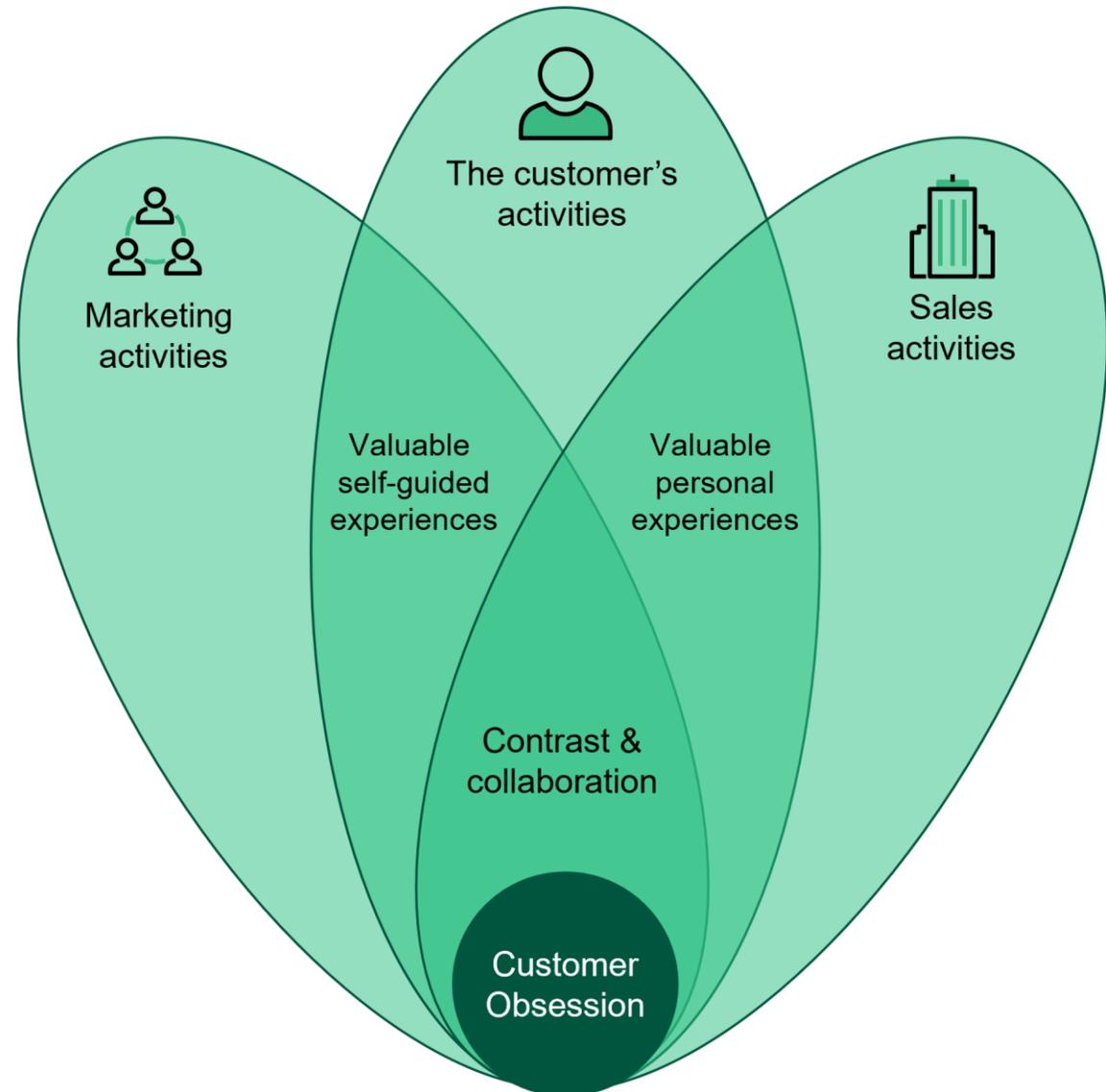Source: Forrester's Buyers' Journey Survey, 2024

Most frequently selected information sources that buyers find meaningful or impactful across the discover, evaluate, and commit phases of the buyer's journey

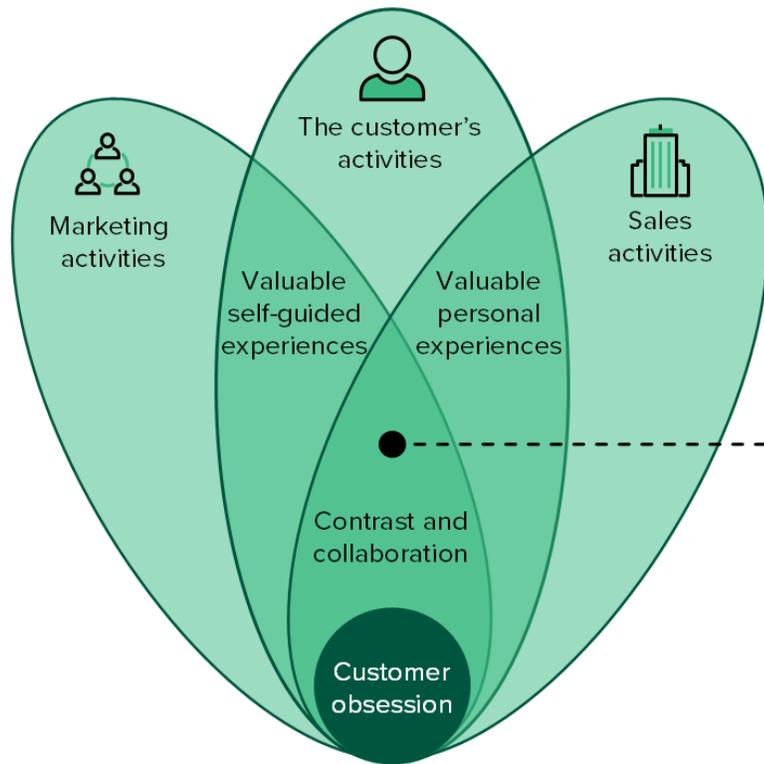| Self-guided interactions		Personal interactions	
Information source	**Impact score**	**Information sources**	**Impact score**
Free trials	34%	Product experts	40%
Vendor websites	32%	Sales representatives	33%
Internet searches	31%	Customer service/success	32%
Customer references	30%	Executives	29%
Online demos or virtual tours	28%	Webinars	27%
Social media	28%	Industry conferences, trade shows, or seminars	27%
User review websites	27%	Executive briefings	26%
Industry or business association websites	24%	Networking events	25%
ROI calculators	23%	Online forums	25%
Online communities	22%	Online chat	24%

Marketing and sales must partner around experiences

Forrester's Customer-Obsessed
Marketing And Sales Partnership Model

The customer's activities

Marketing activities

Sales activities

Valuable self-guided experiences

Valuable personal experiences

Contrast & collaboration

Customer Obsession

Marketing and sales leaders must balance contrast and collaboration

The Forrester Customer-Obsessed Marketing And Sales Partnership Model

- The customer's activities
- Marketing activities
- Sales activities
- Valuable self-guided experiences
- Valuable personal experiences
- Contrast and collaboration
- Customer obsession

Four partnership paradigms will define high-performing sales and marketing functions

Contrast

Collaboration
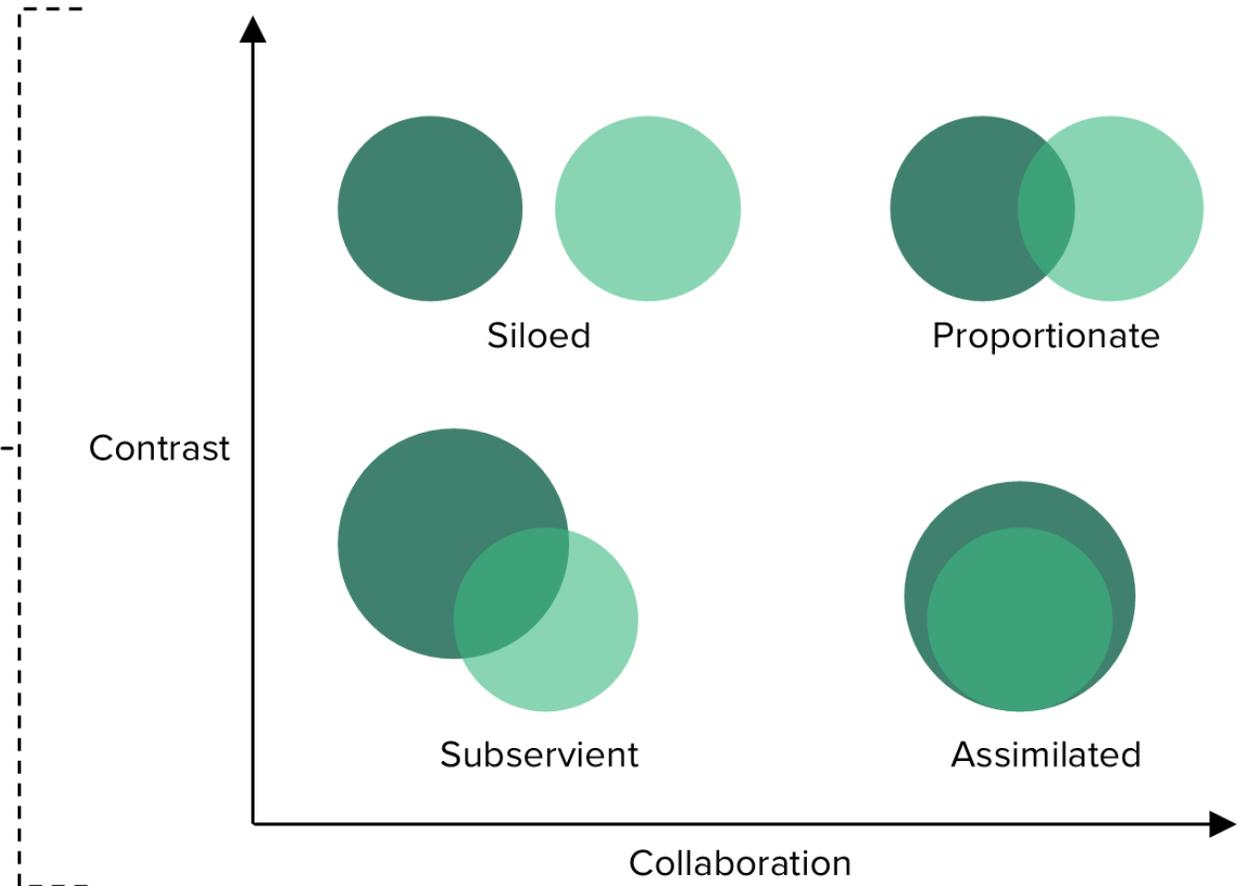
- Siloed
- Proportionate
- Subservient
- Assimilated

Technology will play a big role in alignment, but siloes are disproportionally impacting sales

"We have siloed technology systems across functions that
make it difficult to do our jobs."

- Chief Marketing Officers
- Chief Sales Officers
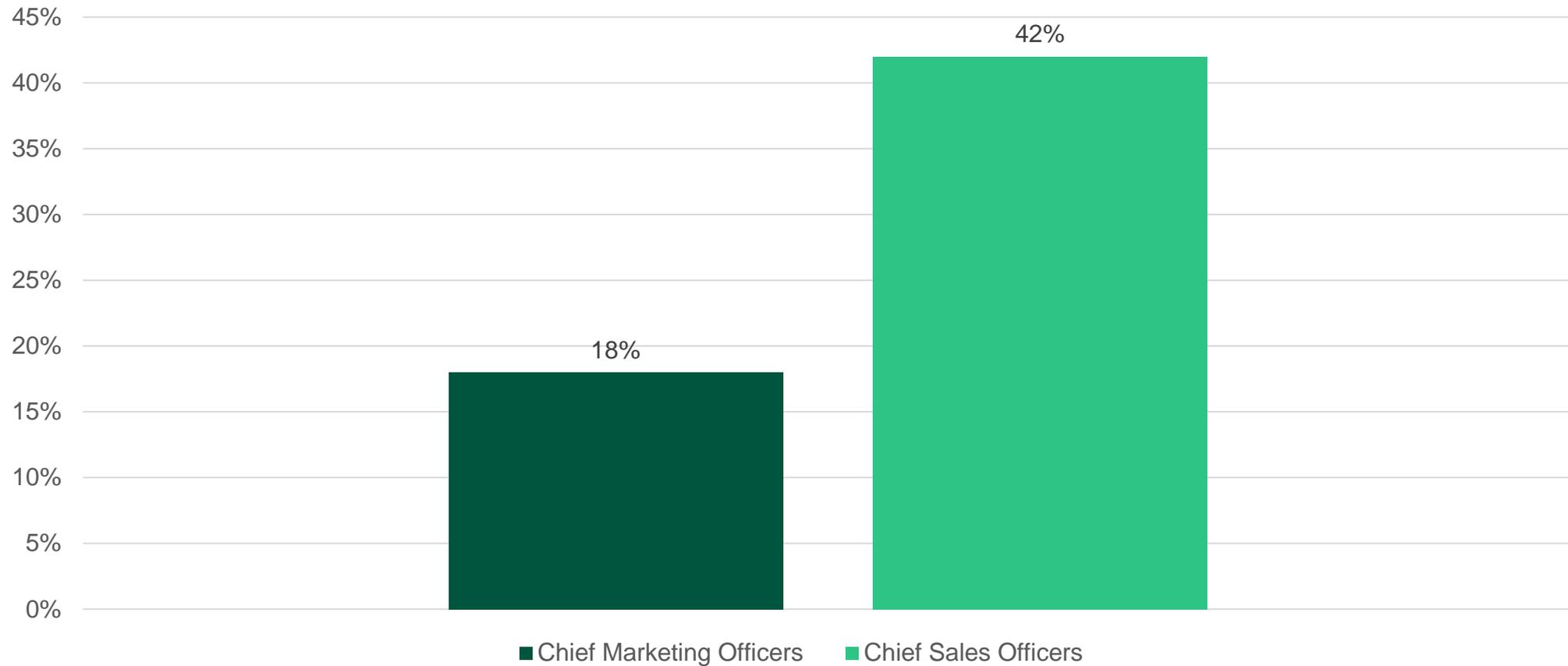
Addressing core challenges in B2B alignment

Personalized email

Enjoy cloud innovation on us, Kimball

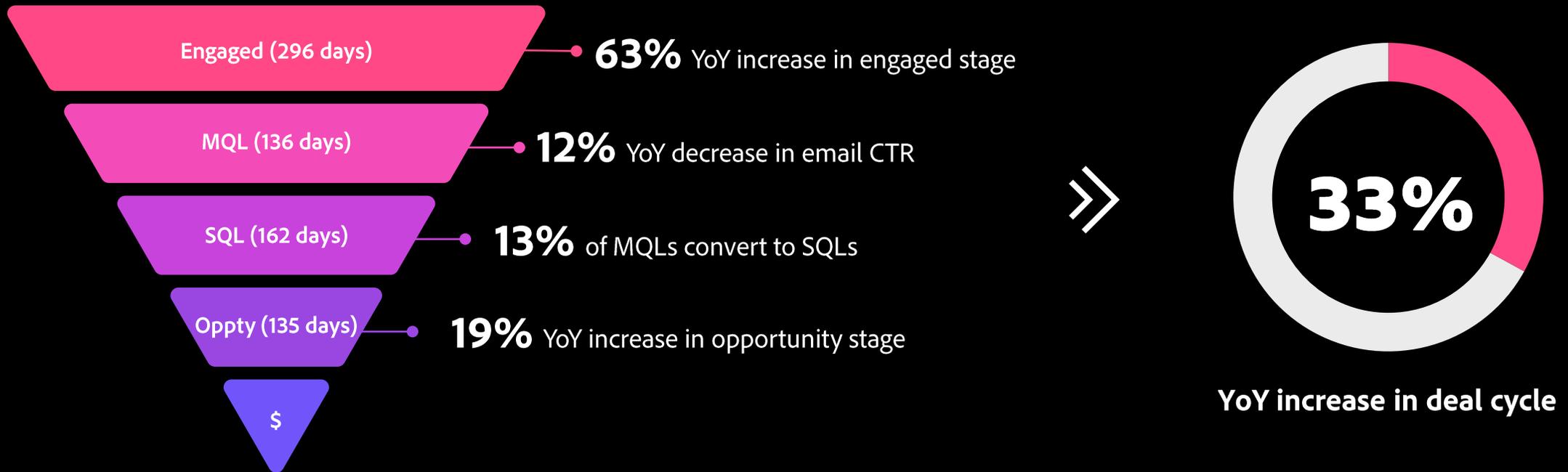Content performance

Clicks
865

Delivered
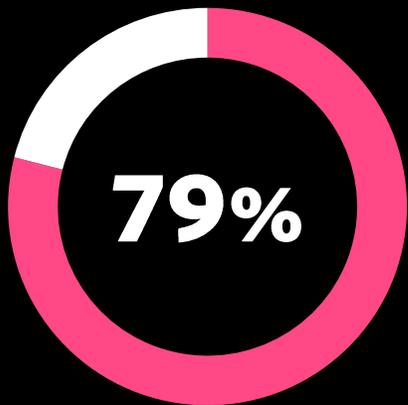164k

Conversion
87%

Clicks
142k

Increasing complexity is impacting pipeline performance

Adobe conducted a B2B benchmarking assessment, leveraging proprietary Adobe Marketo Engage data. Some of our key findings include:

Engaged (296 days)

MQL (136 days)

SQL (162 days)

Oppty (135 days)

$

63% YoY increase in engaged stage

12% YoY decrease in email CTR

13% of MQLs convert to SQLs

19% YoY increase in opportunity stage

33%

YoY increase in deal cycle

B2B **journeys are increasing in length** as buyers are not finding the information they need and Sales is not progressing the majority of MQLs.

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79%

Leaders are 79% more likely than laggards to be focusing their overall sales and marketing activities on multi-person buying groups within an organization.
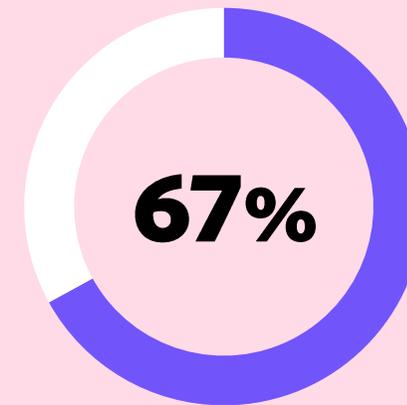
67%

67% of leaders indicate that their organization personalizes the customer journey around the multi-person buying group.

Buying group

Patricia Reed
Decision-maker

Title
VP of Revenue Ops

Group
Altura

Freddie Cole
Decision-maker
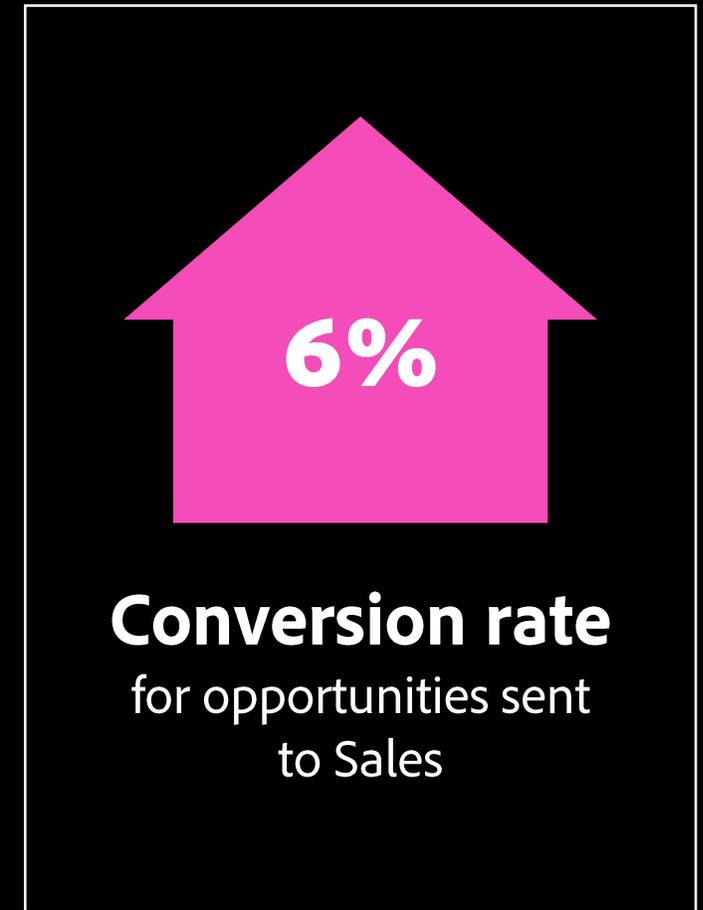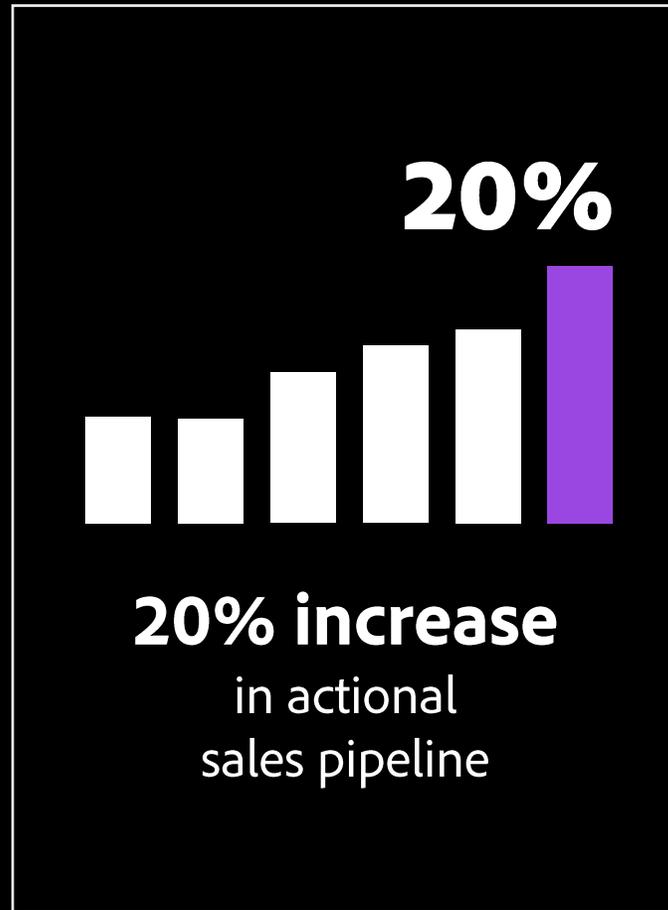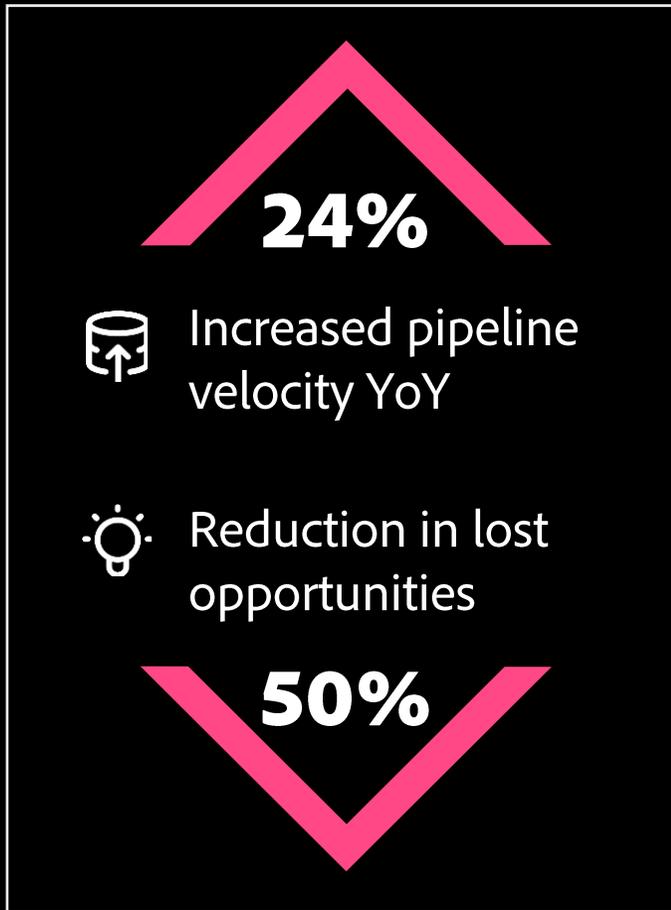
Title
Microchip Buyer

Group
Altura

Nadia Chau
CEO

Member engagement score
60

20% completion
100 out of 500 accounts finished the journey

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And benefit from measurable results

24%

Increased pipeline velocity YoY

50%

Reduction in lost opportunities

20%

20% increase
in actional sales pipeline

6%

Conversion rate
for opportunities sent to Sales
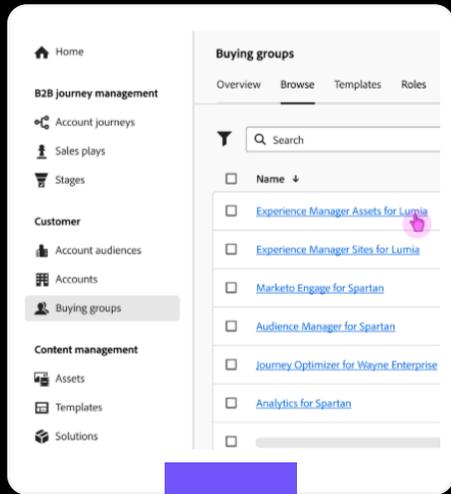
Buying groups can augment lead-based and account-based marketing programs

Technology advancement

Marketing automation systems

Marketing Director

CIO

Finance VP

Finance Director

Marketing Manager

IT Manager

Lead-based marketing

Account-based marketing platforms

Account

Marketing Manager   Finance Director   Contact

Finance VP   IT Manager   CIO

CFO   Marketing Director   IT Director

Account-based marketing

Generative AI foundational data model role-based activation

Marketing	Finance	IT

Decision-maker

Marketing SVP   CFO   CIO

Influencer

Marketing Director   Finance VP   IT Director

Practitioner

Marketing Manager   Finance Director   IT Manager

Buying group-based marketing

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How it works

1 Create buying groups

2 Setup personalized journeys and content
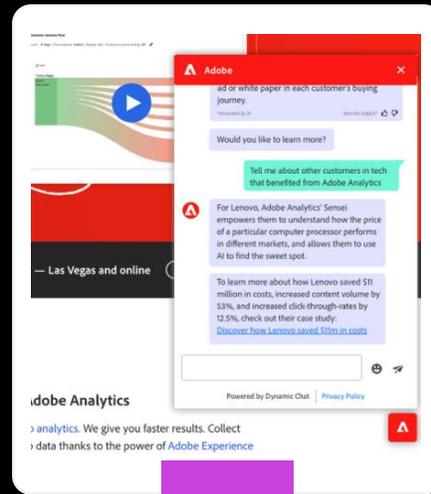
3 Engage and qualify buying groups

4 Alert Sales

5 Measure performance

Buying group by product of interest

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Getting B2B implementations right

B2B marketing transformation journey

Buying group transformation ↑

	💡 **Buying group foundation**	🚀 **Buying group journeys launch**	✳️ **Impact and alignment expansion**
🎯 **Scope**	Initial Journey Optimizer B2B Edition implementation and buying group creation.	Use case activation with Sales and Marketing buying group validation.	Sales and Marketing leaders roll up to CRO; use case activation spans both teams.
📄 **Use case**	Create buying groups and identify missing contacts.	▪ Acquire missing buying group contacts - paid media and BDR outreach ▪ Activate account data to create cross-sell journeys	▪ Qualify opportunities - send sales alerts for qualified buying groups ▪ Understand and optimize ROI of journeys
🎯 **Goal**	Implement Journey Optimizer B2B Edition. Begin creating buying groups for priority accounts.	Orchestrate buying group journeys for priority accounts. Sales Ops validates buying groups, Marketing creates nurture campaigns.	Expand buying group orchestration adoption through additional use cases spanning Sales and Marketing.
🕐 **Duration**	**3 months**	**6 months**	**12 months**

Go-to-market operations maturity →

Organizational structure for leading buying group orchestration programs

Program governance structure

Functions and responsibilities

Executive leadership
Marketing & Sales

▪ Many B2B Marketing teams aligned to CRO

A	**Executive Sponsor**	Aligns program to business strategy and goals (CMO and CRO)
B	**Executive Steering Committee**	Prioritizes and owns enterprise roadmap; ensures cross-organizational alignment (SVPs+)

VISION

Dedicated program
Marketing & Sales

▪ Marketo Engage product manager would also own Journey Optimizer B2B Edition

▪ Sales involved in validating BGs

C	**Program Leadership** Customer experiences + Capabilities	Enterprise roadmap and measures success (VP+)
D	**Program Management Office**	Establishes PM processes and best practices, ensuring efficient project execution
E	**Agile team(s)** 🔗 **Capabilities**	Execute specific buying group program objectives (use cases) Capability teams: Operate and maintain digital technology

STRATEGY & DELIVERY

Scaled Execution

F	**Skilled practitioners**	Users within functions or LOBs; upskilled to deliver BAU with new capabilities

DEPLOYMENT

Activate high value use cases with minimal operational changes

Use case example: Qualification optimization.

Program structure and operational model

Campaign Ops	Demand Gen		BDRs / SDRs	Account team
Creates **audience segments**	Builds journeys to **engage most/all contacts** within accounts	Contacts are progressed in existing **journeys with defined schedules**	Receive MQLs, which **often do not qualify for SQLs**	Engages SQLs and closes opportunities
Real-Time CDP	ME		CRM	
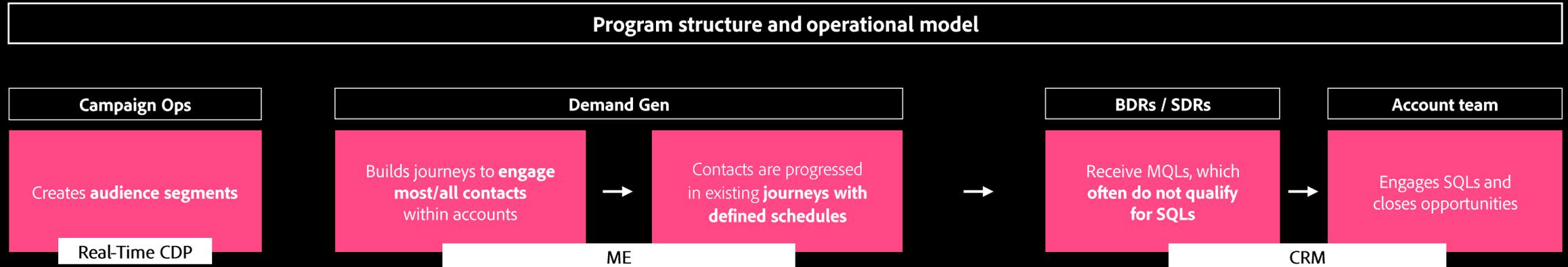
✖ **Engages most or all individuals** within an account and sends sales ineffective triggers based on single leads, leading to poor **MQLs to SQL conversion rate -** (13%).

Activation with Journey Optimizer B2B Edition

ABM/Sales	ABM/Buying Group Manager		Sales Ops	Account team
Creates account segments and **buying group construct**	Builds targeted journeys to **engage priority buying group contacts**	Contacts are progressed in journeys **based on buying group activity**	Receives MQBG alert and forwards to Sales rep	Engages SQBGs with **more informed approach to close opportunities**
Real-Time CDP	Journey Optimizer B2B Edition		Email	CRM

✓ Targeted approach to only **engage relevant contacts**, providing Sales with an **effective alert** based on **collective buying group engagement.**

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Value drivers for a successful B2B marketing transformation

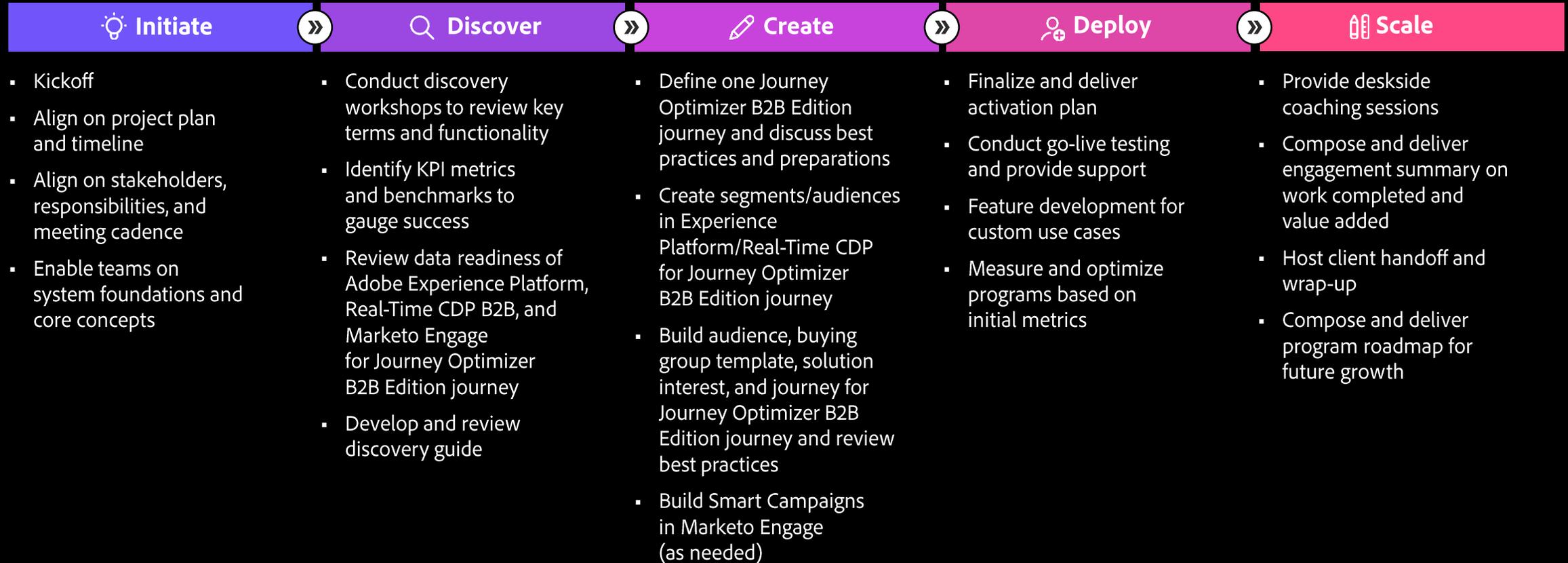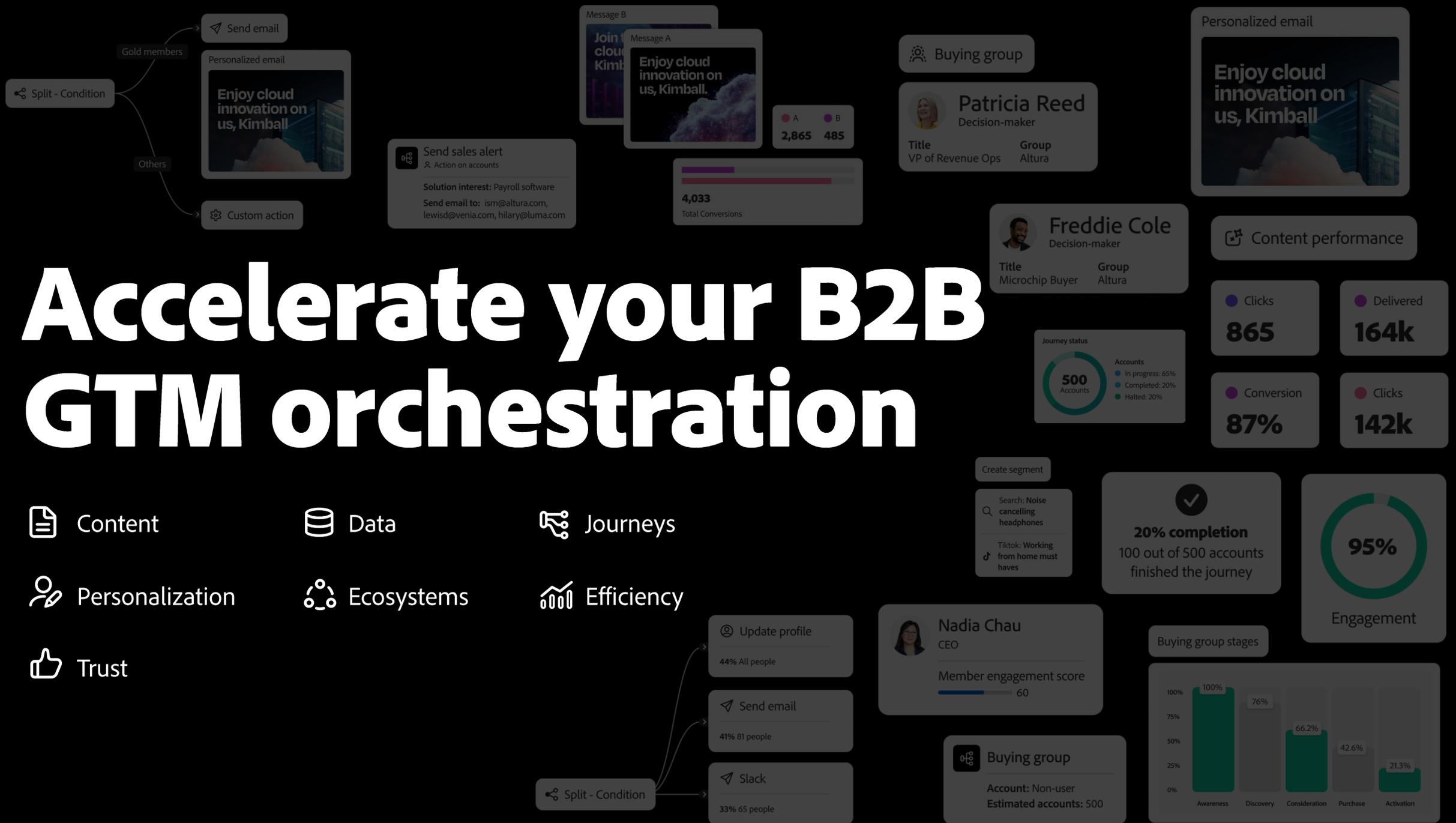| Value driver	How to get there	Impact
Understand and increase buying group completeness	▪ Define account criteria, set up **buying group templates** with roles and governance ▪ **Identify key missing contacts,** build journeys to **convert unknown contacts to known**	▪ Increase **win rate and pipeline velocity** ▪ Optimize **marketing resources and paid media spend**
Scale more precise and intelligent personalization	▪ Enable marketers with **email authoring capabilities to accelerate copy creation** and scale	▪ Reduce **time to market** ▪ Increase **brand reach** ▪ Improve **response rate** through personalization
Qualify buying group behavior for each GTM motion	▪ **Automate engagement and qualification with buying groups** ▪ **Drive opportunity progression and MQBGs**	▪ Increase conversion with **marketing qualified buying groups** ▪ Align sales and marketing to progress pipeline and shorten **sales cycle**
Accelerate sales cycles using marketing qualified buying groups	▪ Equip and alert Sales with **holistic view of the account buying group(s)**	▪ Increase **MQL to SQL conversion** ▪ Shorten **sales cycles** and increase win rates ▪ Optimize s**ales resources**
Optimize ROI for each GTM motion	▪ Use **built-in analytics dashboards** to gain insights ▪ Identify **opportunity areas at the account and buying group role level**	▪ Increase **sales velocity** ▪ Improve **sales engagement** ▪ Maximize **ROI of marketing campaigns**

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How to approach the move to buying groups

An end-to-end approach for your Adobe Journey Optimizer B2B Edition implementation.

💡 Initiate	🔍 Discover	✏️ Create	👥 Deploy	📟 Scale
▪ Kickoff	▪ Conduct discovery workshops to review key terms and functionality	▪ Define one Journey Optimizer B2B Edition journey and discuss best practices and preparations	▪ Finalize and deliver activation plan	▪ Provide deskside coaching sessions
▪ Align on project plan and timeline	▪ Identify KPI metrics and benchmarks to gauge success	▪ Create segments/audiences in Experience Platform/Real-Time CDP for Journey Optimizer B2B Edition journey	▪ Conduct go-live testing and provide support	▪ Compose and deliver engagement summary on work completed and value added
▪ Align on stakeholders, responsibilities, and meeting cadence	▪ Review data readiness of Adobe Experience Platform, Real-Time CDP B2B, and Marketo Engage for Journey Optimizer B2B Edition journey	▪ Build audience, buying group template, solution interest, and journey for Journey Optimizer B2B Edition journey and review best practices	▪ Feature development for custom use cases	▪ Host client handoff and wrap-up
▪ Enable teams on system foundations and core concepts	▪ Develop and review discovery guide	▪ Build Smart Campaigns in Marketo Engage (as needed)	▪ Measure and optimize programs based on initial metrics	▪ Compose and deliver program roadmap for future growth

Summit.Adobe.com

Featured digital experience leaders at Summit 2025.

Session:
Revolutionizing Content: Engaging the Entire Buying Group

Speakers:

Phyllis Davidson
VP, Principal Analyst, Forrester

Jill Steinhour
Director, Industry Strategy, High Tech, Adobe

Session:
B2B Reimagined: Transforming Go-to-Market Strategies for Profitable Growth

Speakers:

Sunil Menon
Sr. Director, Strategy and Product Marketing, Adobe

Rajan Patel
Sr. Director, Product B2B, Adobe

Karishma Phansalkar
Product Marketing Manager, Adobe

Session:
2025: Revolutionizing B2B Buying Journeys With Meeting and Event Data

Speakers:

Hannah Macking
Director, Digital Architecture, Red Hat,

Brian Gates
SVP, RainFocus

Marius Milcher
Group Product Manager, RainFocus

Session:
ABM and Buying Group Orchestration with Journey Optimizer B2B Edition at AWS

Speakers:

Stephanie Simmons
Principal Product Manager, Adobe

Courtney Tobe
Sr. Manager, Marketing Technology Consulting, Deloitte Consulting LLP

Ruchi Sethi
Principal Technical Program Manager, Amazon Web Services

Questions and answers

Related Content

- Forrester Report: The Seven Must-Dos: How Buying Groups Change Everything

- 2024 Digital Trends — B2B Journeys in Focus

- Webinar: Introducing Adobe Journey Optimizer B2B Edition: Go Beyond Leads and Accounts with Buying Group Orchestration