

# 2015 MARKETING BEST PRACTICES SURVEY RESULTS

**i!magine**

In partnership with



**CHICAGO AMA**  
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## INTRODUCTION

### **WE HOPE THIS HELPS**

We asked for your help identifying today's marketing best practices, and you delivered.

In four waves of research over the course of three months, we collected responses from you and your peers. The resulting data provides insight to future marketing trends and current concerns within the industry.

Respondents came from a diverse group of industries and organizations, each with unique needs. Their annual marketing budgets reaching more than 1 million and annual revenues ranged from less than 1 million to over 160 million.

### **A DESIRE FOR GROWTH**

As the data will elucidate later in this document, the results of the survey connect these marketing professionals in their desire for growth, belief in social media marketing, and a need for efficacy over all else.

Fulfilling our goal of identifying marketing best practices, certain findings are clear. For instance, while they are not disappearing entirely, more traditional marketing tactics—including broadcast advertisements and PPC, among others—are losing appeal, as the new frontier of Social Media becomes the preferred medium for engaging an audience and fostering organizational growth.

### **STRATEGY OVER CREATIVE**

In regards to how marketing professionals implement these tactics, it is clear from the results that a premium exists for effective planning and strategy, whereas creativity is considered an afterthought. In the ever-expanding world of digital and social media, hard-data and ROI reign supreme.



## KEY FINDINGS

- Increasing business is the ultimate marketing goal in 2015 for more than half of executives participating in this study
  - Over half of all participants aim to acquire new customers this year, and more than a third regard generating growth as a key challenge
  - A related 2015 objective is ensuring their brand is well positioned to best differentiate it from competition
- In developing and implementing marketing plans, executives perceive the value and cost effectiveness of electronic media
  - Online tactics—including Social Media Marketing, SEO, and email marketing—were perceived to deliver excellent ROI
  - Marketing tactics regarded as desirable, assuming funding allows, include Social Media Advertising and SEO
- Social Media appears particularly intriguing as it was repeatedly referenced, with half of all participants calling it the most effective tactic recently implemented to boost customer engagement
  - Opportunities likely exist to aid executives in its optimal use
- Many also retain interest in keeping traditional media such as Television and Print, as well as utilizing Public Relations
- Executives definitely perceive the importance of making efforts to ensure their brand remains relevant to key customers
  - Two-thirds felt it was important to have meaningful marketing and communications campaigns, and almost half stress delivering on important benefits and conducting ongoing consumer research
- About half stated their firms maintain agility to achieve competitive advantage via supporting and encouraging change, ideation, and collaboration
  - There appears to be opportunity to encourage these practices among the balance of firms
- Executives are primarily seeking Innovation and Strategy skills in a marketing agency
  - Providing Tangible Results and KPIs, and offering Industry Experience and Insights are also considered important resources



## DETAILS

### I. GENERATING ROI

#### What marketing tactics generate the most ROI for your brand?

##### TOP 4 MARKETING TACTICS



**36%**

Social Media  
Marketing



**27%**

Direct Mail



**27%**

Search Engine  
Optimization



**26%**

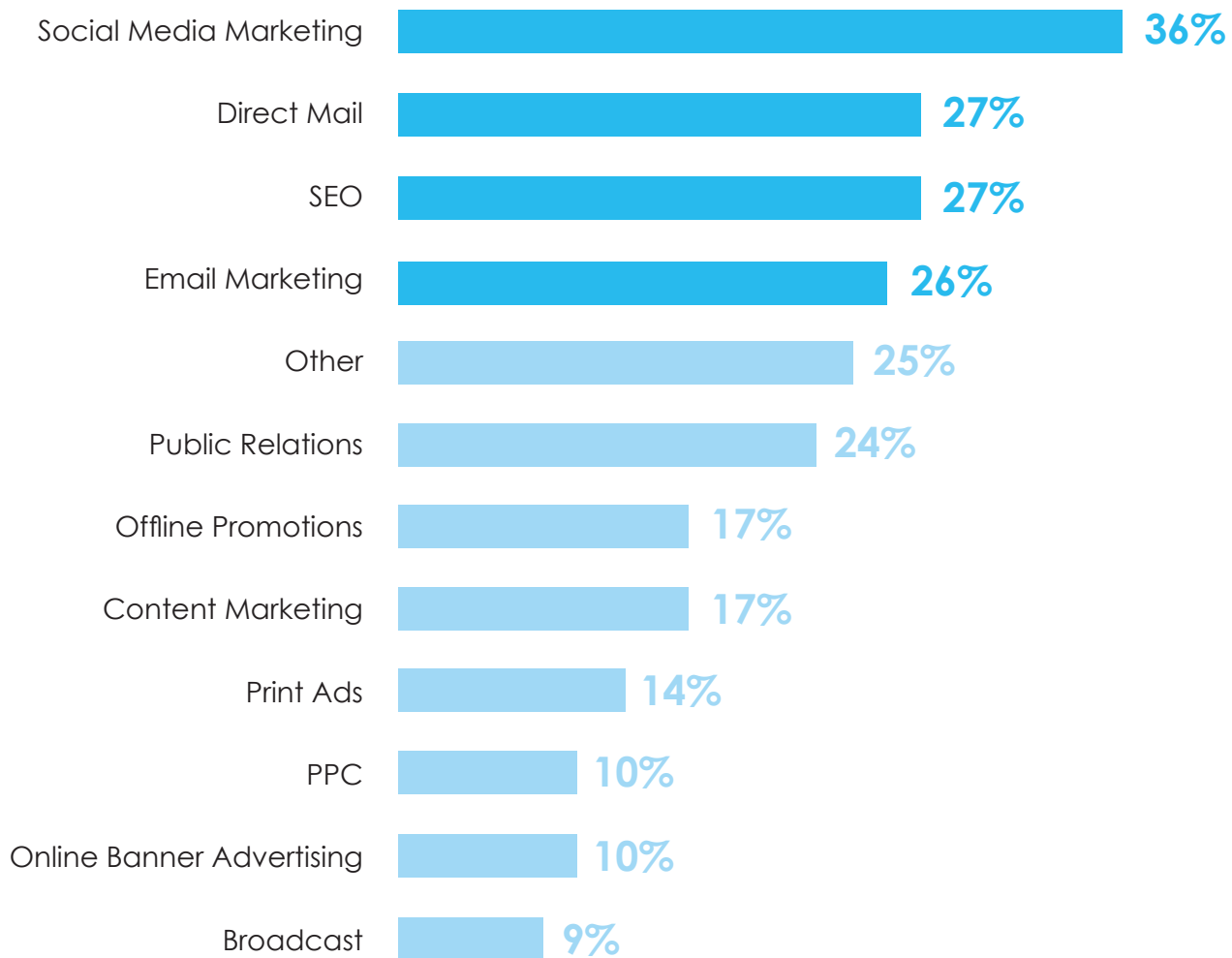
Email Marketing

Overall, the respondents expressed the greatest interest in social media as the tactic of choice for generating ROI, while the more traditional tactics were considered secondary or not effective.



## What marketing tactics generate the most ROI for your brand?

### RESULTS FOR ALL TACTICS



In terms of perceived ROI and interest, Social Media was the clear favorite for respondents, outpacing all other tactics by as much as 9 points. The trend this data suggests reflects the ever-evolving digital frontier, and the promise that Social Media Marketing holds when reaching marketers' key audiences.



## Which marketing tactics would you particularly want to implement if you had additional resources and funds?

### TOP 4 ONLINE MARKETING TACTICS



**32%**

Social Media Marketing



**29%**

Search Engine Optimization



**21%**

Retargeted Online Marketing



**21%**

Email Marketing

### TOP 3 TRADITIONAL MARKETING TACTICS



**24%**

Television Advertising



**21%**

Print Advertising



**20%**

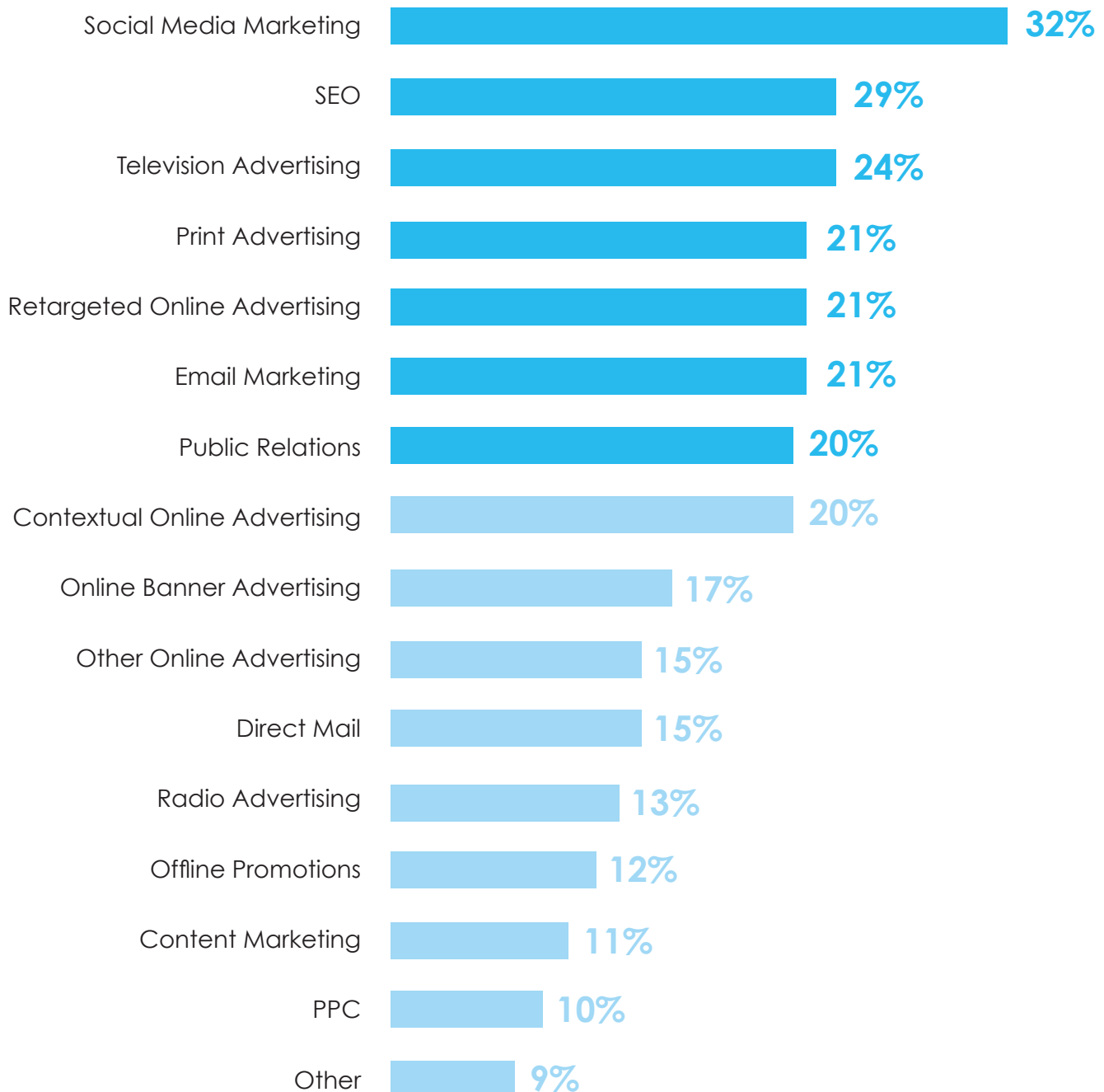
Public Relations

Social media and SEO tactics proved to be the most desirable investment among respondents if additional resources and funds become available. However, they also indicated a desire for investing in traditional marketing media above other online tactics.



## Which marketing tactics would you particularly want to implement if you had additional resources and funds?

### RESULTS FOR ALL TACTICS





## What do you consider to be the most effective tactics your company has recently implemented to increase consumer engagement?

### TOP 3 MARKETING TACTICS THAT INCREASED CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT



**51%**

Social Media



**45%**

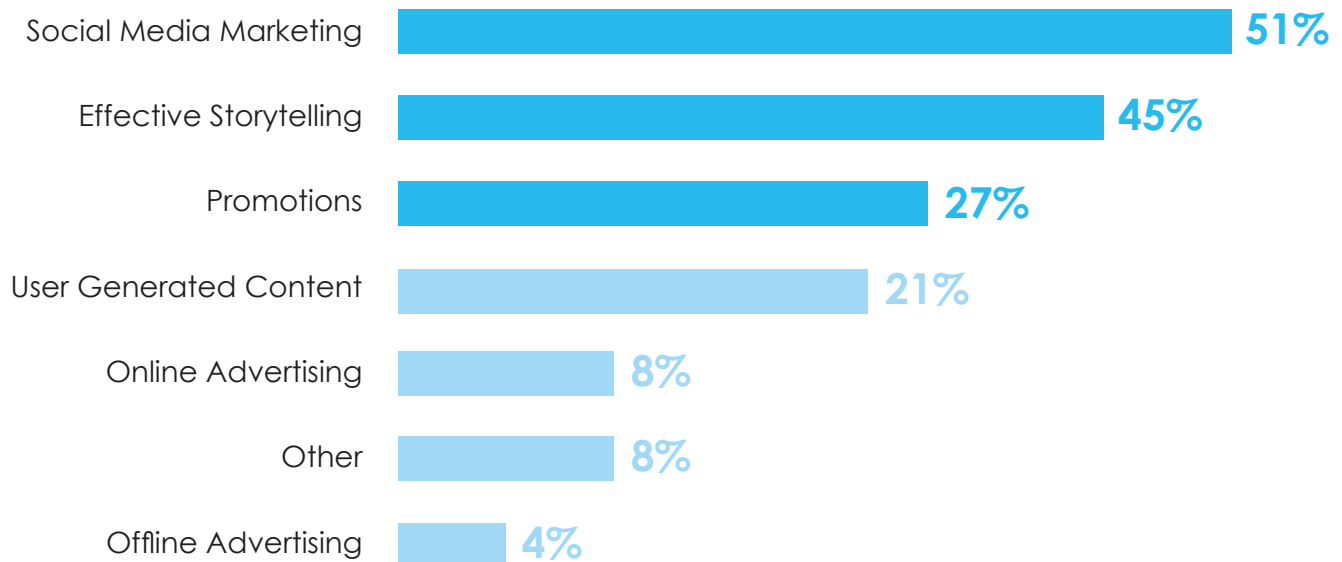
Effective Storytelling



**27%**

Promotions

### RESULTS FOR ALL TACTICS



Social Media Marketing wins out for its tactical effectiveness among the respondents – followed closely by strong brand storytelling, which can be implemented via social media channels as well as the more traditional avenues.





## II. MARKETING GOALS

### What do you consider to be your greatest marketing challenge in 2015?

#### TOP 3 GREATEST MARKETING CHALLENGE THIS YEAR



**52%**

Acquire New Customers



**39%**

Generating Growth



**38%**

Differentiating Brand/  
Creating & Maintaining  
Competitive Advantage

A desire for growth above all else – that's a key finding from the survey. In fact, among the survey respondents, this is the ultimate marketing goal in 2015 for more than 50% of them. Fueled in part by a growing economy, many marketers are seeing opportunities for gaining new customers and generating growth.

Brand differentiation as well as as creating and maintaining a competitive advantage also scored high, suggesting that some respondents believe that there will still be a challenge to their market share in the upcoming year and would like to implement programs that defend their territory.



## What do you consider to be your greatest marketing challenge in 2015?

### RESULTS FOR ALL TACTICS





## What measures do you currently take to ensure that your brand is relevant to your best customers?

### TOP 3 MEASURES TAKEN TO ENSURE BRAND RELEVANCY



**66%**

Campaigns



**46%**

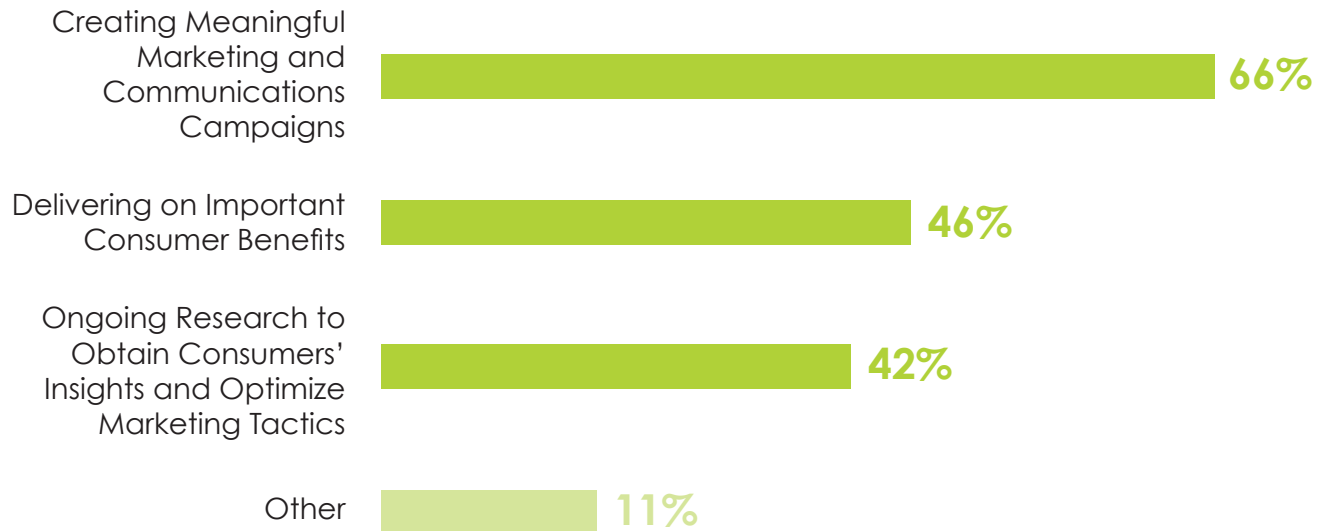
Consumer Benefits



**42%**

Ongoing Research

### RESULTS FOR ALL TACTICS



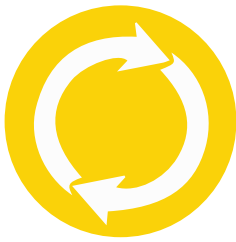
Participating executives in this survey are in consensus as to the importance of brand relevancy amongst key customers. Creating meaningful marketing and communication campaigns, delivering on important consumer benefits, followed by conducting ongoing research to obtain consumers' insights and optimize marketing tactics were top three responses.



### III. OPERATIONS

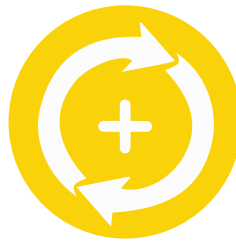
**How does your organization maintain the agility needed to achieve a competitive advantage?**

#### TOP 5 TACTICS FOR MAINTAINING AGILITY TO ACHIEVE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE



**45%**

Senior Management Supports Change



**41%**

Regards Change as a Positive



**41%**

Collaborative Culture



**38%**

Innovation



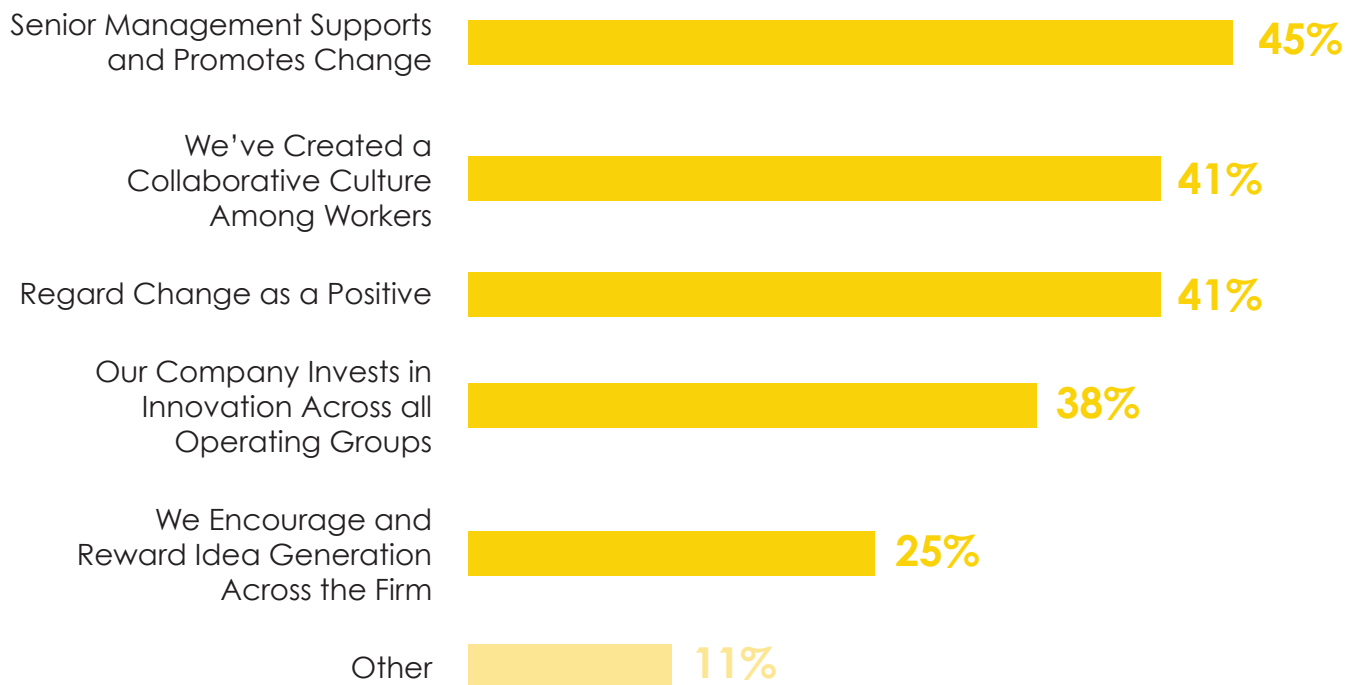
**25%**

Idea Generation



## How does your organization maintain the agility needed to achieve a competitive advantage?

### RESULTS FOR ALL TACTICS



More than half of respondents stated senior management at their organizations maintain agility to achieve competitive advantage via supporting and encouraging change, ideation, and a collaborative culture among workers. Another common tactic companies implemented to stay agile is investing in innovation across all operating groups within an organization.



## What quality makes a marketing agency a high performance resource for your brand?

### TOP 5 IMPORTANT QUALITIES OF A MARKETING AGENCY



**67%**

Innovation  
& Strategy



**50%**

Key Performance  
Indicators



**45%**

Industry Experience  
& Insights



**25%**

Offerings



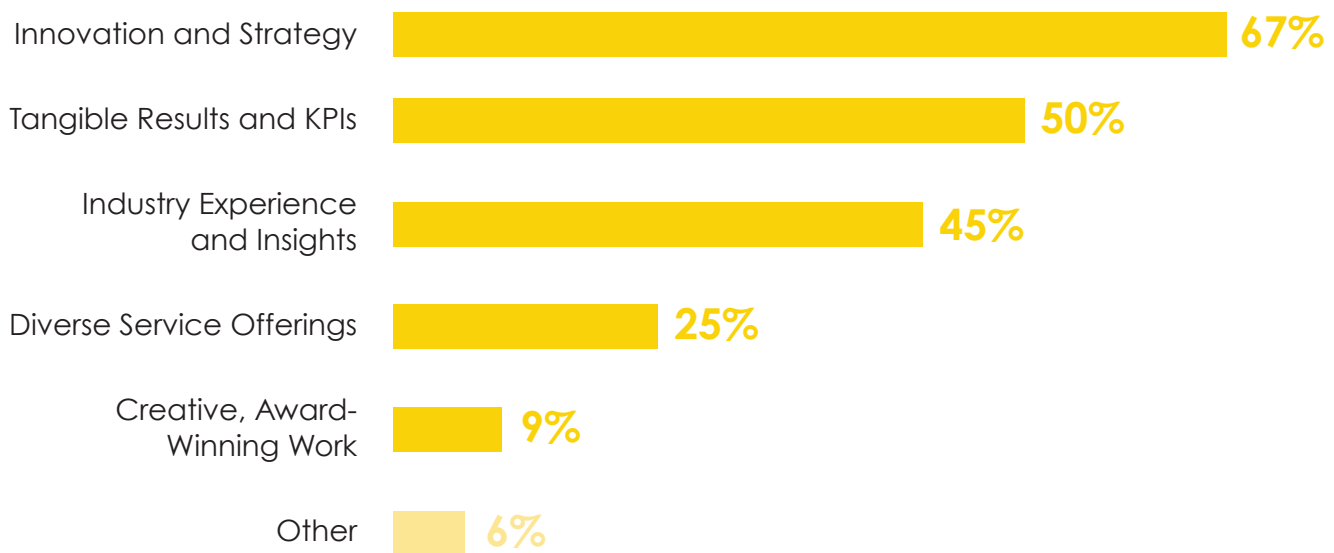
**9%**

Award Winning  
Work



## What quality makes a marketing agency a high performance resource for your brand?

### RESULTS FOR ALL TACTICS



Respondents indicated they are primarily seeking innovation and strategy skills in their marketing agencies. Other important benefits sought in an agency are tangible results and KPIs (Key Performance Indicators), industry experience and insights, and diverse service offerings. Surprisingly, award-winning creative work isn't considered to be as compelling of a benefit. Affordability and low cost was not regarded as an important quality for marketing agencies.



## OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The primary objective of this research study is to assess perceptions of most effective practices in marketing.

To achieve this objective, I Imagine Studio designed a brief survey to be taken by C level marketing executives. The survey was distributed at Chicago American Marketing Association events, other trade events, and online via social media, email, and newsletter. These efforts occurred in four waves of collection, over three months from March to May 2015.

In all, 138 individuals completed our survey. These respondents represented a wide range of organizations in a variety of industries.

With the exception of demographic questions, respondents were encouraged to select all answers that apply. As such, the percentages do not add to 100 percent. All percentages represented here are based on the results collected from the 138 respondents.



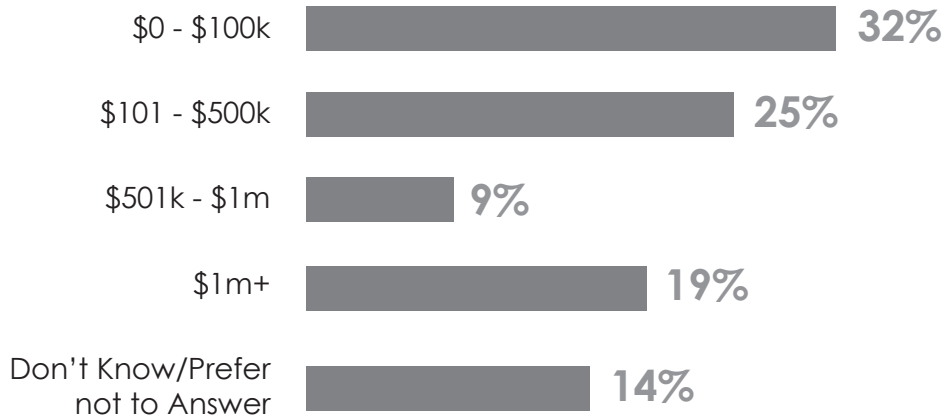


## BUSINESS CLASSIFICATION

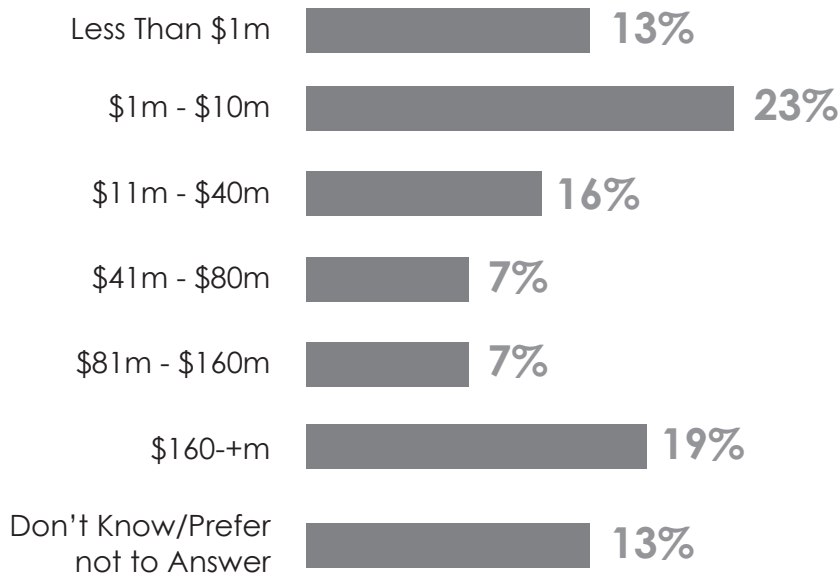
INDUSTRY	RESPONSE COUNT TOTAL	TOTAL %
Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting, Fishing	2	1.85%
Apparel	1	0.93%
Architectural & Engineering Services	4	3.70%
Banking, Finance, Insurance	11	10.19%
Consulting	4	3.70%
Consumer Packaged Goods	8	7.41%
Education	4	3.70%
Food Safety	1	0.93%
Government	1	0.93%
Healthcare	7	6.48%
Hospitality	2	1.85%
Import/Export	1	0.93%
IT	2	1.85%
Legal Services	3	2.78%
Manufacturing	9	8.33%
Marketing, Advertising, Creative Services	27	25.00%
Media	1	0.93%
Mining	1	0.93%
NonProfit	4	3.70%
Other Professional Services	1	0.93%
Real Estate	1	0.93%
Retail	4	3.70%
Staffing/Recruiting	1	0.93%
Technology	5	4.63%
Telecommunications	1	0.93%
Transportation & Logistics	1	0.93%
Wholesale	1	0.93%



## ANNUAL MARKETING BUDGET



## ANNUAL COMPANY REVENUE



**Thank You For Taking Our Survey**

Please Contact Us With Any Questions

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## ABOUT I IMAGINE

I imagine is an award-winning marketing agency dedicated to create meaningful and engaging brand experiences by leveraging integrated marketing communications to optimize brands. From developing your marketing strategy to enhancing your trade show presence, from launching products to elevating your online presence, we ensure your brand's message and look is powerful, effective, and consistent through all marketing communications.

## ABOUT CHICAGO AMA

Over seventy-five years strong, the Chicago AMA delivers cutting-edge marketing programming, connects marketers across all disciplines and business industries, and enables marketing career advancement.



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