# 2018 MARKETING TRENDS & STRATEGIES

MAROPOST.

SALES CLOUD

MARKETING CLOUD

Imagine if you could know what your competitors are doing right now to improve their revenue. Or if you could know what tools and techniques they're adopting along the way. Or, better yet, if you could know what trends they're focusing on to shape their strategies for the future.

After sending out a quantitative survey to executives around the globe, we now have the answers and insights to 2018's top tactics, tools, and trends—along with strategic steps for applying our findings to your business.

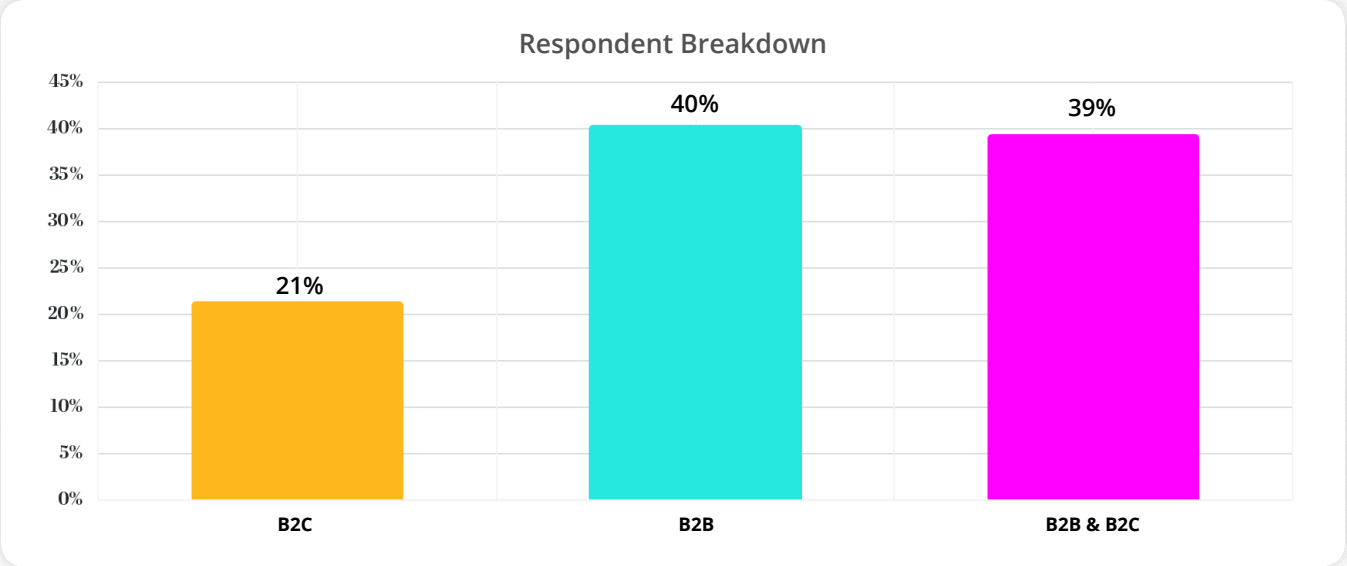
# WHAT'S INSIDE



# ABOUT THIS REPORT

To learn the latest trends in sales and marketing, we sent our survey to executives in North America and abroad. Of the 115 respondents, 21% worked for B2C organizations, 40% worked for B2B organizations, and 39% worked for companies with both B2B and B2C customers.

Most respondents worked for small to mid-sized businesses with fewer than 500 employees, aligning with North American norms. Reported company revenue came in at less than $10 million annually for 64% of respondents, with only 4% reporting an annual revenue greater than $500 million.




# PERFORMANCE

When asked to compare the success of their current sales and marketing activities to those a year ago, 61% said their campaigns were “more successful” or “much more successful”, while only 8% rated their campaigns as “less successful” or “much less successful”. For 31%, not much had changed since last year, with campaign performance “about the same”.

Success of Current Sales & Marketing Campaigns Compared to Previous Year

**61%**

“More Successful” or “Much More Successful”

# TECHNIQUES & TECHNOLOGIES

Unsurprisingly, social media tops the list for frequently used techniques and technology, with 85% of those surveyed already using several social media platforms. More interesting was the percentage of paid social media. 45% of respondents were actively using paid social media to drive leads, surpassing the 34% using paid search. Over the next few years, that number is only expected to increase, as organic social media becomes more and more saturated—driving businesses towards paid social media.

Online video is being used by 36% of those surveyed — and with the growing importance Facebook, LinkedIn, and other platforms place on video, adoption is set to expand further.

85%
SOCIAL MEDIA

## ACTION ITEM #1:

**Incorporating Video Across Channels**

While adopting video is a trend across the board, it isn't a strategy on its own. Incorporating video into your sales and marketing campaigns can take many forms—beyond the immediately obvious YouTube and Facebook video posts. Channels you're already using, like email and mobile push notifications, increasingly support rich content capabilities—meaning you can insert video into almost any area of your cross-channel campaigns, not just social media. Another alternative to consider when expanding into video is GIFs, which are similarly supported on more sales and marketing platforms. Both GIFs and video offer a way to capture the increasingly limited attention spans of your audience—so your message isn't lost along the way.

52% CRM

45% PAID SOCIAL

38% MARKETING AUTOMATION

47% EVENTS

35% ONLINE DISPLAY

21% AFFILIATE MARKETING

33% DIRECT MAIL

36% ONLINE VIDEO

11% SMS (TEXT)

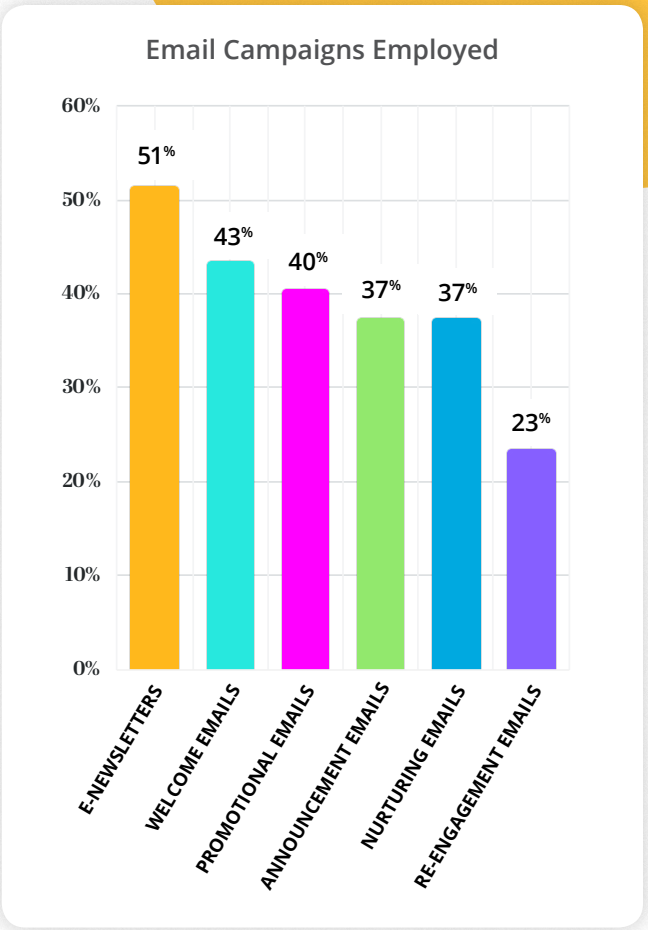
26% WEBINARS

12% OTHER

18% TRADITIONAL MEDIA

# THE CONTINUED IMPORTANCE OF THE BOX

Email marketing continues to be a popular option for campaigns, thanks mostly to its varied use cases. Our survey respondents are keeping their customers engaged on both the marketing and sales sides using newsletters (51%), welcome emails (43%), and promotional emails (40%). Only 23% were using re-engagement emails, which leaves this technique as an underused opportunity for customer retention.



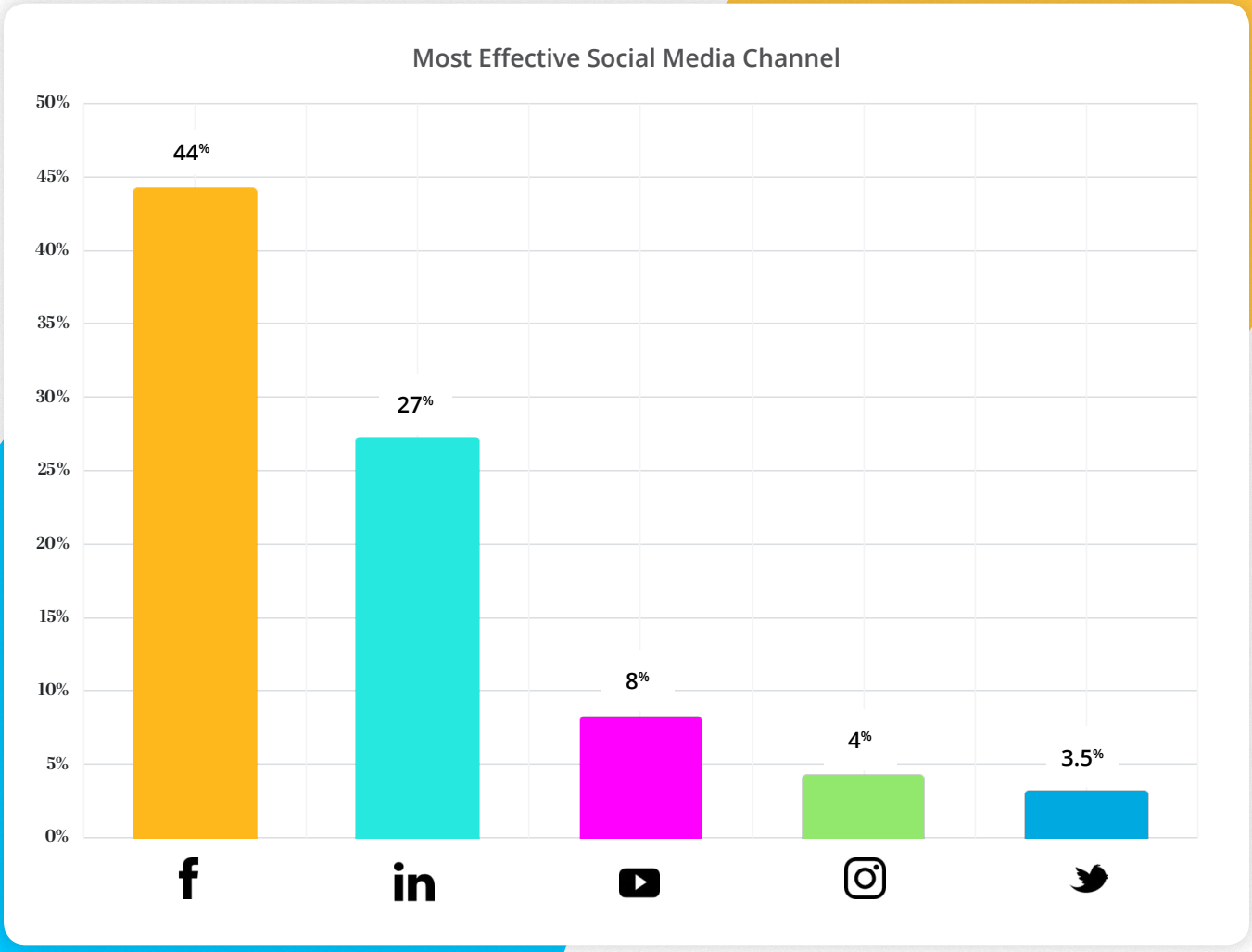

## ACTION ITEM #2:

**Experiment With Email**

Although email has been a sales and marketing mainstay for decades now, a lot has changed since this channel was first introduced. An established channel with ever-evolving abilities, email is surprisingly versatile. Aside from the obvious recommendation of branching out into re-engagement emails, there are plenty of ways to use email to its full potential. Between the personalization possibilities afforded by machine learning-driven dynamic content and the design opportunities that come with rich content capabilities, there's a lot more sales and marketing professionals can do with their email campaigns. And with the addition of drag and drop editors into platforms, even small departments can experiment with email's complexities.

# SOCIAL MEDIA'S PLATFORM PROBLEM

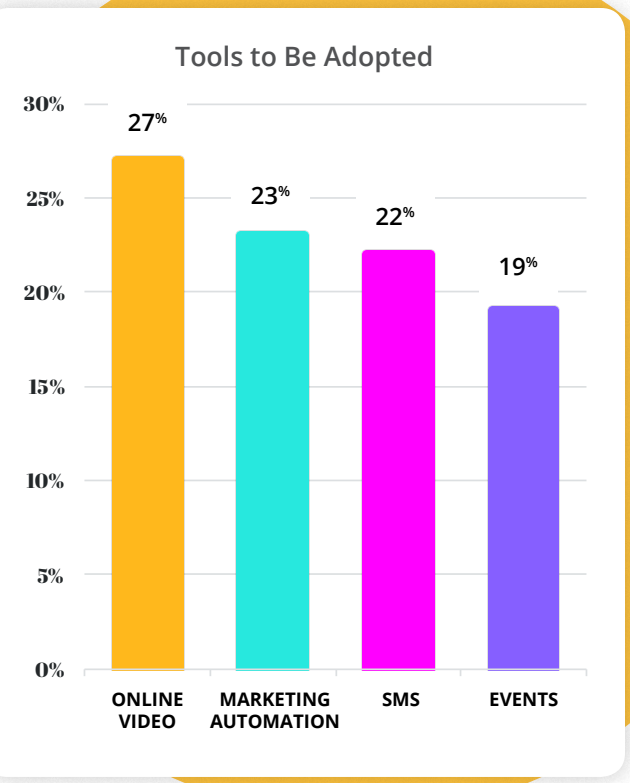
While social media is effective overall, not all social media platforms are created equal, with some vastly outperforming others. Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter were the social media platforms used most frequently by those surveyed, followed by Instagram and YouTube. Of these platforms, Facebook is the clear favorite with 44% reporting it as generating the best results for their business. LinkedIn came in second place at 27%, followed by Instagram with 8%. Despite their ubiquity in social media, Twitter and YouTube were only effective for 4% and 3.5% of respondents, respectively.



# NEW TECHNOLOGY, NEW CHALLENGES

Coming in as the tool companies are most likely to adopt in 2018, online video strategies are in the works for 27% of those surveyed, followed closely by 23% saying they plan to apply marketing automation. In third and fourth place, came SMS at 22% and events at 19%.

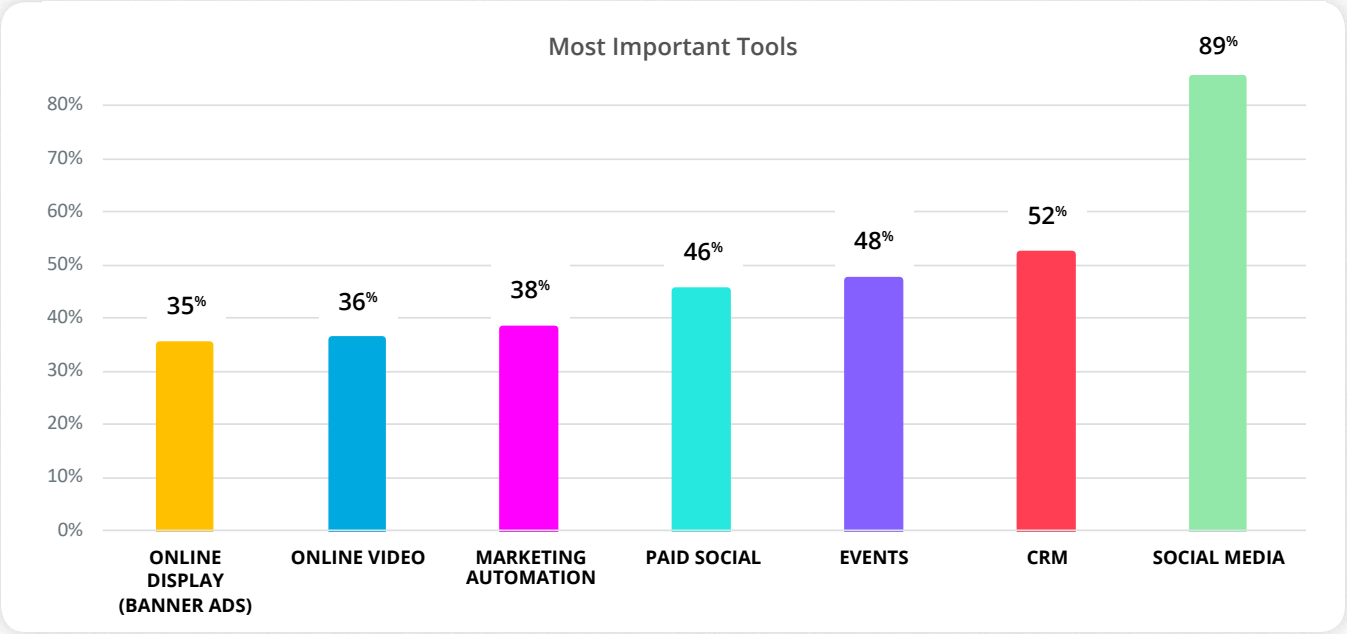
While we defined online video as both live and pre-recorded, it's worth noting that both Facebook and YouTube place a premium on live video. For marketers this means a better chance of cutting through the noise—it also means less control over your message. Going live gives campaigns a younger, more authentic feel, but for more established brands, these benefits might not outweigh the risks. For businesses looking to venture into video, pre-recorded video will always offer a safer—if somewhat less sexy—option.




## ACTION ITEM #3:

**Don't Mistake Automation for Autopilot**

Despite the implications of its name, marketing automation is anything but a hands-off tool. When first employing automation, many marketers start by setting timed messages within a larger campaign, then stop there. Making the most of marketing automation means going beyond the basic delayed send, to build responsive campaigns. By using behavior-based triggers, campaigns can adapt according to audience actions—what they do and don't interact with directs where the campaign will go. This adaptive version of automation can even become a collaborative effort with customers—as data feedback from their interactions becomes the basis for improving campaign performance and customer experience.



# INVESTMENT & RETURN ON INVESTMENT

As for the budgets funding these technologies—new and old—respondents were optimistic on the whole—with 22% predicting a funding increase of more than 10% in the next 12 months, 42% expecting an increase under 10%, and 30% anticipating budgets to stay the same. Of all those surveyed, only 5.4% expected their budget to decrease in the next 12 months.

When respondents were asked what percentage of revenue was currently allocated to sales and marketing budgets, the answers varied greatly. 16% reported between 1% and 2% of annual revenue going towards sales and marketing — and a full 12% reported more than 10% of annual revenue being spent on sales and marketing. Of those surveyed, 27% had no knowledge of the percentage.

When asked about their ability to measure the effectiveness of their sales and marketing campaigns, 61% reported that they were able to measure the ROI, and a shocking 39% either were unable or were unsure if they could measure ROI.

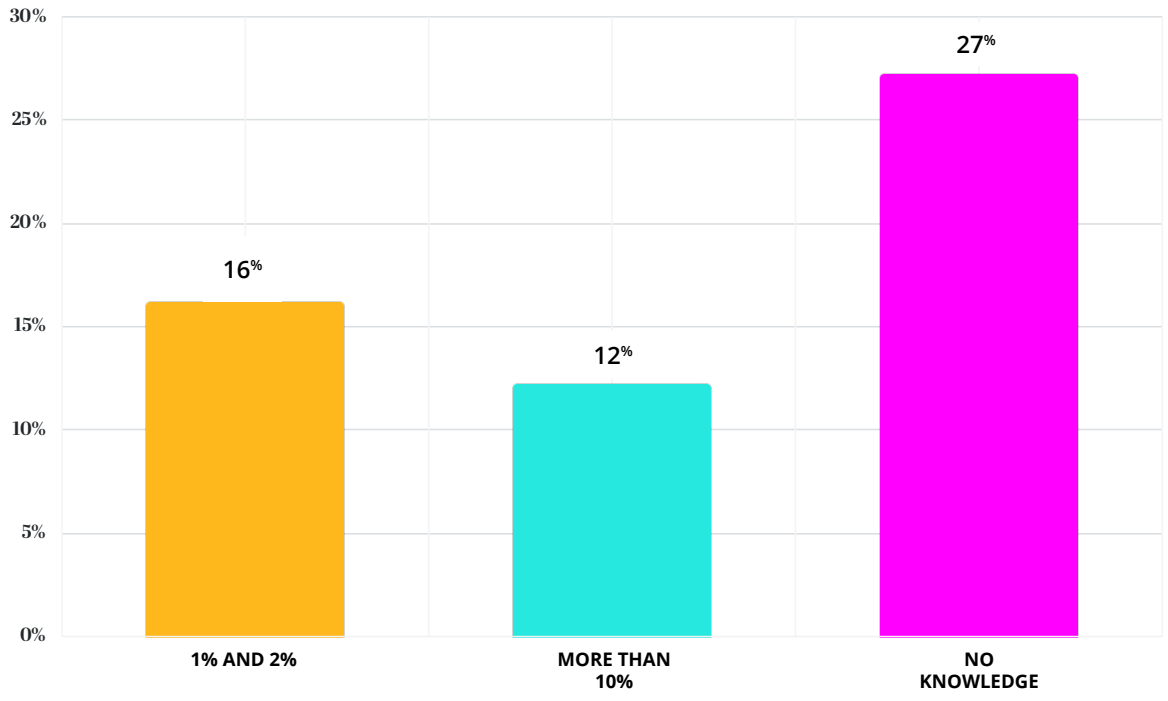
## Anticipated Budget Changes

**22%**
INCREASE OF MORE THAN 10%

**42%**
INCREASE OF UNDER 10%

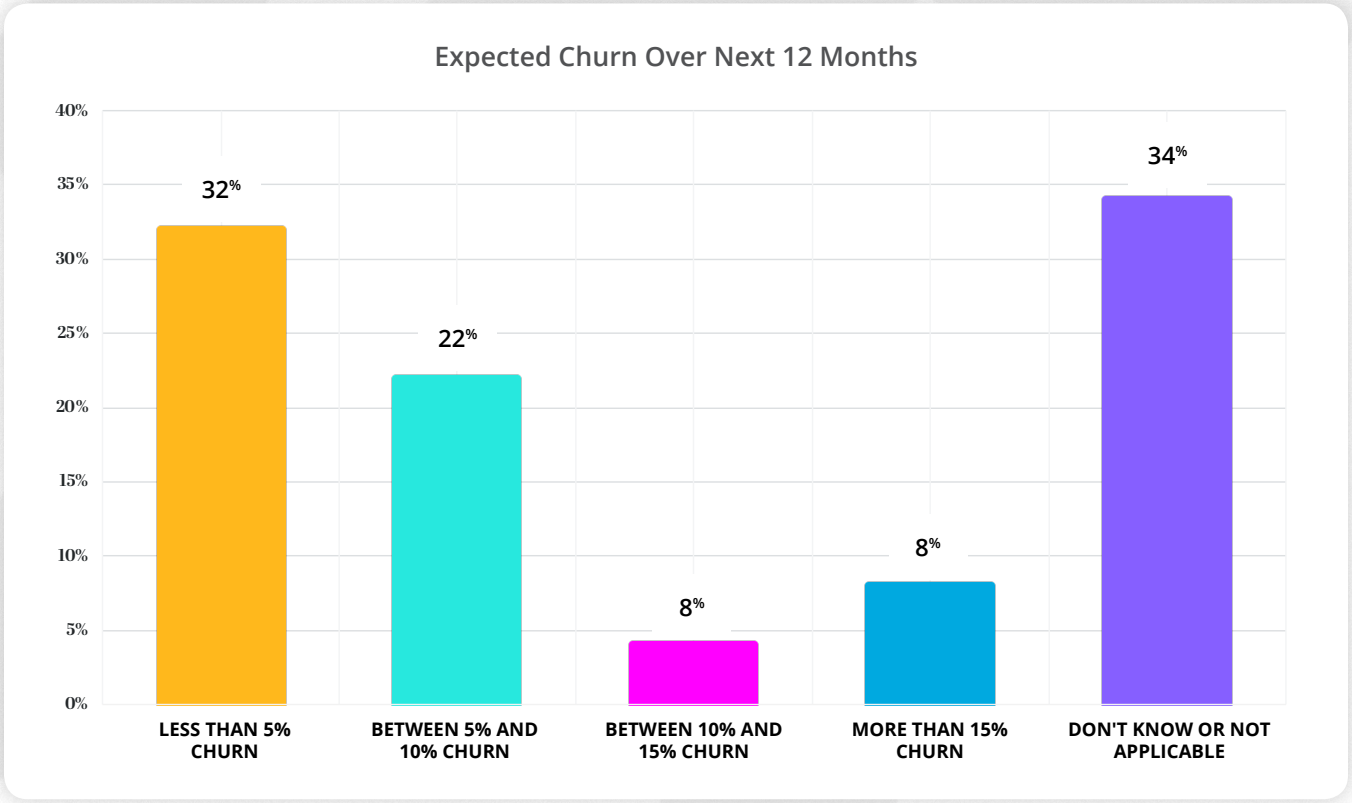
**30%**
EXPECTING THE SAME BUDGET

## Annual Revenue Budgeted For Sales And Marketing



# CUSTOMER CHURN

As for the customer side of sales and marketing campaign success, the majority of reported churn rates were low. Looking at the percentage of customers they lose every 12 months, 32% of those surveyed reported a churn rate of less than 5% with another 22% reporting a churn rate of between 5% and 10%—and only 8% reporting a rate of over 15%.




## ACTION ITEM #4:

**Invest in Current Customers**

Even though it costs 5x as much to gain a new customer as it does to keep a current one, customer retention remains an under-used area. With this cost in mind, reducing the churn of customers — especially high lifetime value customers—is well-worth the effort. As exciting as it is to gain a new customer through new campaigns, the power of re-engagement campaigns shouldn't be underestimated.

But retention efforts should go beyond trying to revive interest in long disengaged customers. Whether it's an email offer rewarding them for their patronage, or higher touch service from your staff, anything you can do to show appreciation will help to keep your customers from becoming someone else's.

# SALES & MARKETING SEE CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

To better understand the drivers behind selecting certain tools over others, we wanted to get a sense of the central challenges for sales and marketing professionals. The largest issue, unsurprisingly, is money. For 33% of those surveyed, a lack of budget was their primary concern. People problems came in second, with 23% reporting a lack of staff as their central obstacle.

Even with these obstacles, the majority were optimistic about future revenue growth—with 53% expecting an "increase" and 29% expecting a "significant increase".

That optimism remained consistent throughout the survey, and despite most respondents saying they would prefer more robust budgets, 53% of those surveyed were "very optimistic" about the future at their companies and 36% were "mildly optimistic", for a combined total of 89% predicting a positive 2018.

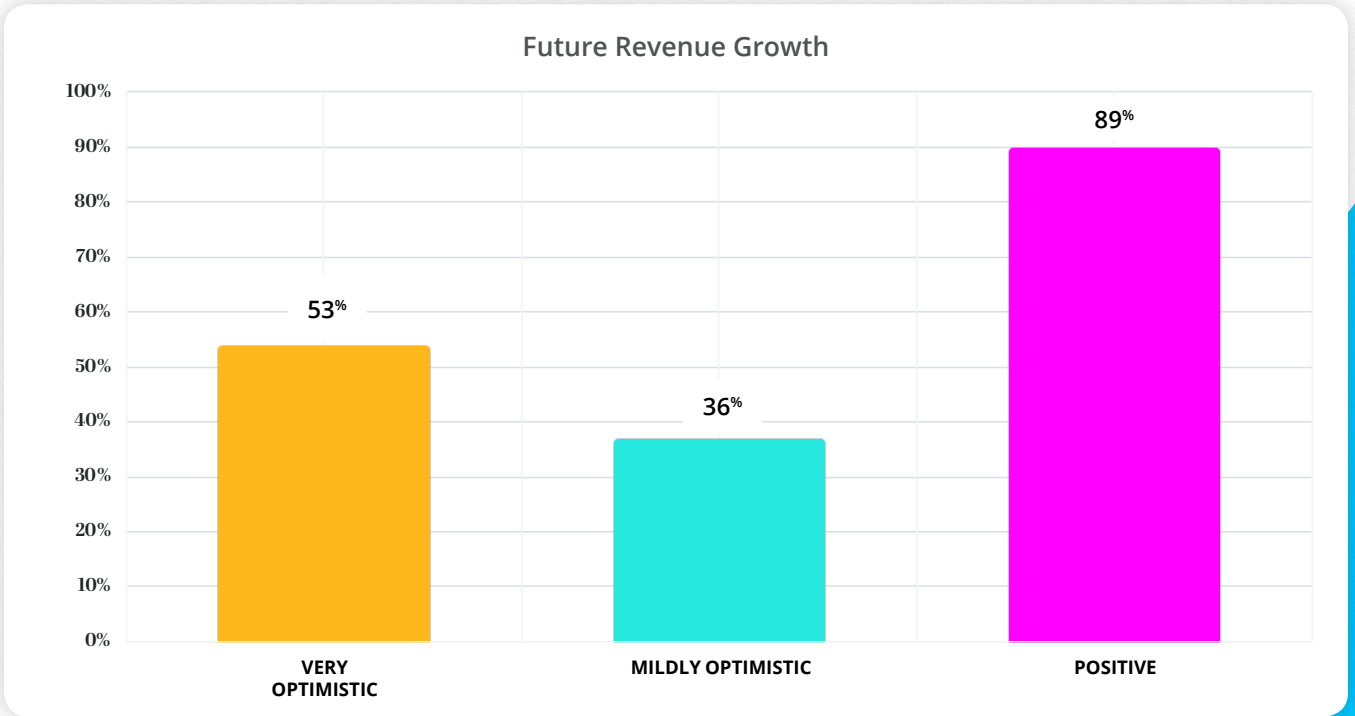
Leading Challenges

**33%**

LACK OF BUDGET

**23%**

LACK OF STAFF



# BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

While there are challenges ahead, our respondents' optimism is well-founded. With evolving technologies offering new opportunities to improve customer experience and engagement across the sales and marketing spectrum, modern professionals are equipped to face all the challenges 2018 has in store. From incorporating rich media in campaigns to capture customer attention, to keeping current customers through re-engagement campaigns, the tech, tools, and tactics are there to help your company do more for their sales and marketing success in 2018.

**Developed in partnership with Jamie Turner.**

Jamie Turner is an internationally recognized author, speaker and TV news contributor who has helped The Coca-Cola Company, AT&T, CNN, and other global brands solve complex business problems. He is the founder of 60SecondMarketer.com, a business blog read by hundreds of thousands of executives around the globe. And he is a regular guest on CNN and HLN where he provides insights on business, digital media, and leadership.

## Interested In Learning More About Maropost?

Request a demo

## About Maropost

Maropost is a B2C cloud-based sales & marketing suite that enables companies to increase cross-channel customer engagement and maximize revenue. Through integrated marketing and sales automation, Maropost provides the essential tools, strategic guidance, and support needed to create personalized customer experiences through a 360-degree business view—from marketing automation, to CRM, commerce, and customer support. Headquartered in Toronto, Canada, Maropost is trusted by brands like DigitalMarketer, New York Post, Mercedes-Benz, RollingStone, SHOP.com, and Yext. Learn more at www.maropost.com.

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