

# The B2B Marketer's Forecast for AI, Budgeting, and Lead Generation

New Statistics and Strategies You Need to Know

# Introduction

At ViB, we are committed to staying up to date with the ever-changing B2B marketing ecosystem. Maintaining a clear view of emerging technologies and trends allows us to better serve marketers, and guide you in your 2024 marketing strategy.

In Q3 of 2023, we conducted a survey of over 300 B2B marketing professionals with the specific goal of understanding three things:

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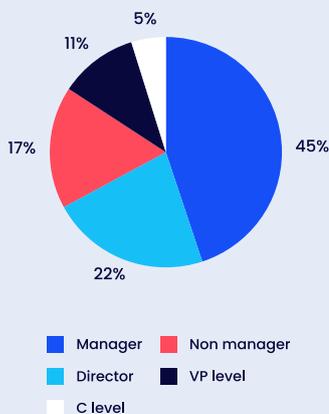
## Respondent demographics

Let’s take a peek at the demographic and firmographic profiles of the respondents we surveyed.

### Job titles

- Respondents’ job titles spanned from IC and manager all the way up to C-Suite.

### Management levels

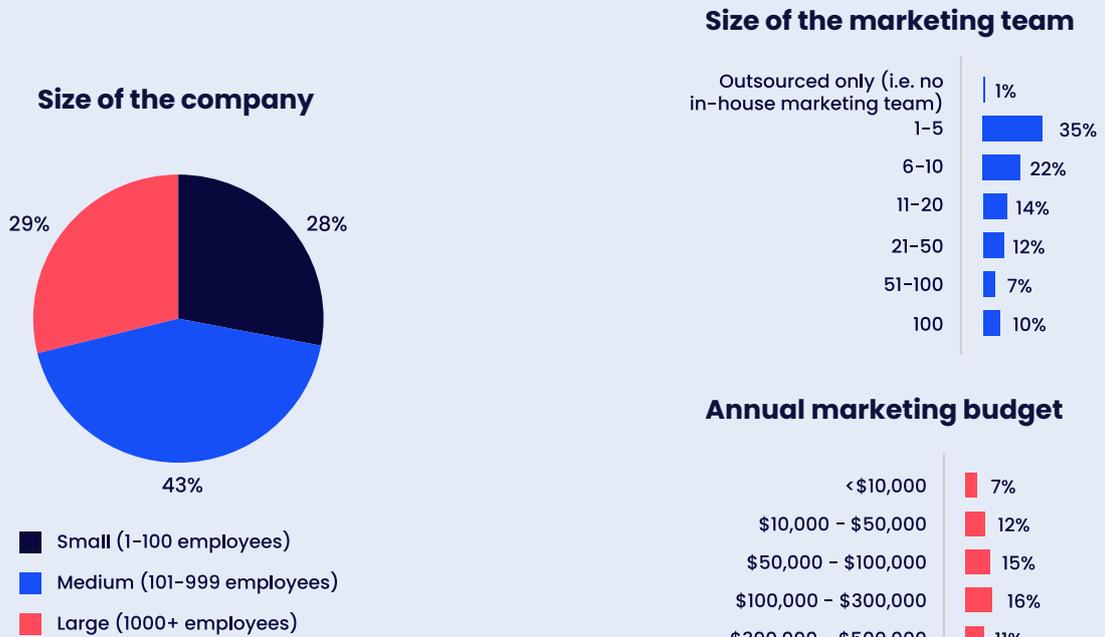


### Areas of responsibility

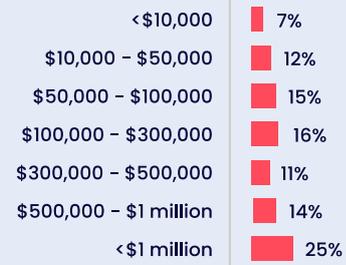


## Company and team size

- We saw an even split of company sizes – from under 100 employees to over 1,000. Marketing teams veered towards the smaller size, with more than half having 1-10 team members.



## Annual marketing budget

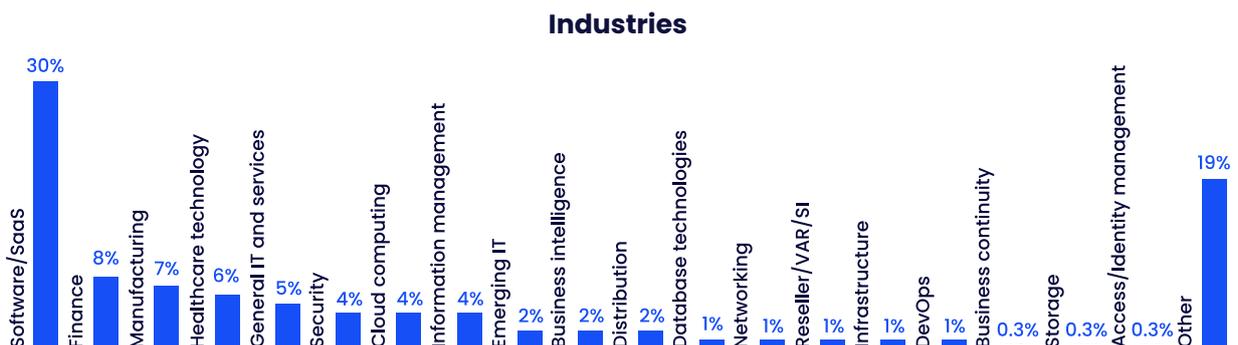


## Marketing budgets

- There was an even distribution of marketing budgets among respondents, beginning at \$10,000 and going upwards of \$1 million.

## Industries

- We spoke to predominantly SaaS organizations, although other industries such as healthcare, finance, IT, and manufacturing were also included.





**Key Findings: B2B  
Marketing Priorities and  
Budgets**

# Overview of top B2B marketing priorities

Brand awareness is the most common priority, with 51% of marketers ranking it as one of their top three priorities.

**First, let's take a look at prioritization.** Marketers are increasingly focused on brand awareness – in fact, 51% said that this was their top marketing priority for the year. Being memorable to consumers – and having a voice in the market – is, arguably, more important than any email or ad campaign you can create.

## Top marketing priorities



Sample size: B2B respondents only (n=323). Q: What are your top three marketing priorities for 2023?

This statistic corroborates a trend we've been seeing for several years: **B2B marketers are moving towards a more traditional B2C approach.** When we say B2C, what we mean is marketing to humans instead of to organizations.

We are seeing more and more campaigns (and content) that are funny, or memorable, and that keep that brand kicking around in folks' brains well after they have finished engaging with it (take a peek at Okta's [video](#)



ads, or this [mockumentary](#) from Slack for some inspiration). Ultimately, **brand awareness is the foundation** on which your other marketing efforts rest.

Marketers maintain a strong focus on increasing lead generation, and improving lead quality and conversion rates, ranking them as the 2nd and 3rd most common priorities respectively.

After brand awareness, generating more leads emerged as a primary concern for marketers, overshadowing the buzz around other priorities, like ABM for example.

Marketing teams continue to prioritize lead generation (49%) and lead quality and conversion rates (46%) above other initiatives such as ABM (18%) and expanding to new markets (17%).

This tells us that marketers are trying to find a **middle ground between cost-per-lead and lead quality**.

- While approaches like ABM can yield excellent results, they can also be costly and there is inherently more risk involved.
- And while expanding to new markets may be more cost-effective, you run the risk of generating lower-quality leads overall as you devote resources to learning new geographies and localizing content.

Honing in on an effective strategy that hits your target markets and personas, without putting all your eggs into one basket, is ideal.



# Importance of different B2B marketing channels

Email marketing, and website and SEO, are the two most important channels for B2B marketers, at 83% each.

**Next, let's break down how marketing teams are prioritizing different channels** in their marketing strategy. Despite the strong trend toward visual and audio content that we've seen over the last several years, videos and podcasts are only viewed as important channels by 31% of marketers.

The majority of emphasis is placed on email marketing (83%) web and SEO (83%), content marketing (75%), and social (74%).

## Importance of marketing channels in one's current strategy



Sample size: B2B respondents only (n=323). Q: Which of these are important marketing channels in your current marketing strategy?

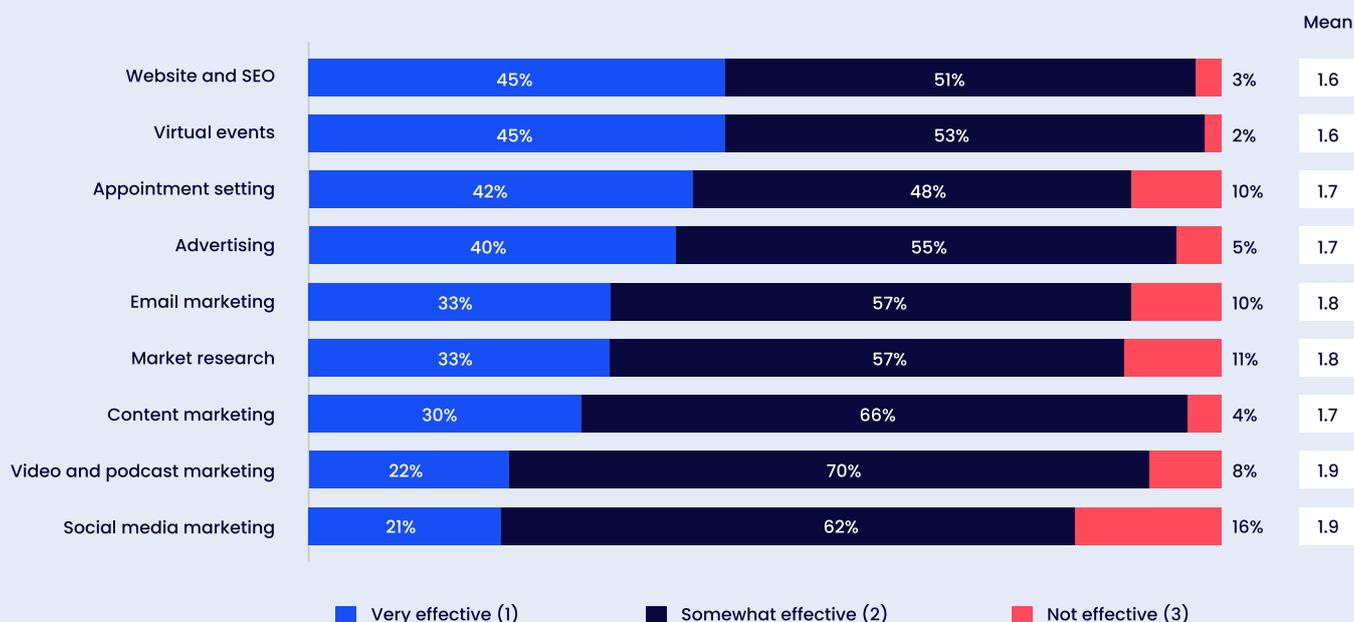
However, when looking at these numbers, it is important to note the possibility that B2B marketers haven't fully explored the full potential of video and audio — as most major industry leaders and news outlets tout its effectiveness. With the rise of platforms like TikTok and Twitch, it will be **difficult to ignore video for much longer.**

# Effectiveness of different B2B marketing channels

Website and SEO (45%) and virtual events (45%) are the most effective marketing channels in generating quality leads.

**When it comes to efficacy**, 45% of marketers say website, SEO, and events yield positive results while videos & podcasts (22%) and social media (21%) are the least impactful.

Effectiveness of marketing channels



Sample size: B2B respondents only (n=323). Q: In terms of generating quality leads, how would you rate the effectiveness of the following channels you selected?



Interestingly, despite email being a top focus when it comes to strategy, only 33% of marketers say that it is an effective marketing channel. In fact, **the majority of marketers (61%) say that they had an email open rate of below 20% in 2022.**

This begs the question: are we focusing on email because we think we should – or because it's a smart priority?

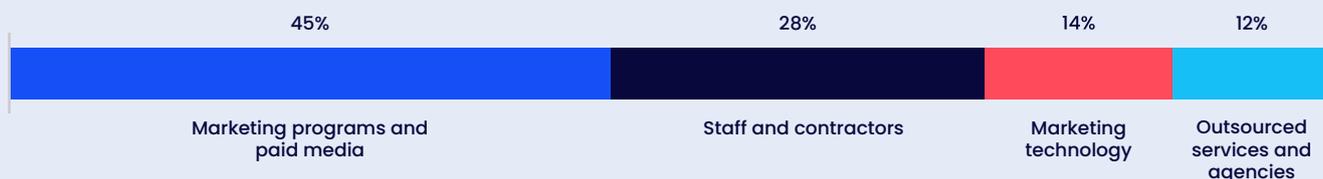
# Marketing budgets and spending

45% of marketing leaders allocate most of their budget to marketing programs and paid media.

**Lastly, let's take a peek at trends in marketing budgets and spending.** When it comes to the allocation of budget, 45% of marketing leaders assign most of their budget to marketing programs and paid media accounts. In contrast, only 12% allocate most of their budget to outsourced services, like agencies.

## Allocation of marketing budget

Highest areas of spending



Sample size: B2B respondents only, excluding non-Managers (n=268). Q: How much of your budget do you allocate to each of these major categories of spending? (Rank all categories, from highest to lowest spend)

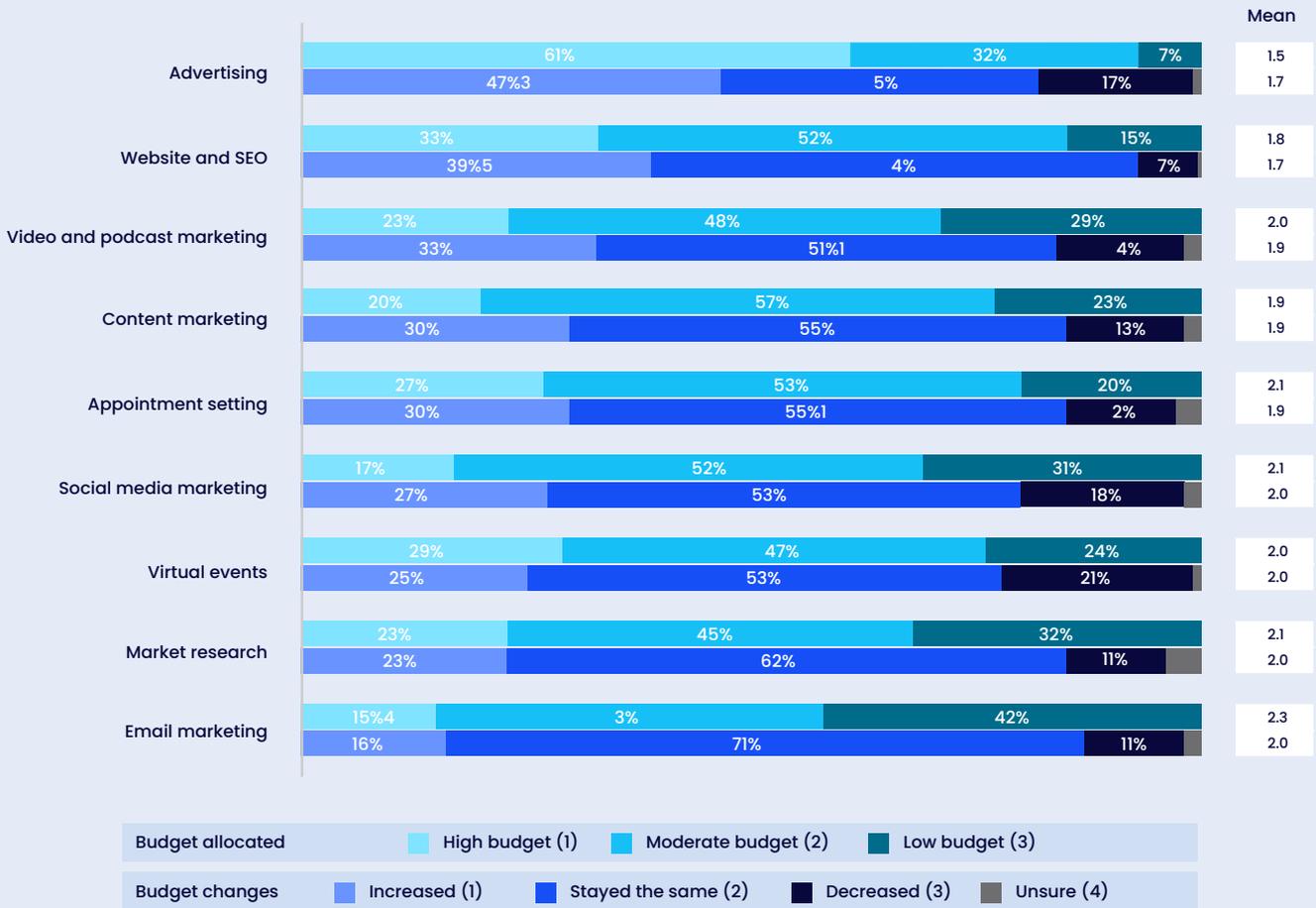
Looking at the statistics on the next page, we can see that as compared to last year, **marketing spending is up across the board – regardless of channel.** It's worth noting that, although email ranks high on marketers' priority listings, 42% of professionals said that their spend on email was "low."

The biggest changes to budgets we recorded are in advertising (up 47%) and in website and SEO (up 39%). In fact, 61% of marketing organizations say that their advertising spend is "high."



47% of marketing leaders are increasing their spending on advertising. 61% of organizations consider their advertising spend as high.

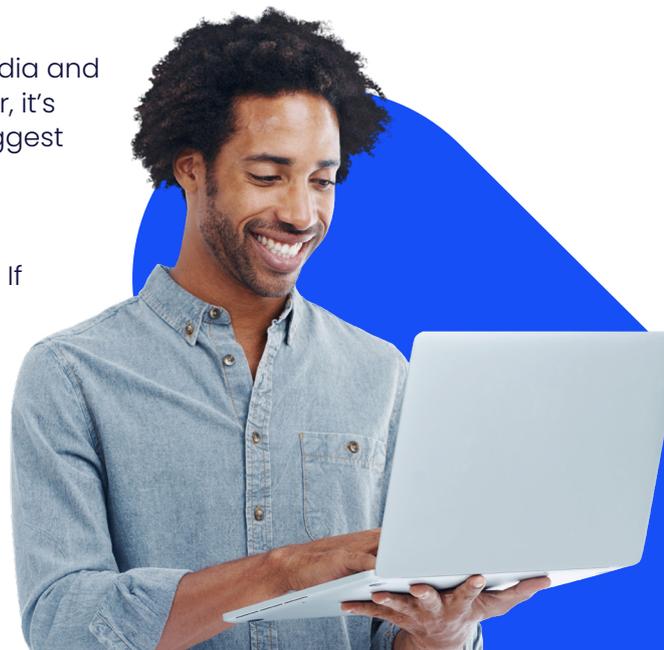
### Budget allocation and changes by channel



Sample size: B2B respondents only, managers and above (n= 268). Q: For 2023, how much budget have you allocated to each of these marketing channels in your current strategy? and Q: Has the budget allocated to each of these marketing channels changed between 2022 and 2023?

Paid marketing strategies, such as pay-per-click, social media and retargeting, naturally come with a heftier price tag. However, it's important to acknowledge that advertising is seeing the biggest increase in budget as well.

These higher ad spends can be attributed to the previously discussed **prioritization of brand awareness** above all else. If orchestrated correctly, your spending on SEO, paid media, and advertising will increase the visibility of your brand and awareness around your brand and messaging. This is not to say that agencies, contractors, and technology are not important – they simply account for a smaller piece of the pie.





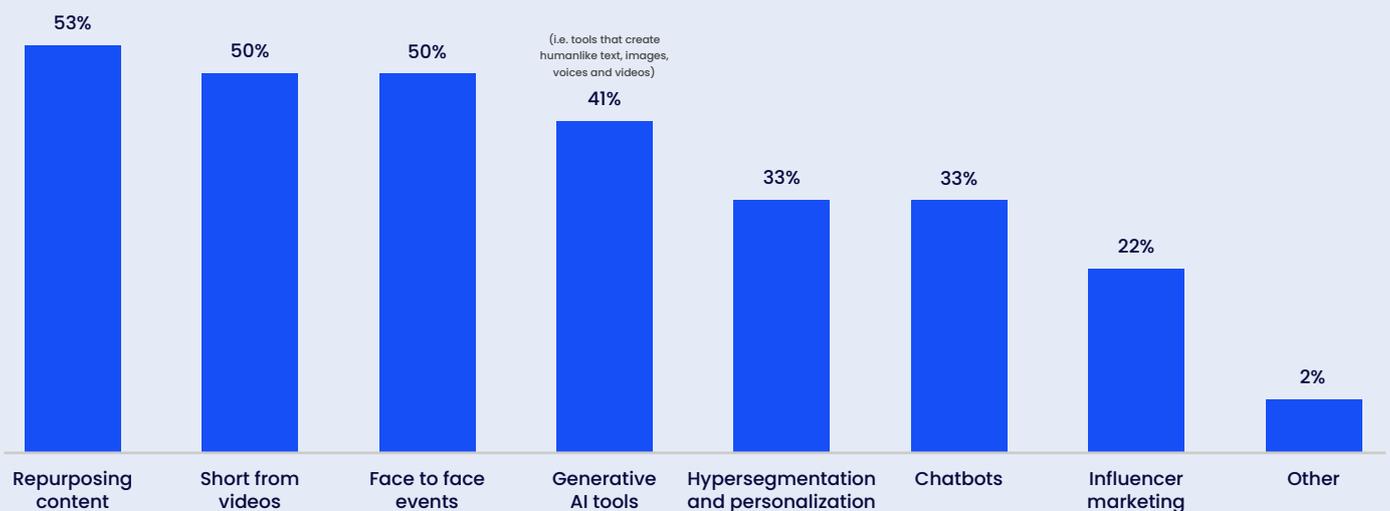
# **B2B Marketing Trends and the Impact of Generative AI**

# Emerging tools, tactics and trends

Repurposing content, short-form videos and face-to-face events are the top three trends.

**In terms of what marketers are focusing on today, our study revealed several interesting trends.** To start, 53% of marketers say they are leaning into repurposed content — this can mean anything from refreshing old pieces from years back to taking current long-form copy and editing it down into blogs and other bite-size pieces. Strategically, this is a brilliant use of resources as it allows you to **generate content for every channel from a single piece.**

## Tools, tactics or trends that are recently or planning to be adopted



Sample size: B2B respondents only (n=323). Q: Which of these new tools, tactics or trends have you recently adopted or are planning to adopt in 2023?

To this point, short-form video is on the rise as well, with 53% of marketers saying they plan to adopt it this year. This is particularly interesting given how many of these same people responded that video as a channel wasn't effective or a high priority. It is very likely that, for many of these organizations, **video is a new tactic and they are open to exploring it despite not entirely having a grasp on best practices for engagement.**

Lastly, 50% of marketers are back to in-person events this year. The return to IRL experiences has been tenuous at best — but it seems as though many marketers are ready to make the leap.

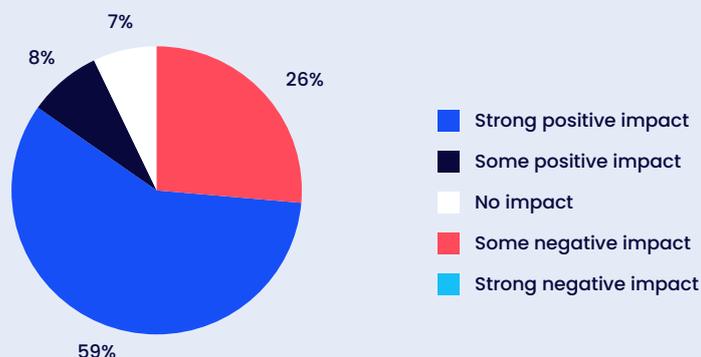
# Generative AI outlook and impact on B2B marketing

**What is AI-generated content, anyway?** According to TechTarget, “AI-generated content is copy such as blogs, marketing materials, articles and product descriptions written by a machine. The AI content creator generates the content after a person inputs information such as keywords, phrases, and topics.”

While ChatGPT popularized this technology, there are a variety of platforms on the market today that use AI to generate everything from articles to websites to video – and marketers have begun to implement this into their day-to-day activities.

85% of marketers see AI as having a positive impact on B2B marketing in the next 12 months.

## Impact of generative AI on the B2B marketing industry in the next 12 months

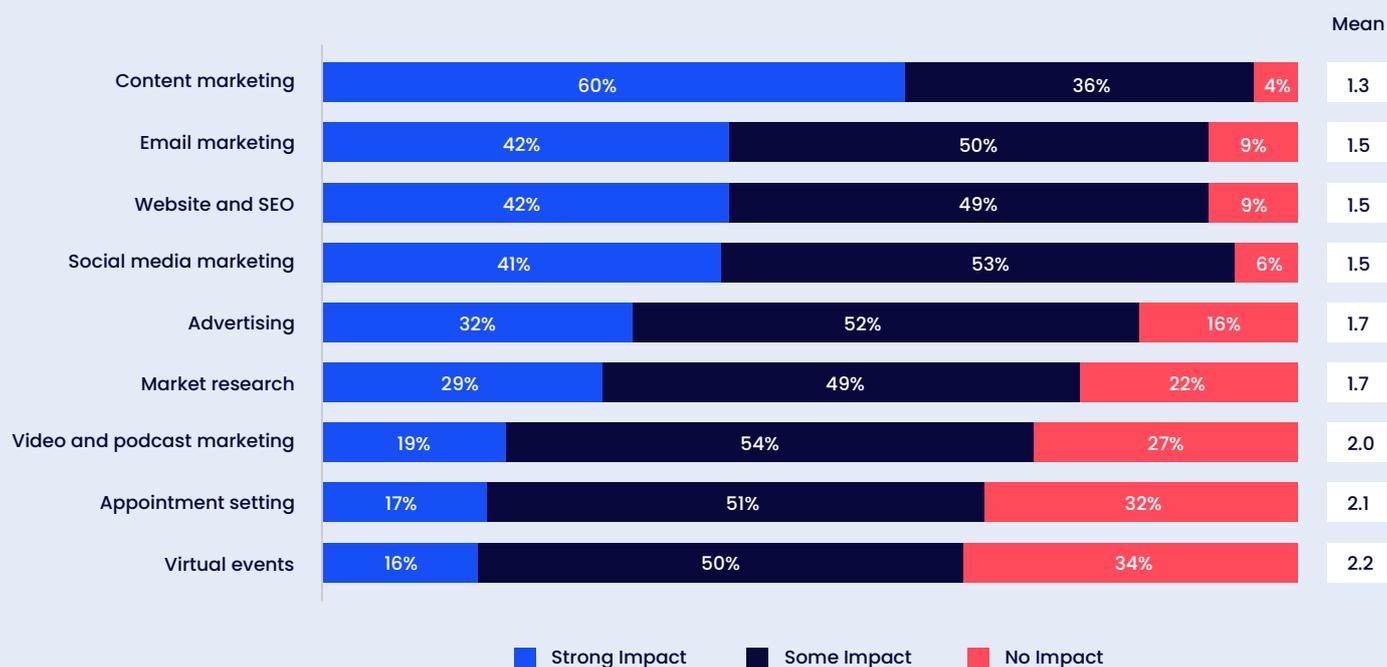


Sample size: B2B respondents only (n=323). Q: Do you think that generative AI will have an impact on the B2B marketing industry in the next 12 months?

In fact, 41% of marketers also have formalized plans to use AI from now til Q3 of 2024 at least. Additionally, in terms of how AI will impact individual marketing channels, 96% say it will have some to strong **impact on content marketing** in particular, as seen on the graph on the next page.



## Generative AI's impact on each marketing channel



Sample size: B2B respondents only (n=323). Q: Which of these marketing channels do you think generative AI will have a strong impact on?

While AI may seem like a no-brainer for content creation, there are some pros and cons to take into consideration before you begin to integrate it into your marketing strategy. Let's begin with the positives.

### Why generative AI will positively impact B2B marketing:

- **It's fast:** Because AI pulls from already established materials, it can churn out content at a pace that is impossible for humans. This means quicker turnaround times and freedom to focus efforts in other places during the workday
- **It's cost-efficient:** Compared to a freelance writer, AI is a fraction of the price. While this is absolutely a pro in certain cases, be cautioned that these platforms are not a catch-all solution to replace humans. For a small business without a lot of resources, however, AI can be a huge boon in creating written content.
- **Better SEO:** Because AI uses already extant SEO-optimized content to inform its writing, it can be a boon to those marketers who are new to SEO – helping with keyword insertion and article structure.
- **Combating writers' block:** Instead of asking AI to write articles for you, you can ask the platform to assist you in brainstorming new ideas; even helping write outlines so that you can get to content creation more quickly.



*"If you don't jump on the trend, you will be left behind. I believe most big companies will shift to using chatbots and AI-generated materials."*

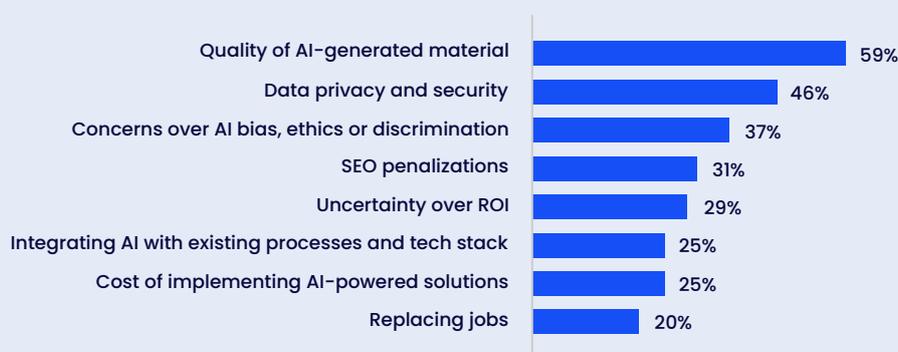
Respondent

# Generative AI risks in B2B marketing

AI isn't all sunshine and rainbows, however — and marketers know it. Let's dig into the drawbacks of these AI content-generation platforms:

59% of marketers surveyed have concerns regarding the quality of output, while 48% have data privacy worries, and 37% take issue with the ethics.

## Biggest concerns over implementing generative AI in marketing strategy



Sample size: B2B respondents only (n=323). Q: What are some of your biggest concerns over implementing generative AI in your marketing strategy?

## Drawbacks when integrating generative AI in B2B marketing

- **Plagiarism:** Because AI pulls from writing that already exists on the web (without citations), there is the potential that a piece you generate is already extant elsewhere, nearly verbatim. Always Google the verbiage that a platform like ChatGPT outputs to ensure it is original.
- **Privacy concerns:** AI platforms are new and vastly unregulated; they scrape the web for content sources for their writing. While consent for data release is implied in (most of) the United States, privacy laws in Europe — GDPR — and even in some parts of the US — CCPA & CPA — make the legality of these technologies murky. While it is unlikely at this point in time that we will see companies who use ChatGPT being sued for privacy violations, it isn't impossible. Staying up-to-date with regulations and legislation is a must if you want to implement any sort of AI writing assistant in your marketing plans.
- **Inconsistency:** AI writing tools don't always produce the same quality content across topics. They have varying degrees of knowledge on different subjects — meaning that while you might get an in-depth piece for one prompt, the next will be severely lacking. Additionally, the pieces AI writes can be significantly less readable than what a good human writer could produce — even if they are grammatically correct.

- **Requires resources:** Under no circumstances should you use AI-generated content without human oversight. These platforms are not a replacement for employees but should be used to augment work already being done by humans. This means that someone needs to proofread and edit every piece that is generated before it goes live — often re-writing parts that are clunky, inaccurate, or don't hold up to brand standards.



*"I believe AI will play a major role in content marketing however if the content is not reviewed and edited by a person, the content could be low quality and possibly duplicative if other users search for a similar query."*

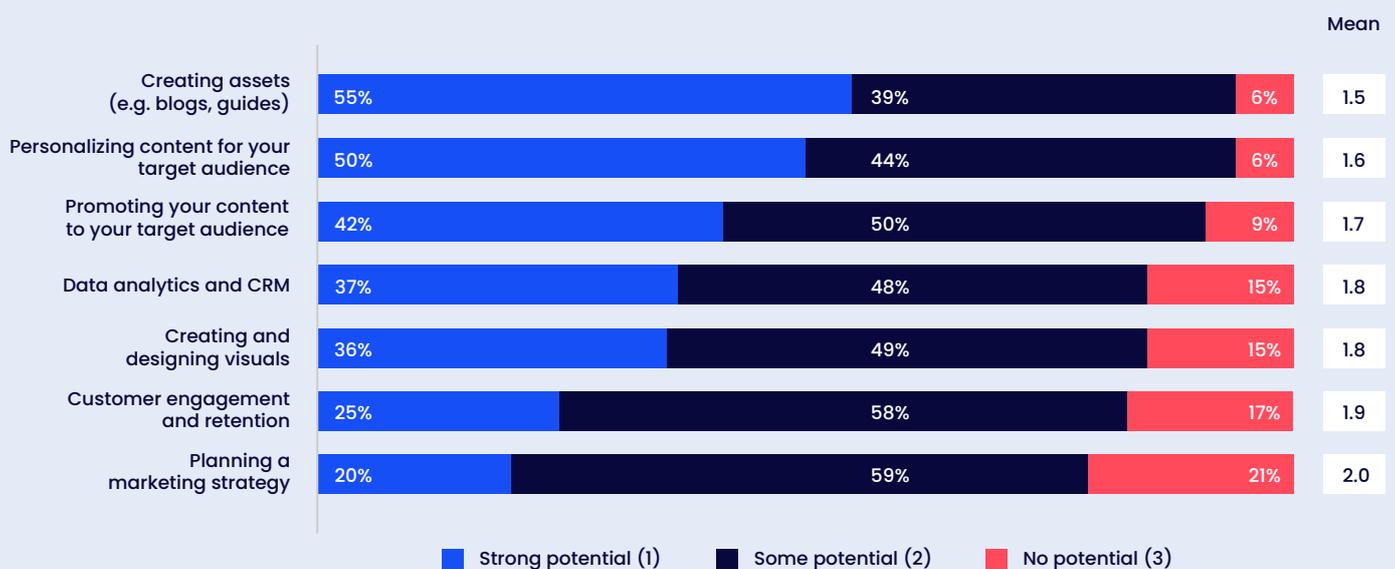
Respondent

## Best practices when integrating generative AI with B2B marketing

**With all this in mind, where does AI have the potential to have the biggest effect?**

Creating and personalizing content see the most potential for generative AI-powered tools, with 94% and 92% of marketers seeing some to strong potential respectively.

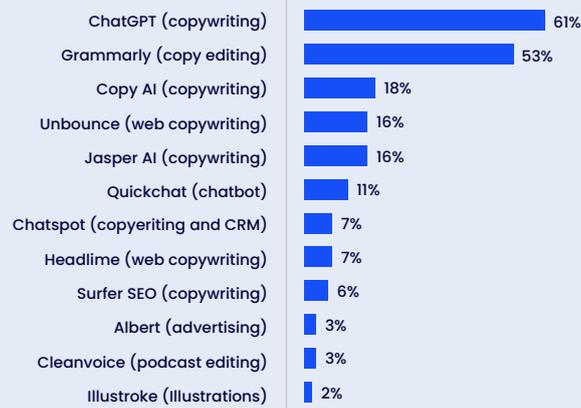
### Areas of marketing with the most potential for generative AI-powered tools



Sample size: B2B respondents only (n=323). Q: In which areas of your marketing strategy do you see the most potential for generative AI-powered tools?

In terms of tools you should be using, 61% of marketers are implementing or exploring ChatGPT, and 53% for Grammarly, a cloud-based typing assistant.

### Specific generative AI tools being used or explored in one's strategy



Sample size: B2B respondents only (n=323). Q: Which of these generative AI tools are you currently using or are exploring as part of your marketing strategy?



*"We hope that AI will allow our content team to focus on our larger content pieces — [we can] use AI to help grind out blogs and smaller pieces so they can concentrate on the pieces that convert."*

Respondent

**So, you're going to use AI — now what?** Try these simple tips to ensure you protect yourself and your organization while generating content that converts.

#### Best practices when integrating generative AI

- **Use AI for top-of-funnel assets, not proprietary product content:** Anything you input into a platform like ChatGPT goes into its database. You don't want your organization's private data being used to generate someone else's article, so be smart about what you share with AI — because as soon as you do, it's no longer yours.
- **Edit everything:** Never trust that what an AI platform has presented you with is good enough as is. Always include human oversight in your AI planning and review process.
- **Personalization and iteration are your best friends:** One of the easiest and most efficient ways to make use of AI is to have it take pre-written content and have the platform personalize it to a specific vertical, or edit it to a particular use case.

And, as always, be smart. **Stay up to date on changes to legislation.** AI is a new phenomenon and we're likely to see a lot of changes to the technology in the next several years. Don't assume that today's best practices will be tomorrow's.

A man and a woman are shown in profile, looking towards the left. The man, on the left, has a beard and is wearing glasses and a light-colored button-down shirt. The woman, on the right, has her hair in a bun and is wearing a brown top, a watch, and hoop earrings. Her hands are clasped in front of her chin. The background is a blurred office environment with windows.

# Lead Generation Challenges and How to Leverage Generative AI

# Overview of top B2B marketing challenges

Majority of marketers say lead generation, lead quality, and conversion rates are the biggest challenges that they're facing this year — let's understand why.

The two biggest challenges marketers are facing this year are improving lead quality and conversion rates (54%) and generating more leads (41%).

We saw earlier that lead quality and generating leads are two of the top three marketing priorities for B2B marketers. At the same time. They're the biggest challenges us marketers face.

## Top marketing challenges



Sample size: B2B respondents only (n=323). Q: What are the three biggest challenges you face in B2B marketing? (Drag and rank your top 3 challenges in the boxed section, starting with the biggest challenge)

On average, 55% of marketers met — but did not exceed — their target lead numbers in 2022.

Observing the statistics on the next page, last year, just over half of the B2B marketing leaders we surveyed met their lead targets.

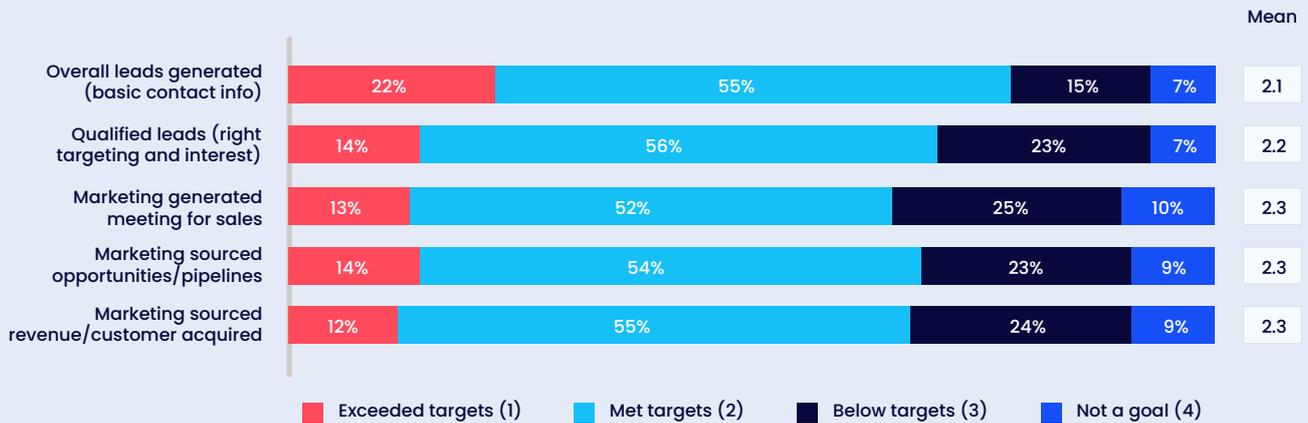
In fact, nearly a quarter of organizations fell well below their conversion rate targets.

Overall numbers were similar for each stage of the funnel too. In particular though, 22% of organizations exceeded their targets for overall leads generated in the top of the funnel — with basic contact info generated.

That metric trickled down to just over 10% for the middle to bottom of the funnel, reinforcing how **lead quality is a major concern even from the performance standpoint too.**

In the world of B2B marketing, “good enough” is never what we strive for, so what can marketers do to start exceeding expectations as opposed to just making ends meet?

### Reaching lead targets in 2022



Sample size: B2B respondents only, Managers and above (n=268). Q: If applicable, did you achieve your targeted numbers for each stage of the funnel in 2022?

## So how can we leverage AI to address the B2B marketers’ biggest challenges — lead generation?

While AI can assist in creating content for emails, assets, sales scripts, event abstracts and so much more, it’s crucial not to lose sight of the big picture and our top priority: generating repetitive and quality results.

**Here are our three top tips for B2B marketers in a new AI assisted era:**

### 1. Be ready to maximize use of generative AI tools, and prepare for more changes to come

- Generative AI is only going to grow from here, so us B2B marketers must prepare to experiment with AI, with an open mind.
- But remember, that heavy editing is crucial to address content quality, which the biggest concern marketers have reported.
- Keep an eye on evolving rules concerning AI quality, data privacy, ethics and SEO too, considering how new this field is.



## 2. Repurpose, syndicate, and repeat:

- Personalize existing successful content for specific personas or industries, to help you attract more qualified and closely targeted leads.
- Repurpose content efficiently using AI to reach target audiences on a range of platforms faster. That multi-channel approach will help you drive awareness tremendously.
- Maximize a single AI-generated piece to the fullest with promotional strategies like syndication. That means placing your content in high-value platforms like other content publishers or syndication networks, so you can drive traffic beyond your usual reach.

## 3. Supplement AI with lead generation solutions:

- Remember that AI is creative, not promotional, so it's crucial for B2B marketers to integrate an AI-assisted strategy with result-generating campaigns.
- Partner with a demand generation provider like ViB, to turn your existing emails, webinar recordings, content assets and much more, into qualified leads.



*"I believe that B2B content marketing will continue to be a critical strategy for businesses to reach and engage with their target audience in the next 2-3 years, opportunities to personalize their content to specific buyer personas, industries, or even individual customers with personalized content that will help businesses build stronger relationships."*

*Respondent*



# How to convert AI-generated assets into targeted leads

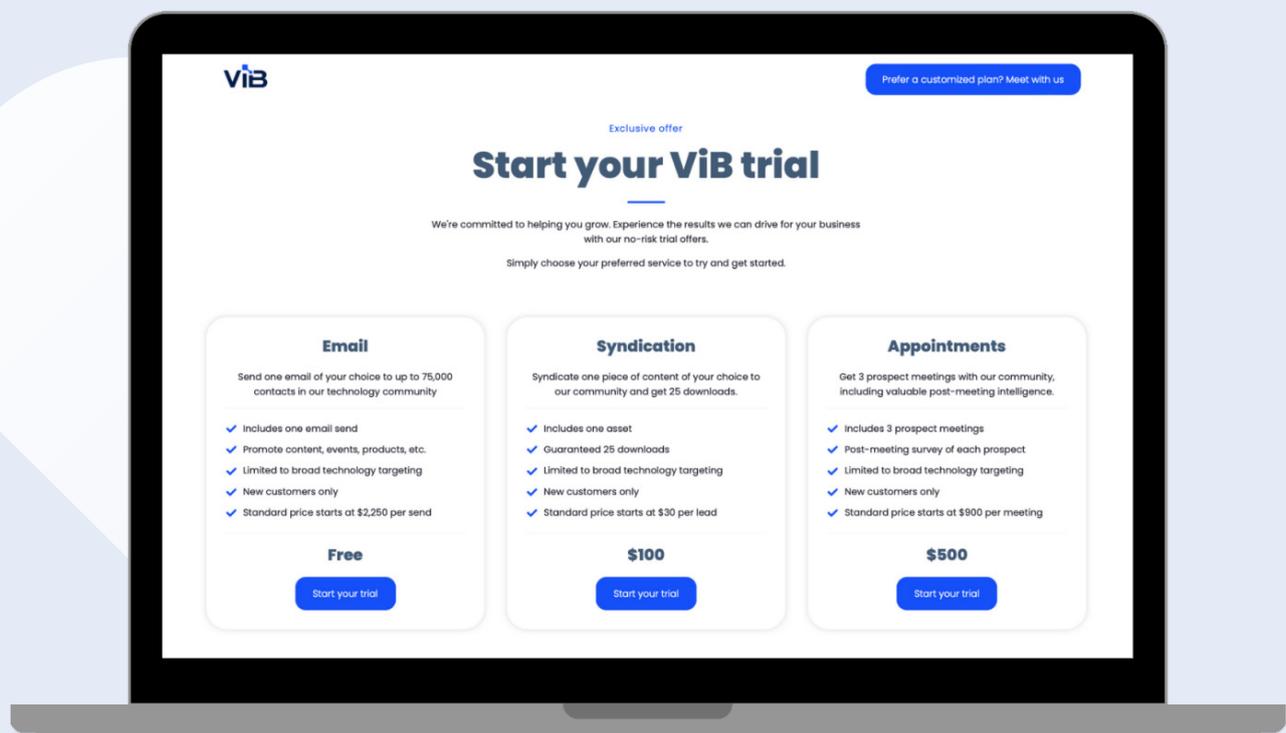
The introduction of AI in 2023, and its potential maturation through 2024, has brought a variety of changes to the B2B marketing landscape – from the return of in-person events to the rise of short-form video to the introduction of AI. **With budgets rising and lead generation being seen overwhelmingly as a top priority**, now is the perfect time to reevaluate strategy – implementing tactics like personalization and syndication.

Finding a lead generation partner who understands these changes – and how to stay ahead of them – is crucial to your business.

## Take the next step

Have emails, assets, solution demos, or even webinar recordings you want to push? Turn those into your most qualified leads with a [trial offer](#) today.

See for yourself how ViB delivers on your demand generation needs. Test our unique community-based approach with three of our flagship services, at no to little cost.



## Get a personalized walkthrough

Understand firsthand how our community works to deliver leads for each service and explore which service works best for your marketing needs. Schedule a no-pressure discovery session at [vib.tech/contact](https://vib.tech/contact) to get started today.

Contact us