

B2B SMALL BUSINESS

SMALL BUSINESS CONTENT MARKETING:

2015 BENCHMARKS, BUDGETS,
AND TRENDS—NORTH AMERICA



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Hello Content Marketers,

Welcome to *2015 B2B Small Business Content Marketing Trends, North America*. In this report, we look at how the practices of small business marketers (10-99 employees) in the business-to-business space have changed over the last year. You'll also find new insights on how content marketing is structured within organizations, how often marketers are publishing new content, initiatives they're working on, and more.

It's been a year of many changes for content marketing. B2B small business marketers are juggling many competing initiatives and are feeling more challenged in every area of content marketing. They're also feeling a bit less effective with content marketing overall. The exceptions are marketers who have a documented content marketing strategy: 60% say they are effective at content marketing and they are less challenged in every area.

It's sure to be an interesting year ahead as content marketing continues to become increasingly sophisticated. We look forward to helping you navigate the changes.

Yours in content,

Joe

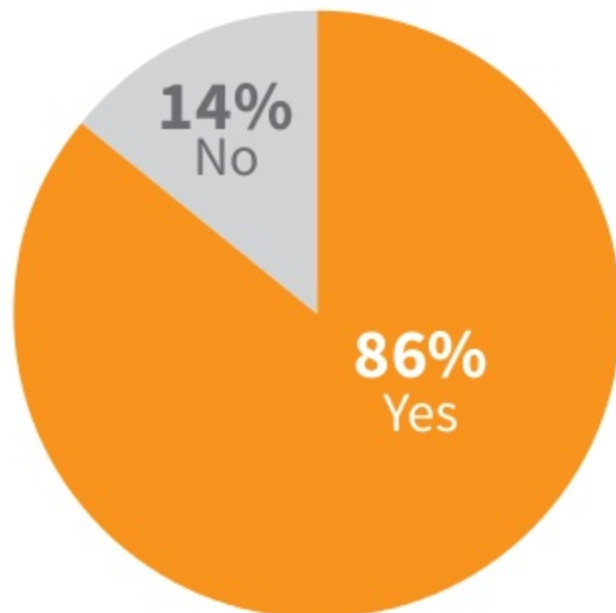


Joe Pulizzi

Founder

Content Marketing Institute

Percentage of B2B Small Business Respondents Using Content Marketing



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Does your organization use content marketing?

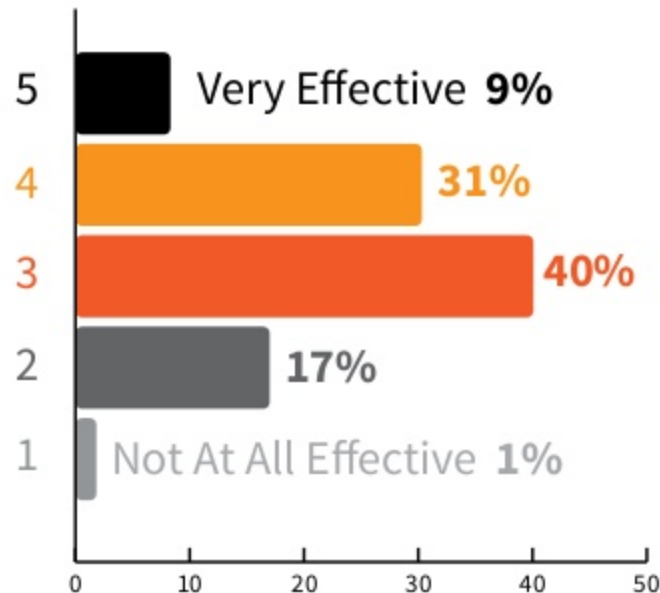
86% say yes

Last year, 94% of B2B small business respondents said they use content marketing. Back then, we defined content marketing as the “creation and distribution of educational and/or compelling content in multiple media formats to attract and/or retain customers.”

This year, we defined content marketing as “a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience—and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action.”

The new definition—crafted by Content Marketing Institute in early 2014—better reflects how content marketing has grown from the mere “creation and distribution” of content to a formal business discipline.

How B2B Small Business Marketers Rate the Effectiveness of Their Organization's Use of Content Marketing



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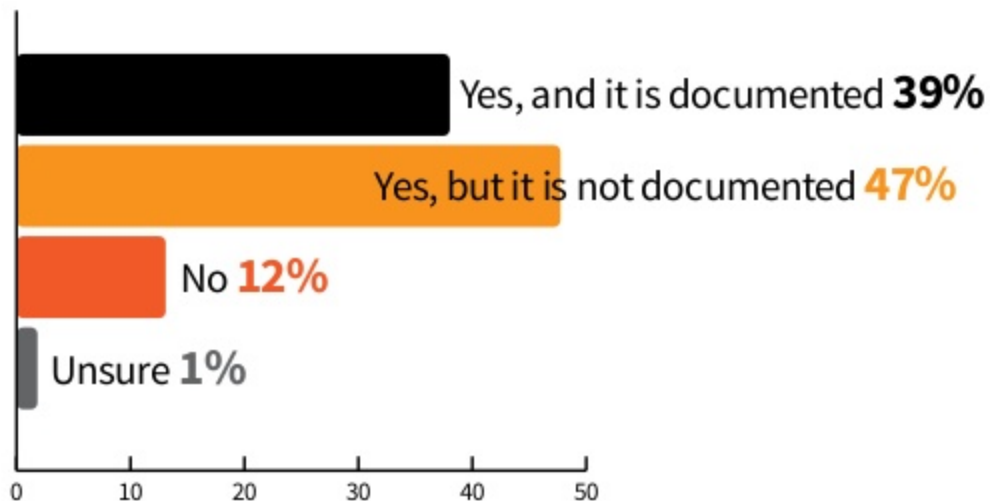
Overall, how effective is your organization at content marketing?

40% say they are effective

Note: For purposes of our annual survey, we define effectiveness as “accomplishing your overall objectives.” Those who rate their organizations a 4 or 5 (on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being “Very Effective” and 1 being “Not at all Effective”) are the “most effective” or “best-in-class.” The 1s and 2s are considered the “least effective,” while the 3s are neutral.

Last year, 45% of B2B small business marketers said they were effective at content marketing. Even though there is a decrease this year, having a documented content marketing strategy helps in this regard (60% of small business marketers who have one say they are effective).

Percentage of B2B Small Business Marketers Who Have a Content Marketing Strategy



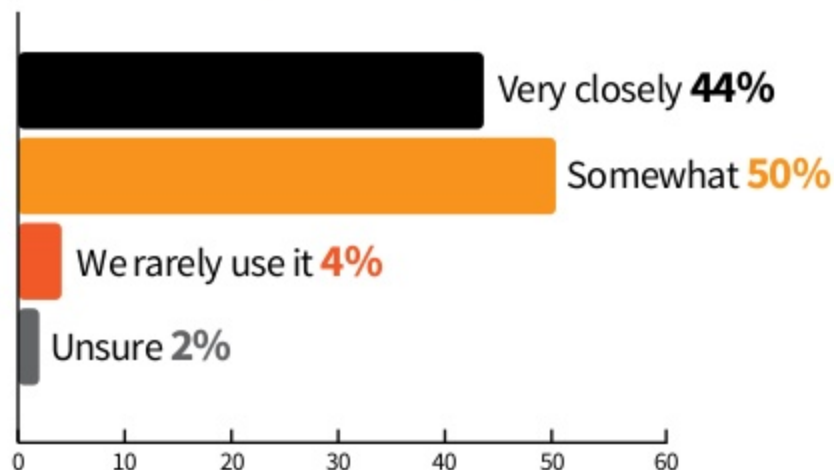
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Does your organization have a content marketing strategy?

39% say they have a documented strategy

The 39% of B2B small business marketers who have a documented content marketing strategy are more effective in nearly all aspects of content marketing than their peers who either have a verbal-only strategy or no strategy at all.

Percentage of B2B Small Business Marketers Who Say Strategy Guides Efforts



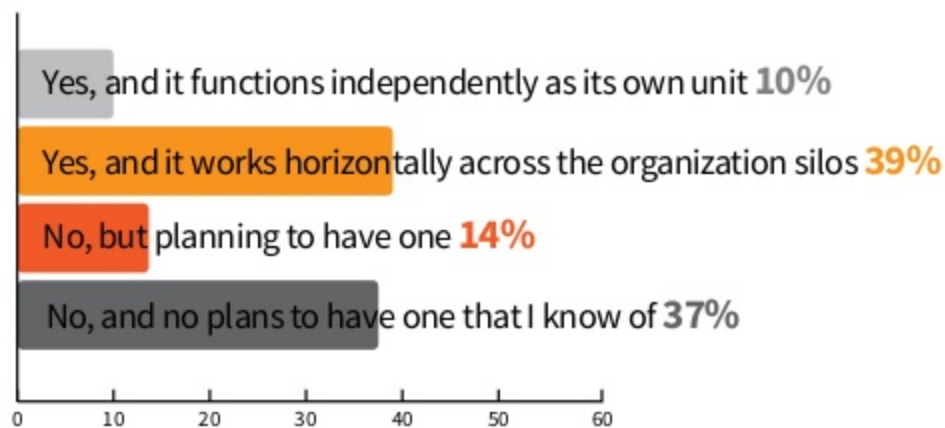
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How closely does your content marketing strategy guide your organization's content marketing efforts?

44% say very closely

Having a strategy is one thing—following it is another. The more effective the B2B small business marketer, the more likely it is that his or her organization follows the strategy very closely (64% of the most effective follow their strategy very closely).

Percentage of B2B Small Business Marketers Who Have a Dedicated Content Marketing Group



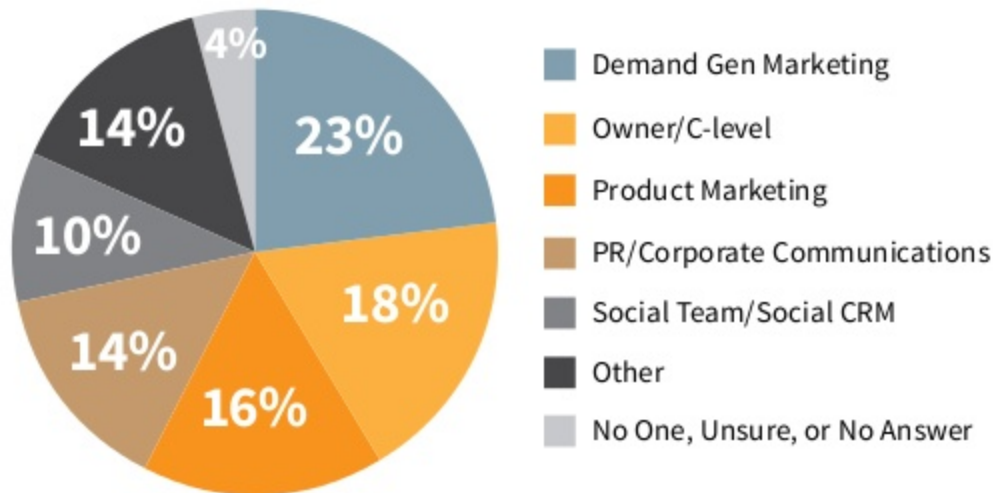
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Does your organization have a dedicated content marketing group?

49% say yes

Nearly half of B2B small business marketers said their companies have a dedicated content marketing group. The percentage is even higher for the most effective small business marketers (69%), as well as for those who have a documented content marketing strategy (69%).

Areas Accountable for B2B Small Business Content Marketing



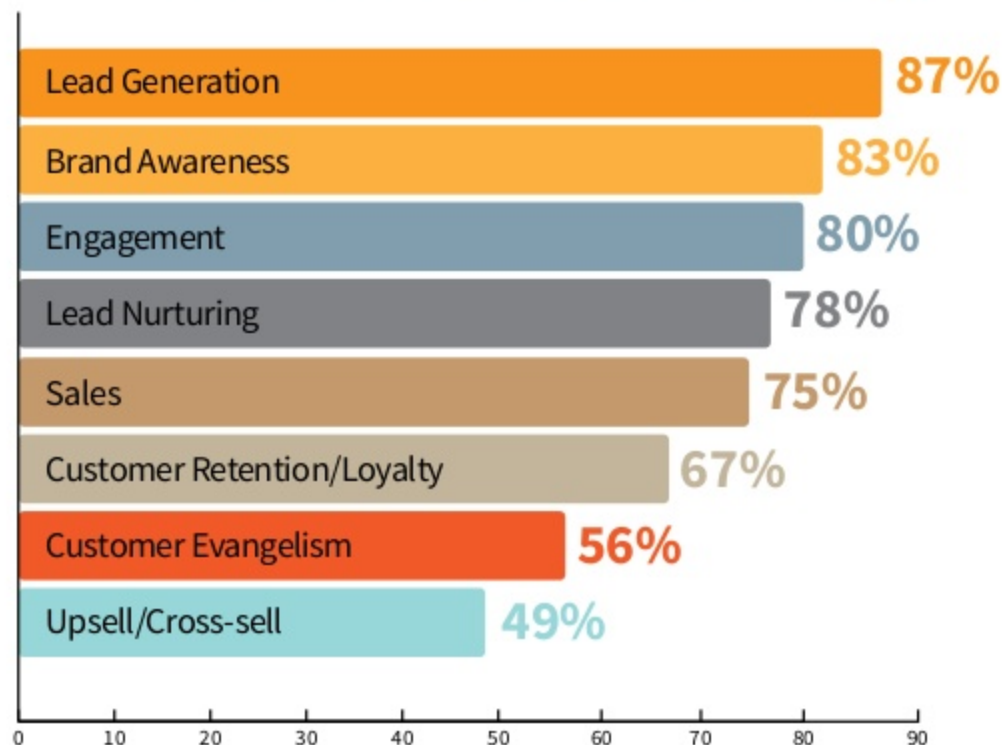
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Which area in your organization is accountable for content marketing?

23% say demand-gen marketing

In small B2B companies, content marketing often falls under demand-gen marketing or the marketers report directly to the owner or executive team.

Organizational Goals for B2B Small Business Content Marketing



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How important are each of the following content marketing goals to your organization?

87% say lead generation is an important goal

Note: Percentages shown represent marketers who rated each goal a 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale where 5 = “Very Important” and 1 = “Not at all Important.”

Lead generation has replaced brand awareness as the top goal. Last year, 85% of B2B small business marketers cited brand awareness and 78% cited lead generation.

Customer evangelism is new to the list this year.

Metrics for B2B Small Business Content Marketing Success



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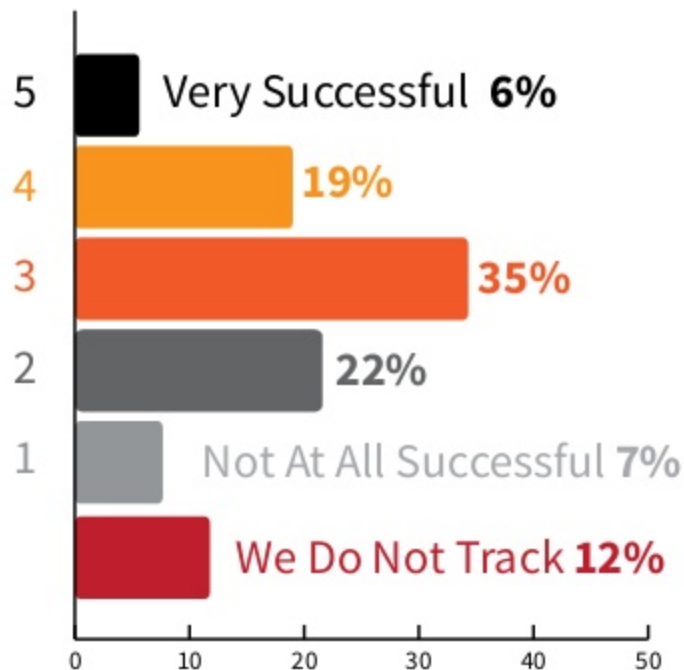
Which metrics does your organization use to assess content marketing success?

67% say website traffic

Note: Fewer than 30% cited the following metrics: Benchmark Lift of Company Awareness (22%), Benchmark Lift of Product/Service Awareness (19%), Customer Renewal Rates (19%), and Cost Savings (5%).

Website traffic and sales lead quality were the two most often cited metrics among B2B small business marketers last year as well. In 2014, 64% cited website traffic and 57% cited sales lead quality.

How B2B Small Business Marketers Rate Their Organization's Success at Tracking ROI



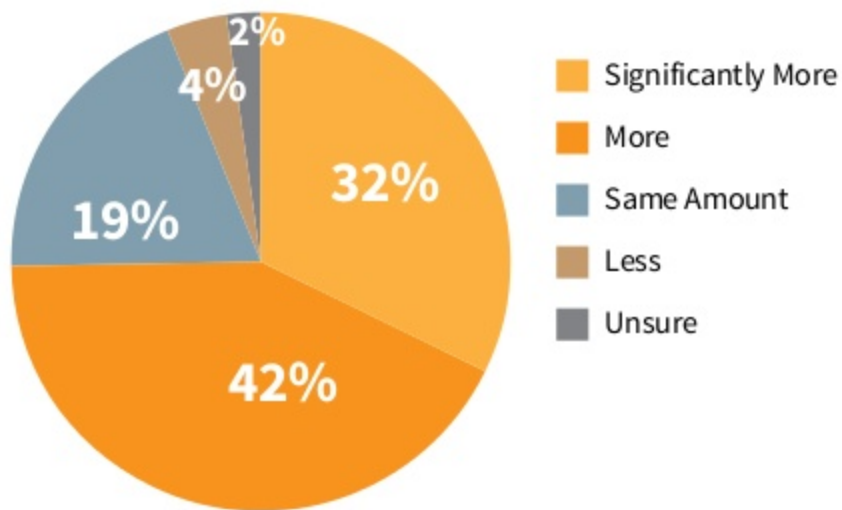
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How successful is your organization at tracking the ROI of its content marketing program?

25% say they are successful

This was a new question on the survey this year. As the percentages show, tracking ROI can be a challenge. Having a documented content marketing strategy helps, though, as 38% of the B2B small business marketers who possess one say they are successful in this area.

Change in B2B Small Business Content Creation (Over Last 12 Months)



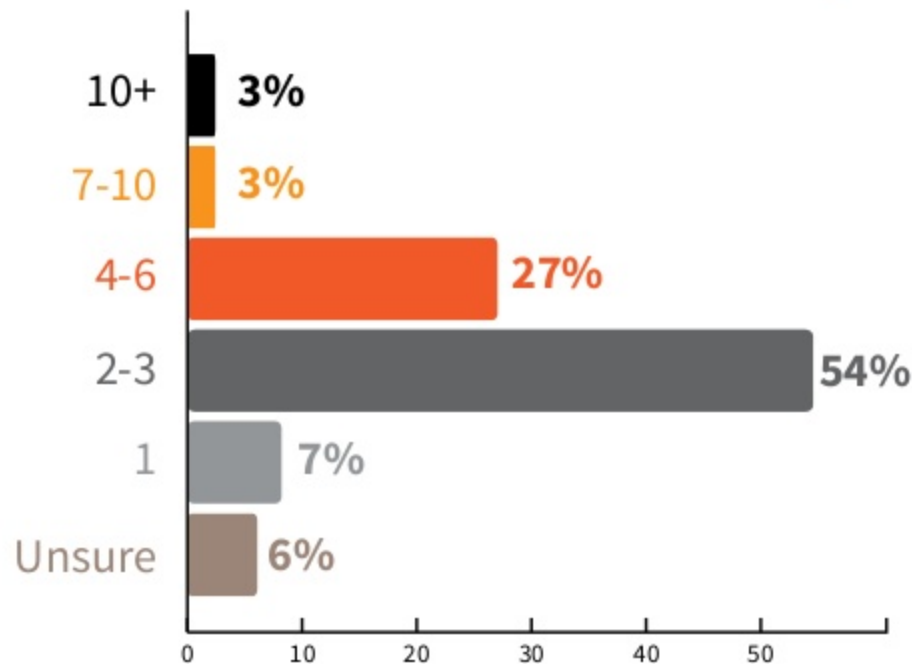
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Compared with one year ago, how much content is your organization creating?

74% are creating more

Last year, 75% said they were creating more content.

Number of Audiences that B2B Small Business Marketers Target



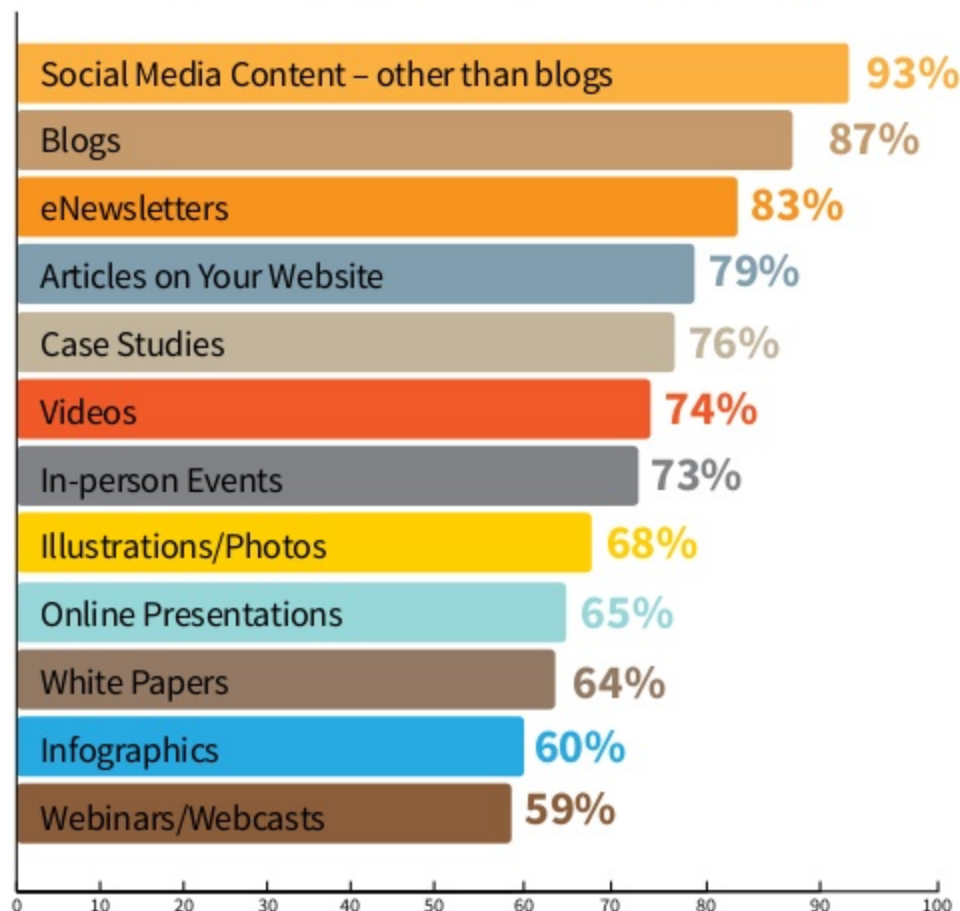
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How many different audiences does your organization target with separate content marketing strategies?

The average number is 4

There is a correlation between company size and the number of audiences targeted. Generally speaking, the larger the company, the more audiences it targets.

B2B Small Business Content Marketing Tactic Usage



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Which content marketing tactics does your organization use?

The average number of tactics used is 12

Note: Fewer than 45% said they use the following tactics: eBooks (40%), Microsites (40%), Research Reports (40%), Branded Content Tools (34%), Books (29%), Print Magazines (25%), Digital Magazines (23%), Mobile Apps (22%), Virtual Conferences (21%), Podcasts (18%), Print Newsletters (16%), and Games/Gamification (9%).

The percentages shown here are fairly similar to last year's. The biggest changes have been with the use of:

- Social media content (other than blogs)—up 5 percentage points (88% last year vs. 93% this year)
- Blogs—up 10 percentage points (77% last year vs. 87% this year)
- Infographics—up 12 percentage points (48% last year vs. 60% this year).

Effectiveness Ratings for B2B Small Business Tactics



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How effective are the following tactics that you use?

65% say ebooks and webinars are effective

These are the 12 tactics that B2B small business marketers find most effective.

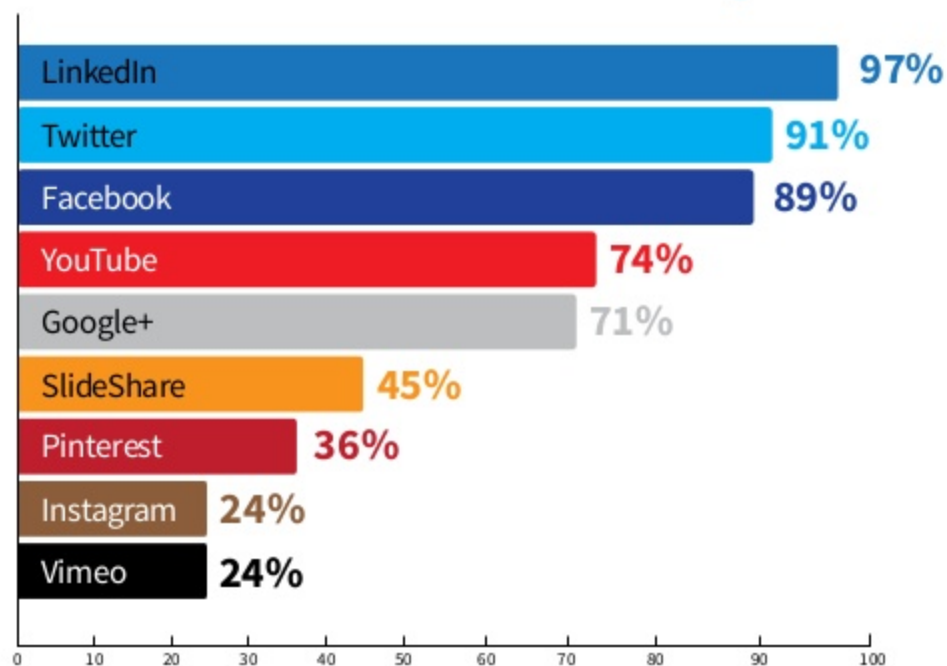
Case studies saw a big decrease this year. Last year, marketers said they were the most effective tactic (69% last year vs. 57% this year).

Other tactics that small business marketers have less confidence in this year are:

- In-person events (67% last year vs. 62% this year)
- Blogs (65% last year vs. 60% this year)
- eNewsletters (65% last year vs. 60% this year)

Confidence in all of the other tactics decreased within a few percentage points.

B2B Small Business Content Marketing Social Media Platform Usage



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Which social media platforms does your organization use to distribute content?

97% use LinkedIn

Average Number Used: 6

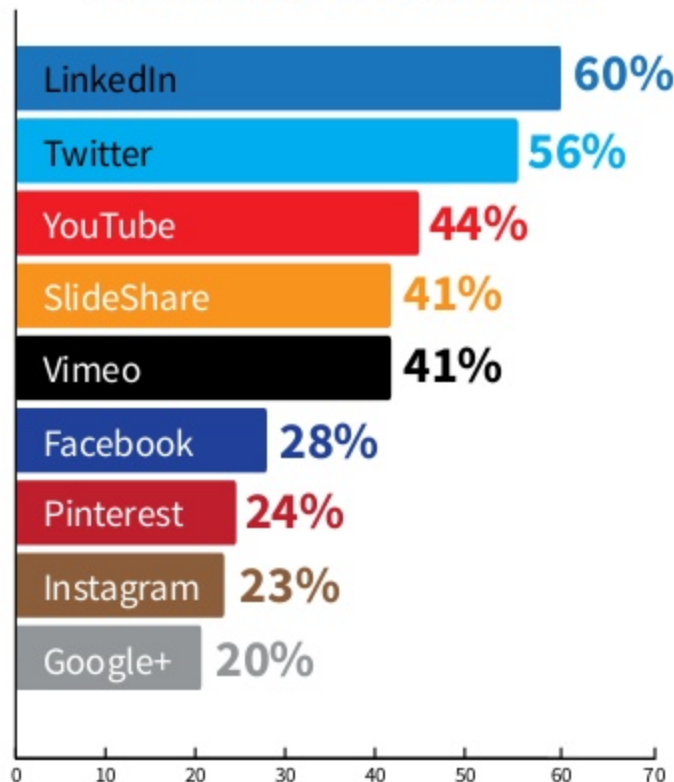
Note: Fewer than 20% said they use the following platforms: Flickr (14%), StumbleUpon (14%), Foursquare (13%), Tumblr (11%), Vine (10%), and SnapChat (6%).

As with last year, B2B small business marketers use an average of 6 social media platforms. Once again, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook are the platforms they use most often.

The percentage of marketers using all of the platforms shown here increased this year, except for YouTube (75% last year vs. 74% this year) and Pinterest (which stayed the same).

The biggest increase was with Google+ (61% last year vs. 71% this year).

Effectiveness Ratings for B2B Small Business Social Media Platforms



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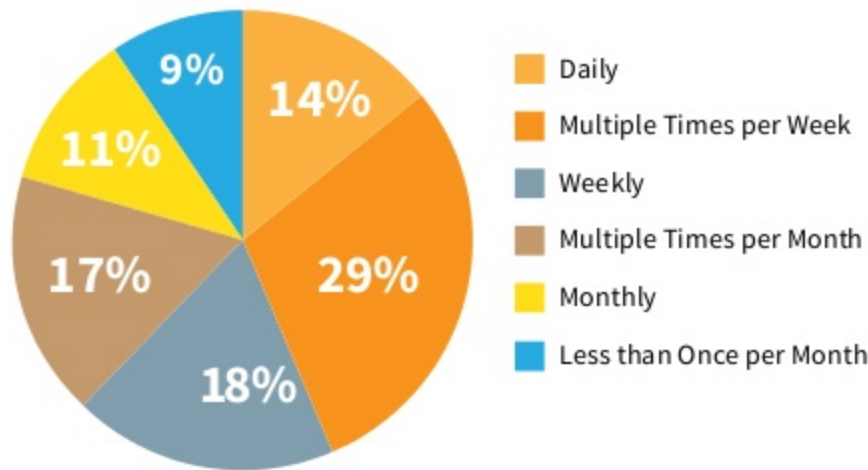
How effective are the social media platforms that you use?

60% say LinkedIn is effective

Both last year and this year, 60% of B2B small business marketers said LinkedIn is effective. Confidence in Twitter rose by 7 percentage points (49% last year vs. 56% this year).

The biggest decreases were with SlideShare (49% last year vs. 41% this year) and Pinterest (30% last year vs. 24% this year).

How Often B2B Small Business Marketers Publish New Content



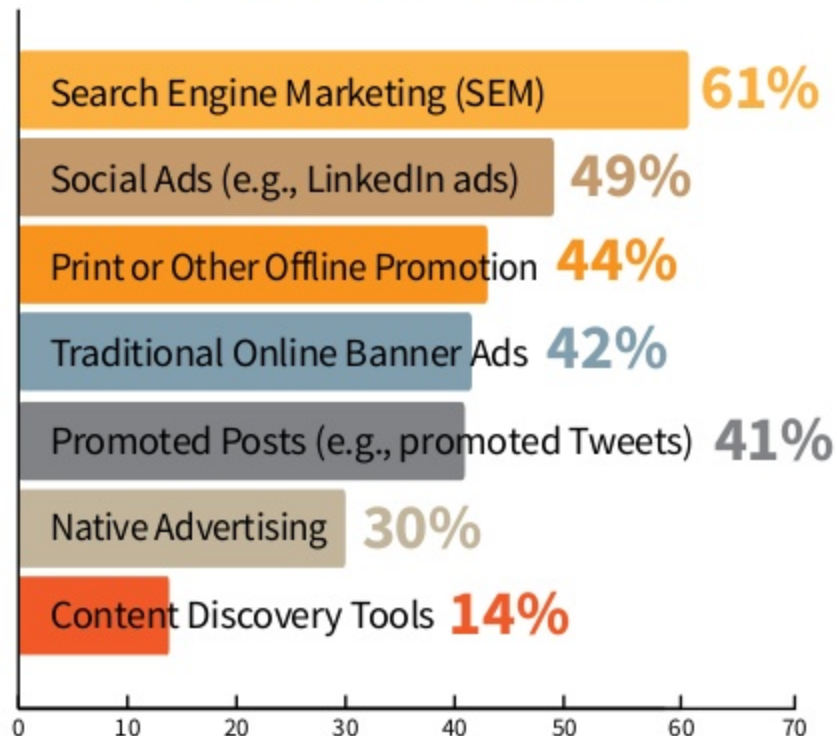
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How often does your organization publish new content that supports its content marketing program?

43% say daily or multiple times per week

The most effective B2B small business marketers publish new content even more frequently than the percentages shown here (55% of the most effective marketers publish new content daily or multiple times per week).

B2B Small Business Paid Advertising Usage



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Which paid advertising methods do you use to promote/distribute content?

61% use search engine marketing (SEM)

Average Number Used: 3

This was a new question on the survey this year. The most effective B2B small business marketers are more likely to use each of these paid methods, especially social ads (57% vs. 49%).