



New Business Tools 2017 Annual Report

A Review of the Most Important Tools Your
Agency Should Be Using for New Business

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Background

The Mirren-RSW/US 2017 New Business Tools Annual Report is an essential resource for agencies executives. As tools and technology continue to play a greater role in agencies of all disciplines, it's important to understand the value of each as it pertains to driving growth.

Now in its fifth year, The New Business Tools Annual Report summarizes the findings from nearly 400 US agency executives on the use and effectiveness of tools across a wide range of categories that are most critical to an agency's new business function. The categories were determined based upon usage rate trends from previous reports.

Agency executives can leverage this report to inform new business tool usage, best practices and investment decisions. It's also a good resource to understand what's lacking when it comes to each tool and what needs to be developed further.

This year significant changes were made to provide a deeper assessment of the effectiveness of each tool examined. This included measuring the effectiveness of tools across customized variables identified as being most pertinent to its new business effectiveness.

Mirren Business Development and RSW/US's respective databases of senior agency executives were used for this study. The study was fielded in March and April 2017.

ABOUT MIRREN BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Mirren's approach to converting business is down to a science – strategic and methodical – but often contrarian. If you follow the rules of the process and never lead the client, your ability to convert business drops considerably.

Start converting more business, more quickly. Mirren provides the training and online resources to better convert more competitive reviews/RFPs, build a pipeline of qualified leads, and grow your existing clients. In fact, every year, more than 700 agencies now participate in our annual conference, training programs, and webinars.

There are four ways to use Mirren to convert more business: 1) Mirren Membership; 2) Events & Classes; 3) Training In-Person; and 4) Mirren Talent. More information about Mirren can be found at www.Mirren.com or by contacting Mirren at brent.hodgins@mirren.com.

ABOUT RSW/US

RSW/US is a full service, outsourced agency lead generation and new business development firm that helps marketing service companies (exclusively) find and win new business. We help agencies find qualified leads, set meetings, better position them in the market, and help move them closer to close. More information about RSW/US can be accessed at www.rsw.com or by contacting Lee McKnight Jr. at lee@rswus.com.

Executive Summary

OVERVIEW

As The New Business Tools Annual Report is now in its fifth year, the opportunity for trend comparisons and insights were robust. While usage in some categories was down, others were up. The most drastic changes included **Prospect Content / List Building Software**, up 11% and **Email Marketing Services**, down 9%.

Downward Usage Trends

For the categories that were down, two themes stood out: **lack of resources and consistency**. The data revealed that many agencies don't have the resources to effectively leverage new business tools or don't maintain a consistent practice of utilizing them. Therefore, the investment isn't warranted. This, combined with a demand for tools that demonstrate a clear ROI, are key usage trends to watch in 2017.

Assessing Tool Effectiveness

Perhaps most provocative this year is the deeper insight the report provides into the effectiveness of each tool. Compared to last year's report, which provided a general effectiveness score, each tool this year was rated on the two dimensions most relevant to the category. For example, while Social Media tools were rated on their effectiveness at brand awareness and lead generation, Marketing Automation tools were rated on their effectiveness at campaign management and marketing analytics.

The categories that were rated as **most effective** included:

- Marketing Automation
- CRM
- Target Audience Research

Alternately, Social Media tools, Prospect Content / List Building tools and Content Development tools received the lowest effectiveness ratings.

Insights Into Effectiveness

Offering some insight into these findings, respondents indicated that Marketing Automation and CRM tools' ability to show measurable results was a key reason they found them effective. Meanwhile, they continue to be disappointed by Social Media tools whose impact is more difficult to prove. However, as the majority of Social Media tools are free, usage remains high.

We trust that you'll find the insights in this report informative to your needs and that you'll take away key learnings that can be applied to your current efforts to grow business. The following pages provide a more detailed summary of the usage and effectiveness findings in this report.

Executive Summary

USAGE OF AGENCY NEW BUSINESS TOOLS

A number of categories saw growth compared to 2016. Prospect Contact/List Building grew by 11%, while Target Audience Research Services and Content Development tools grew by 4% respectively.

In terms of the categories that have the highest usage, **Social Media and Content Development Tools** (both at 87%) continue to lead, followed by Meeting/Web Conferencing (77%). As indicated earlier, Social Media continues to be a favorite, likely due to the low/no cost of the various tools that make up this category.

Additionally, many agencies continue to outsource content development, as video, blogging and other content efforts continue to play an important role in new business.

% of Agency Executives that use New Business Tools

TOOLS	2017	2016	2015
Social Media Tools	87%	93%	93%
Contact Management / CRM Software	65%	69%	70%
Marketing Automation / Inbound Marketing Platforms	32%	37%	40%
Target Audience Research Services	44%	40%	49%
Prospect Contact / List Building Software	59%	48%	45%
Email Marketing Services	56%	65%	73%
Content Development Tools	87%	83%	----
Meeting/Web Conferencing Software	77%	84%	----

Executive Summary

EFFECTIVENESS OF AGENCY NEW BUSINESS TOOLS

Tool effectiveness was assessed on a five-point scale ranging from “not effective” to “very effective” against the two dimensions identified as most critical to the category. The majority of the tools evaluated in this report received average effectiveness ratings (e.g., 2-3 rating score).

Low Effectiveness Ratings

Many of the tools in this report were rated to not be effective and very few received an above average rating (4+). While it's possible that many of the tools fall short, qualitative findings indicate a lack of consistent usage, perhaps explaining some of the low scores. In other words, many of the tools evaluated require consistent use to be effective.

Usage vs Effectiveness

There were some key contrasts among usage and effectiveness. While Social Media leads in terms of usage, it is reported to not be an effective tool for driving brand awareness or lead generation, with over half of the tools in this category rated as ineffective. Alternately, while Marketing Automation has one of the lowest usage rates, these tools received some of the highest scores on their ability to manage campaigns and deliver marketing analytics. Nearly all of these tools received a score of three or higher, indicating agencies are satisfied with their performance.

Content Development Tools received low effectiveness ratings in both the quantitative and qualitative feedback, contrasting their high usage rates. Driving this finding, respondents indicated that the majority of Content Tools are built for scale, not quality. It was suggested that only freelancers could be relied upon to accurately reflect the agency's brand voice and mission.

NEW THIS YEAR

Finally, this year the report examines how agencies are customizing tools to their needs as well as how they are leveraging proprietary tools. We also explore several new tools which didn't fit into any of the “traditional” categories that were examined.

Table of Contents

Who Responded?	7
What Are Your Three Most Essential Agency Tools Today?	9
Did You Add Any New Business Tools / Services in the Past Year?	10
What most impacts your consideration of new business tools?	12
Channel Specific Questions	
SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS	13
CONTACT MANAGEMENT / CRM SOFTWARE	18
MARKETING AUTOMATION / INBOUND MARKETING	24
TARGET AUDIENCE RESEARCH SERVICES	29
PROSPECT CONTACT / LIST BUILDING SOFTWARE	35
EMAIL MARKETING SERVICES	40
CONTENT DEVELOPMENT TOOLS	46
MEETING / WEB CONFERENCING SOFTWARE	50
PROPRIETARY TOOLS	55
A Few Closing Thoughts	57
Glossary	58

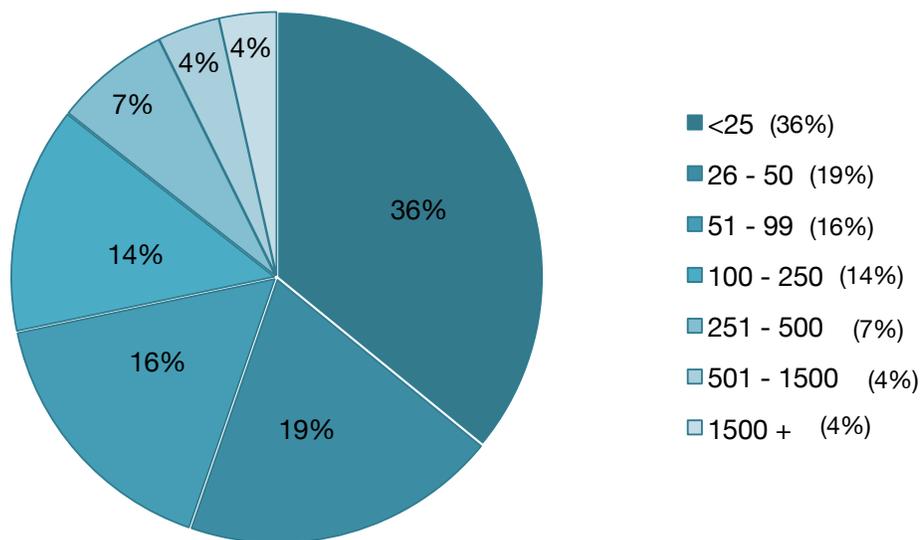
Who Responded?

Small, mid-size and large agencies were all well represented across the 396 respondents in 2017. We saw the largest representation once again with 36% of respondents representing firms of 25 employees or less.

Segments seeing changes in participating respondents were:

- 26 – 50 employees: -5% vs. 2016
- 100 – 250 employees: +1.5% vs. 2016
- 251 – 500 employees: -.5% vs. 2016

How many employees do you have nationally at your agency?

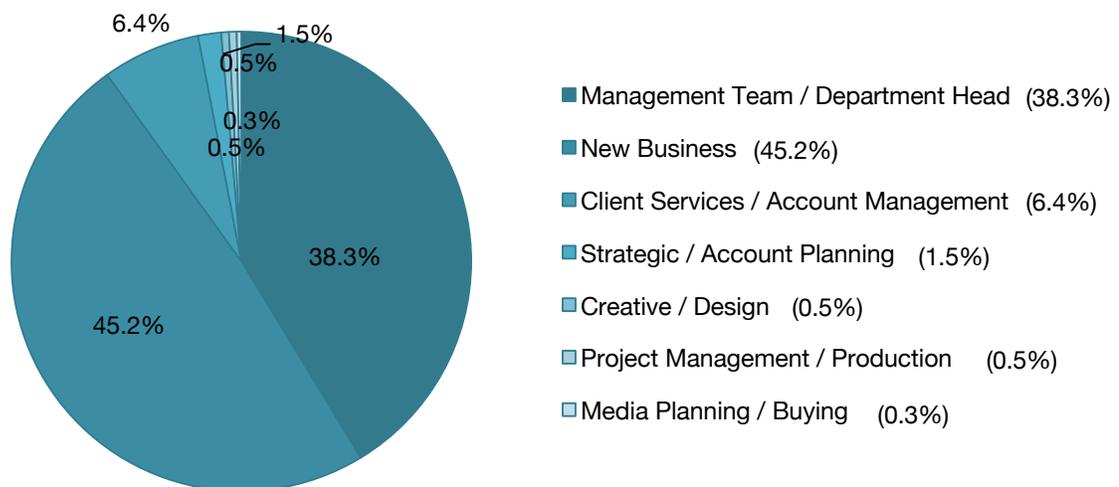


Who Responded? - Continued

We saw a change from our 2016 report in two specific titles who responded to the survey this year: Management/Department Head respondents dropped almost 12%, while those with new business titles saw an increase of 11.5%.

As in previous years, Client Services / Account Management titles represented the next highest percentage at 6.4%.

Please select the title that most closely represents your role in the agency.



What Are Your Agency's Three Most Essential New Business Tools?

Prior to exploring specific tool types, we asked agencies to identify the three most essential tools, those they found essential, for driving new business growth.

This year more than ever, agencies continue to use a wide-range of new business tools. We tracked over 100 in this year's survey, and, as you'll see below, there was a wide variety.

Winmo/The List (19%), LinkedIn (16%) and Salesforce (12%) were cited as the top three most essential tools agencies use to drive new business. Rounding out the top 7 were HubSpot (9%), Access Confidential (7%), and Google tools (3%).

As a point of reference, and to give you an idea of the scope of answers agencies gave us, any tool an agency mentioned more than once and their corresponding percentage is listed below (Note that not all these are single tools/platforms, as opposed to a full suite of services, but are still included):

SharpSpring
infusionsoft
MailChimp
Pipedrive
Mirren
Pardot
ACT!
Workamajig
RSW/US
Excel

Lead Forensics
Marketo
Intel
SalesLoft
Kantar
Pearlfinders
Vertical Response
Twitter
Redbooks
Catapult

Did You Add Any New Tools / Services In The Past Year?

A prominent goal in this year's survey was to gather as many *new* tools as we could from agencies, so that this year's report becomes that much more valuable for your firm.

Over the course of the next two pages are a listing of any new tools agencies told us they added in the past year to help drive new business, along with a brief description of the tool, to help guide you towards any category you may be considering as an add for 2017.

(Note that the below list only includes those new tools that were not represented in any other categories throughout this report.)

- Raining-Marketing and Sales SaaS platform for IT sales and marketing professionals
- Tableau-Business Intelligence and Analytics
- Statista-online statistics, market research and business intelligence portal
- Yesware-Sales, Productivity, and Email Tracking
- CubeYou-technology, based on social data and predictive algorithms, that delivers customer insights without the need for expensive and time-consuming surveys.
- Lucky Orange-All-in-One Conversion Optimization Suite
- Crystal-shows you the best way to communicate with any prospect, customer, or coworker based on their unique personality.
- Speek-Free conference calling
- Thankster-Easily Create And Mail Cards That Look Genuinely Handwritten.
- Harvest-Simple Online Time Tracking Software
- Prime Lingo-Unlock insights on your target audiences, markets and categories with Nielsen's user-friendly, web-based platform

Did you add any new tools / services in the past year? If so, which ones?

- SalesLoft - the Modern Sales Engagement Platform
- NUVI - Real-time data visualizations are what set NUVI apart.
- Inside View - gleans insights and relationships from business information, contact data, online news, and social media and customer CRM data
- TrackMaven - marketing analytics software helps marketers prove ROI and improve results on 18 integrated digital and social channels.
- Crimson Hexagon - an enterprise social media analytics company providing insights for brand strategy, market research, and more.
- Smaply - create professional personas, journey maps, stakeholder maps in minutes
- Proposify - create beautiful proposals, streamline them in the cloud, and get faster sign-off with online signatures.
- Canva - makes design simple for everyone. Create designs for Web or print: blog graphics, presentations, Facebook covers, flyers, posters
- Thriveleads Wordpress Plugin - The Ultimate List Building Plugin for WordPress
- 10,000 Feet - makes simple, collaborative software to help creative organizations thrive
- Streak customer relationship management platform for Gmail
- Leadlander - enhances the ROI of your inbound and outbound marketing automation efforts.

What most impacts your consideration of new business tools?

This year we asked agencies to rank their top 5 considerations of new business tools.

Effectiveness or an **ability to provide a direct impact** was ranked as the most important consideration (85%). Following in close proximity were **efficiency**, or an ability to improve new business productivity (72%), and **ease of implementation and use** (68%). The next most important factors were value (59%), followed by an ability to customize (44%). Interestingly, quality product reviews was valued the least by respondents.

Surprisingly, value, or an ability to drive impact for the cost associated with the tool, was ranked last in respondent's top 5 list. However, this was likely offset by effectiveness and efficiency receiving the #1 and #2 spots.

What most impacts your consideration of new business tools? Select your top five (5).



CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS



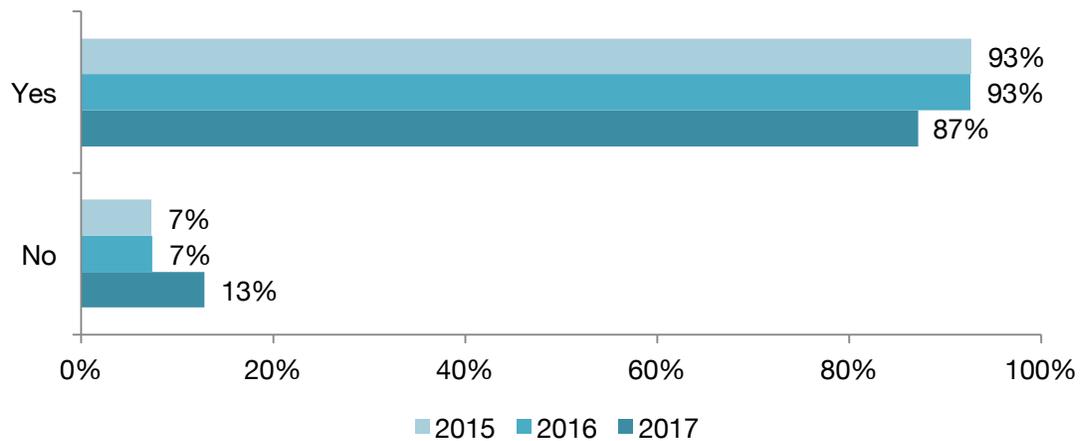
Social Media Tools

CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS**SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS**

Social Media continues to be one of the most used tool categories overall, with 87% of agency executives indicating they currently use them in support of their new business efforts. Other than Content Development tools, this usage stat surpasses all other tool categories in this report by 10%+.

While there was a slight decline among usage compared to the last two years, it's clear new business professionals value Social Media tools as an important new business asset.

Do you currently use Social Media to support your agency's new business efforts? (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn)



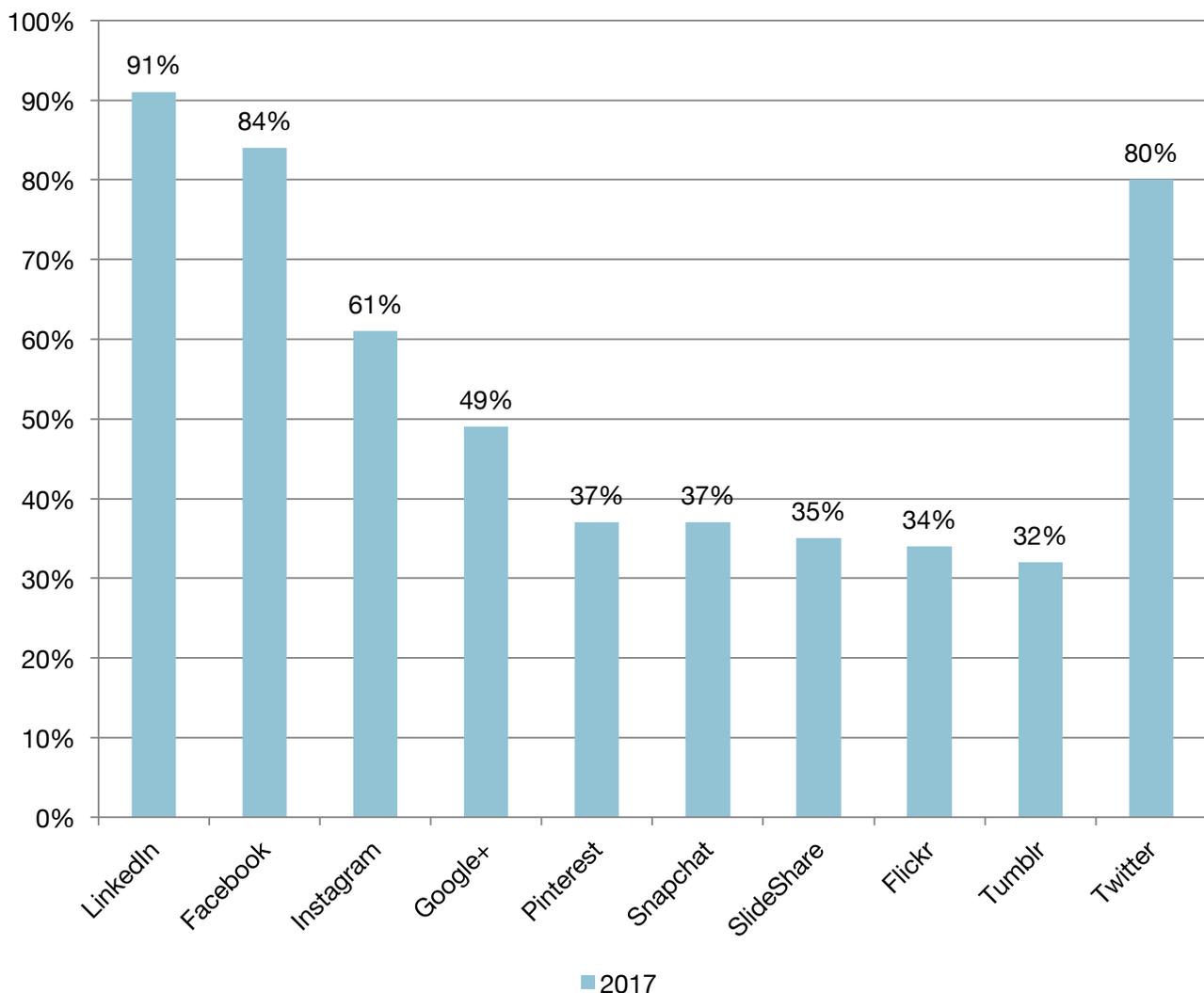
CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS

Larger, established platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn drove the majority of usage for Social Media tools. LinkedIn is used most by the respondents at 91%, followed by Facebook at 84% and Twitter at 81%.

As highlighted in the prior question, compared to other tool categories, respondents are using social media more than any other tools featured in this report. However, it's worth noting that usage is driven by the social media tools that achieve scale and are most measurable (e.g., LinkedIn). As social media has long struggled to prove its effectiveness via a clear ROI, this could perhaps explain some of the lackluster usage rates for over half of the tools featured.

Current Usage of Social Media Tools



CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS

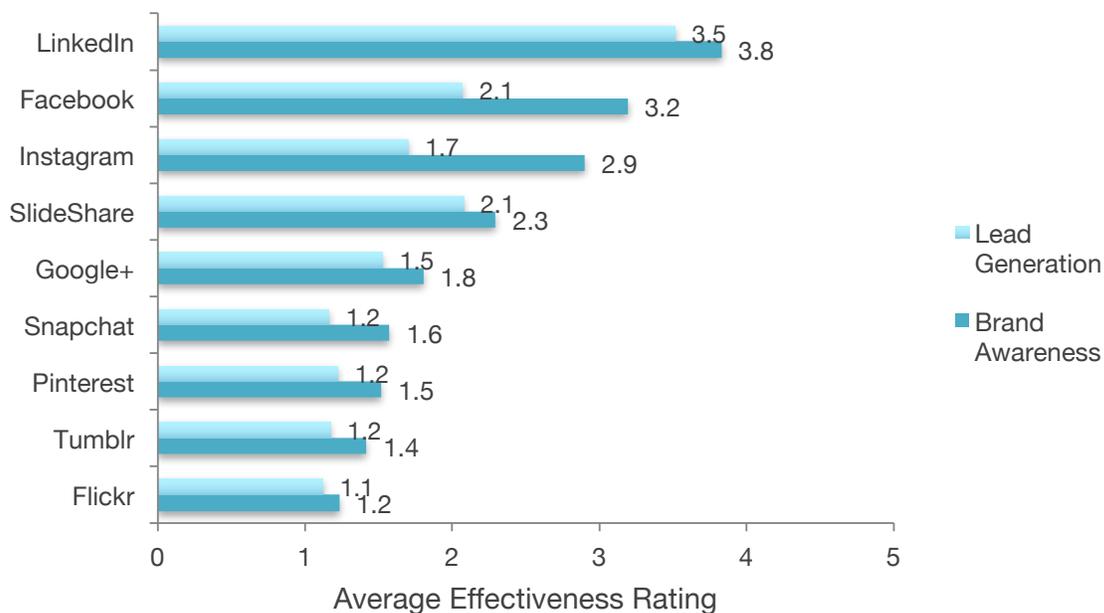
This year we looked at both lead generation and brand awareness to assess the effectiveness of social media tools.

Based on the findings, LinkedIn was the clear winner when it comes to being an effective social media tool, receiving a 3.8 rating for driving brand awareness and 3.5 for lead generation. Facebook and Instagram received moderate ratings for driving awareness.

Interestingly, the rest of the tools evaluated received relatively low marks, with the vast majority being rated as not effective.

One explanation for these low marks is likely the measurement challenges innate to social media. While we've come a long way, it's still challenging to prove the ROI of social media.

Rate each tool on how effectively it supports your new business objectives.



CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS

Confirming some of the results in the prior questions, respondents indicated that they view social media tools as a great asset for brand awareness. However, they don't view it as strong for lead generation, except in the case of LinkedIn.

Key themes for why they find social media to be an effective tool varied. Some indicated the lack of cost, while others cited their awareness building capabilities, like reach and impressions. Additionally, culture building and finding contacts and/or contact information was also listed.

On the contrary, respondents were more aligned on what makes social media tools ineffective. This includes ineffectiveness at driving leads, reaching senior decision makers and demonstrating a measurable ROI.

Please provide more detail why you find the Social Media tools you use effective or ineffective.



"I don't really find social media useful, other than perhaps LinkedIn, and even that is questionable as recent changes have made it less effective."

"They are good to plant seeds but none of them are drivers. LinkedIn might be the exception."

"Drive awareness, human interaction with prospects."

"Great for brand awareness but as far as creating leads it is a mixed bag."

"We use social media tools primarily to promote company culture."

"We have not gotten one lead from our social media efforts."

"Portray agency culture and share case studies."



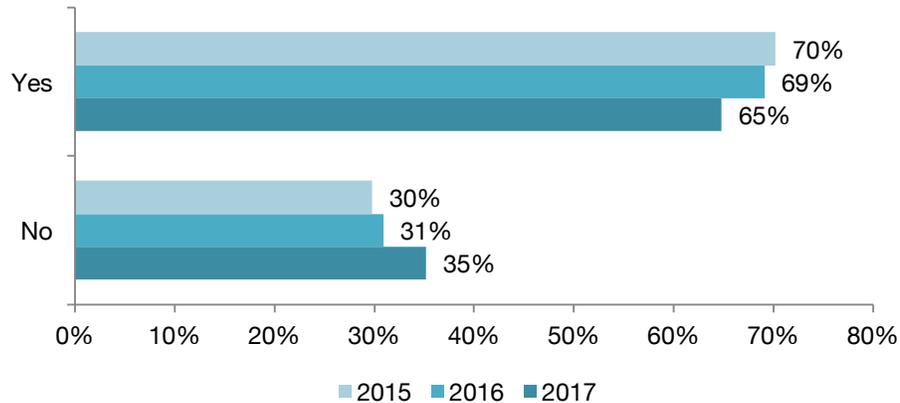
CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS



Contact Management / CRM Software

CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS**CONTACT MANAGEMENT / CRM SOFTWARE**

Do you currently use Contact Management / CRM Software to manage your new business prospects?



Agency usage of CRM tools is still at a healthy 65%, however continues to drop year-over-year (In 2015 it was 70%)

We'll explore reasons for this decline and what if any alternatives agencies use instead. As we'll see, there are very clear frontrunners in regards to the specific CRM tools agencies use, and strong opinions on effectiveness and best practices in the open-ended comments.

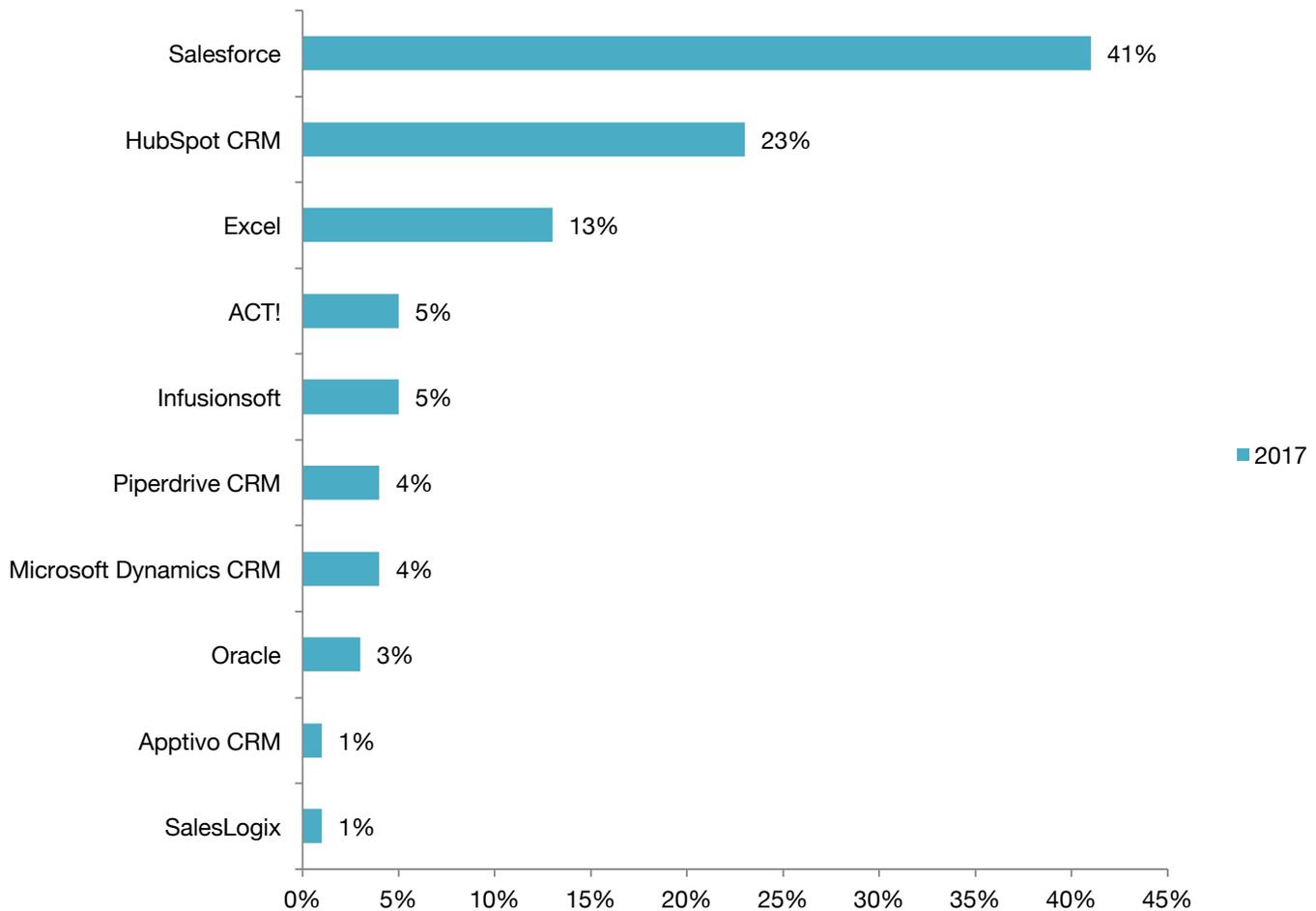
CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

CONTACT MANAGEMENT / CRM SOFTWARE

Salesforce is the predominant leader in the CRM category at 41%, with HubSpot trailing 18 percentage points behind at second, with 23%. Excel (technically not a CRM) rounds out at third with 13% usage. **First interesting takeaway-technically at third was the “other” category**, which represented 17% of answers, showing agencies more willing to explore in 2017 than ever before with new tools, or tools that don’t typically fall into those top usage categories.

And a second takeaway-more so than the majority of other categories, we saw 4 platforms/tools (Maximizer, NetSuite, OnContact, and TeamWox) completely drop off this year’s report, while 3 other platforms/tools (Piperdrive, Oracle, and Apptivo) made their first appearance.

Current Usage CRM / Contact Management Software platforms



CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

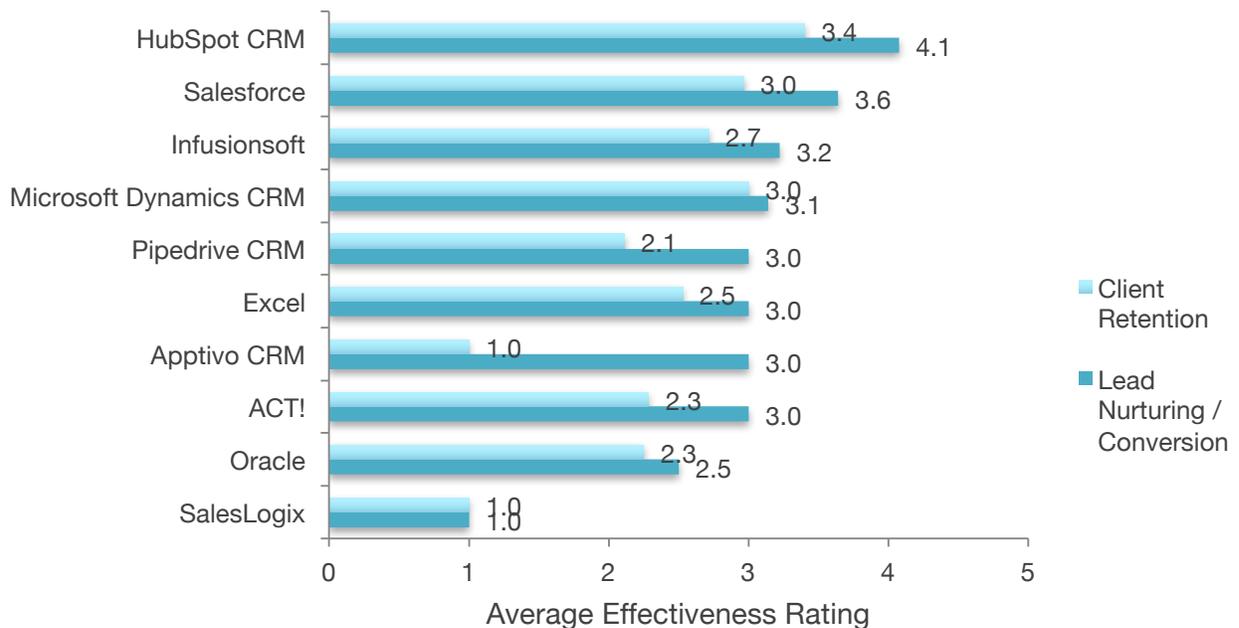
CONTACT MANAGEMENT / CRM SOFTWARE

As a more accurate rating of effectiveness this year, we asked agencies to rate the CRM tools they used in two ways: in terms of client retention and lead nurturing/conversion.

While coming in second in overall usage, HubSpot scored the highest marks for lead nurturing effectiveness with a 4.1 out of 5. Salesforce came in solidly behind at 3.6, while the remainder of the CRM tools fell in right around 3 (SalesLogix being the one exception.)

Agencies aren't using their CRM tools for client retention to any great degree. HubSpot again takes the lead there at 3.4, with no other CRM tools breaking the 3 mark.

Rate each tool on how effectively it supports your new business objectives.



CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

CONTACT MANAGEMENT / CRM SOFTWARE

So what are some of the reasons behind the drops in CRM usage in 2017?

We asked agencies to provide us further detail around their CRM effectiveness (or ineffectiveness), and a definitive theme ran through their answers.



“Not sure that we are fully taking advantage of all of the tools and benefits associated with HubSpot.”

“Pipedrive is great at organizing the billion contacts we have and helping to prioritize and drive continued action against prospects. It starts to fall down when it's not looked at and used every single day by a team that understands and tracks the individual actions of its members.”

“I use salesforce, but nobody else in the agency does. It's not helpful when there's not adoption across disciplines/I am the only one upkeeping.”

“Lack of effectiveness resides on our side - not consistently tracking points of engagement with leads to better understand where they are in the journey.”

As in past years, CRM tools are consistently named as the hardest to maintain on an ongoing basis. One difference this year: less comments about how complicated they can be—so either agencies are becoming more adept at their usage, or these companies are doing a better job of streamlining.

Ultimately, CRM's, like agency new business as a whole, often fall victim to lack of consistent usage by the end user. Another agency response sums it up fairly well with this simple comment:

“Any CRM is most effective when used properly. Ours helps us track the pipeline, win/loss rate and the overall sales cycle.”



CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS**CONTACT MANAGEMENT / CRM SOFTWARE**

What are your best practices / hacks for getting the most out of your CRM tool?

We asked agencies to tell us about best practices and/or methods they use to make CRM usage more efficient. The answers we got varied, but as with other new business tools in our report, those agencies who made the time to understand and consistently engage with the platform found ongoing success:



“Make everyone record what they do!”

“Former Positions! The best, most valuable free app in the Salesforce App store! No more need for work-arounds to denote where people used to work and in what role, when they get promoted, etc. It is the best kept secret on Salesforce and I wish EVERYONE knew about it, because it is fantastic. And did I mention it was free?! We also like Dupe Catcher.”

“We have worked with our administrators to revamp the system to pull the most important reports for us. We are also proactive with our staff about entering information and updates on a timely basis.”

“Bi-weekly check-ins with ALL users of the system to ensure data integrity is high and being captured from all angles. We've also tied adoption and usage of the CRM system to internal personnel goals.”

“Develop a 3 or 6 month publishing calendar and stick with it! Cultivate your larger pool of prospects (1,000 contacts +) with periodic content but fertilize your key prospects (<100) frequently.”

“Using MassMail Subscription components and modules make CRM tools irrelevant in my experience...I personally developed several Salesforce/SugarCRM integrations with a YouTube clone sites, etc for State Farm insurance contests. With 15,000+ agents at the time in Texas they had the most potential for making a relevant case for CRM tools, but alas MassMail components with simple subscription modules won the day and didn't waste time on the details.”

“Consistently updating it is critical. Ease of use encourages our staff to use it. Info from HubSpot very useful.”



CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS



Marketing Automation / Inbound Marketing

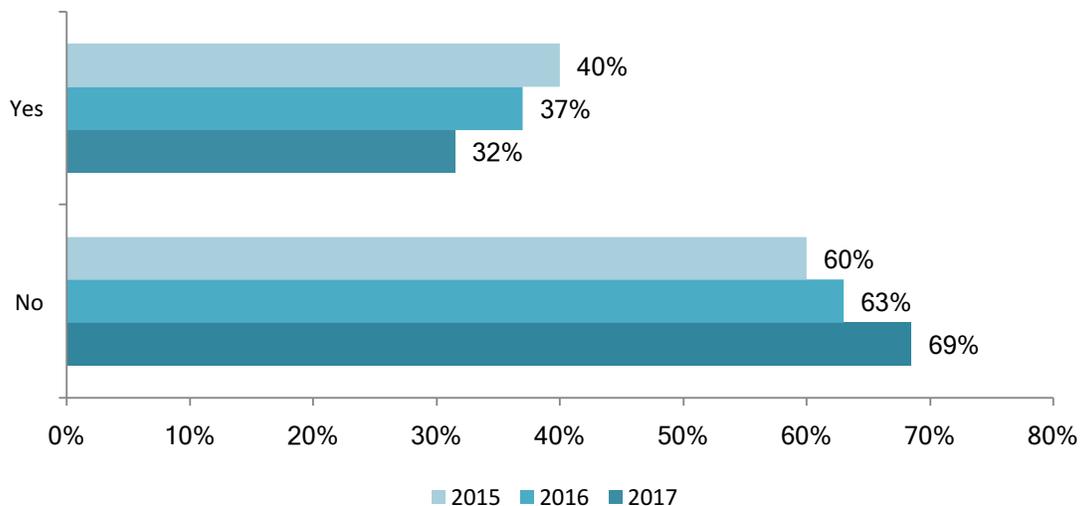
CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

MARKETING AUTOMATION / INBOUND MARKETING PLATFORMS

Use of Marketing Automation has trended down since 2015, dropping 5% compared to last year. A number of reasons offer explanation for these findings. It's possible that agencies aren't seeing the kind of results that warrant investment. Additionally, qualitative findings indicate they've decreased or haven't been able to sustain their inbound marketing efforts, which are critical to effective use of these tools.

Tools like HubSpot, SharpSpring and Marketo are best leveraged by companies who rely upon their website as a key source to capture leads and invest heavily in driving people there. While the majority of agency business development is "less transactional" in nature, when marketing automation is leveraged properly, the results can be impressive. However, they do require proactive marketing efforts, something agencies historically aren't great at supporting.

Do you currently use Marketing Automation / Inbound Marketing tools to support your new business efforts?



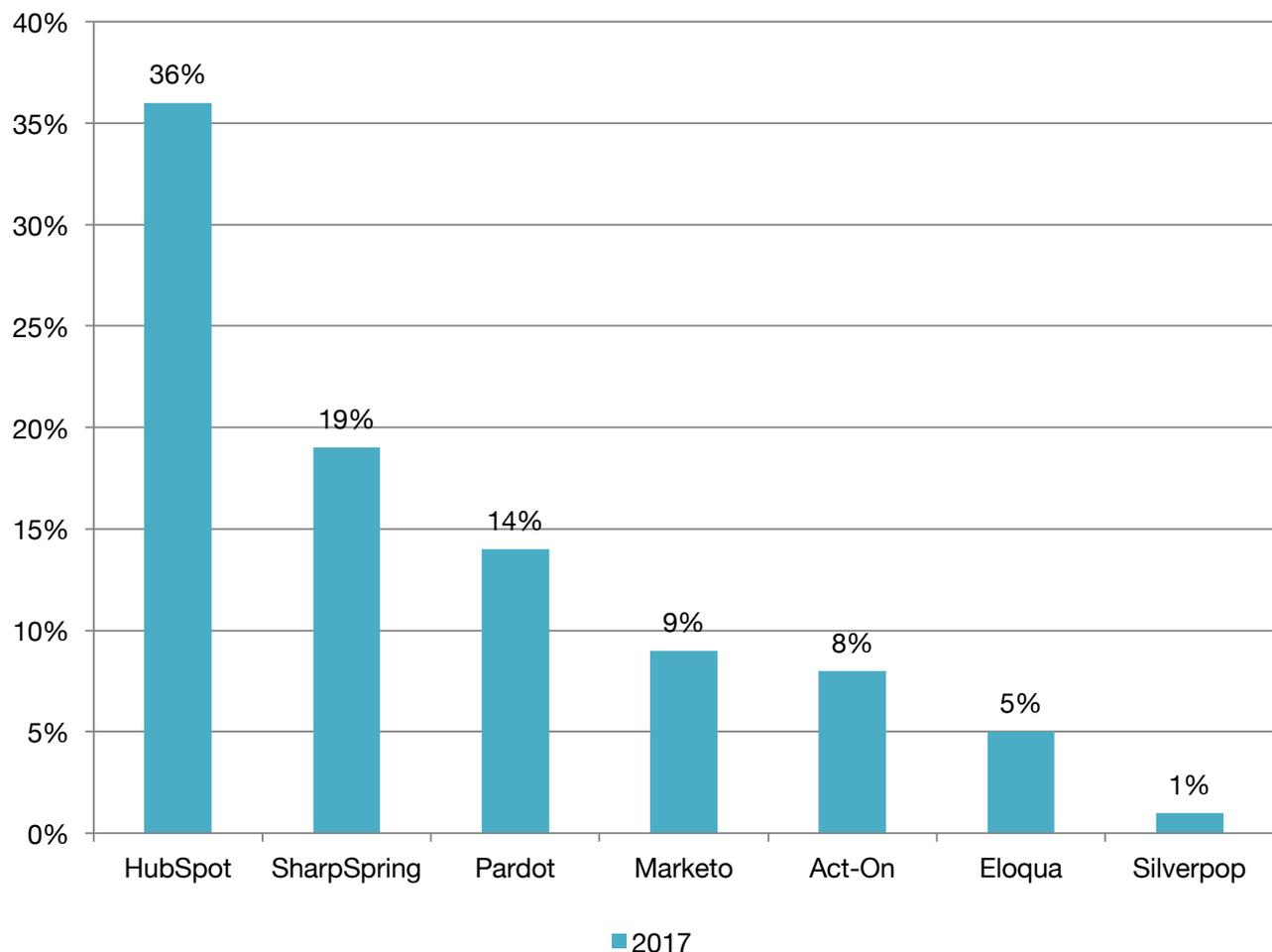
CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

MARKETING AUTOMATION /
INBOUND MARKETING PLATFORMS

As indicated in the prior question, overall usage is trending down for marketing automation, also reflected in the low usage rates for the tools featured. The clear winner in terms of overall usage is HubSpot (36%) followed by SharpSpring (19%); Marketo is only used by 9% of the audience.

This trend in usage is reflective of a long-standing agency trend: **A lack of sustained, proactive marketing efforts.** Agencies continue to struggle with investing into marketing and sales programs, due to not having the proper resources (and discipline) in place.

Current Usage of Marketing Automation / Inbound Marketing



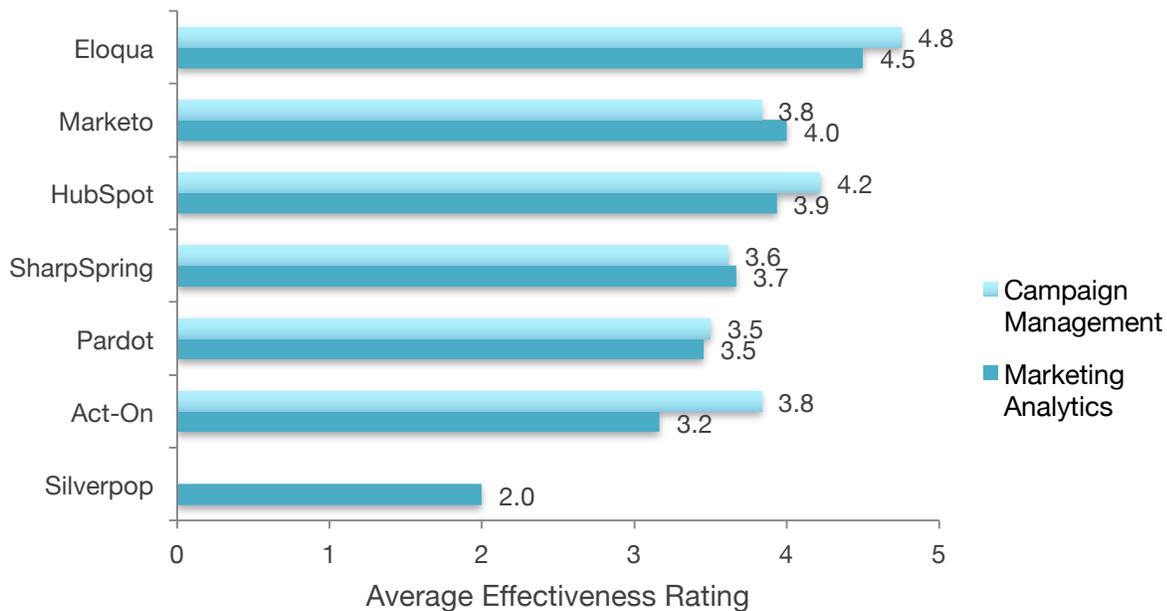
CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

MARKETING AUTOMATION / INBOUND MARKETING PLATFORMS

Compared to other tool categories in this report, Marketing Automation performed quite well on its two measures of effectiveness: **campaign management and marketing analytics**. Qualitative findings reveal this is due to the tools' abilities to drive performance and measure ROI.

SharpSpring, HubSpot, Marketo and Eloqua topped the list, indicating respondents see them as effective. Eloqua received the highest ratings overall with a score of 4.5 and 4.8 for its performance across each respective variable.

Rate each tool on how effectively it supports your new business objectives.



CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

MARKETING AUTOMATION / INBOUND MARKETING PLATFORMS

Overall, the responses were mixed but there were some key themes. In terms of effectiveness, agencies find these tools good for supporting their newsletters and email campaigns. They also indicate that Marketing Automation tools are easy to use.

Additionally, many agencies have seen success from the integration of Marketing Automation and CRM, in terms of understanding the impact of their sales and marketing efforts.

In terms of what's not working or ineffective, some agencies indicated they found the tools difficult to use or integrate with their current systems. While others indicated they simply didn't have the staff or enough marketing activity to warrant the investment.

Please provide more detail why you find the Marketing Automation tools you use effective or ineffective.



"It is cost effective and the integration of marketing automation and CRM is a win win"

"HubSpot has been very effective at campaign management, analytics are all good but can be more difficult to understand and target exactly who is looking at content"

"We do not have capable in-house staff to use and manage tool"

"We have set up processes between our Interactive team and our Business Development team to produce weekly reports of what all is coming through our social and websites"

"Not easy to use"

"Eloqua is best-in-class. Pardot gets what we need done. Respond is great for salespeople who do not want to integrate their contacts with enterprise software/outreach"



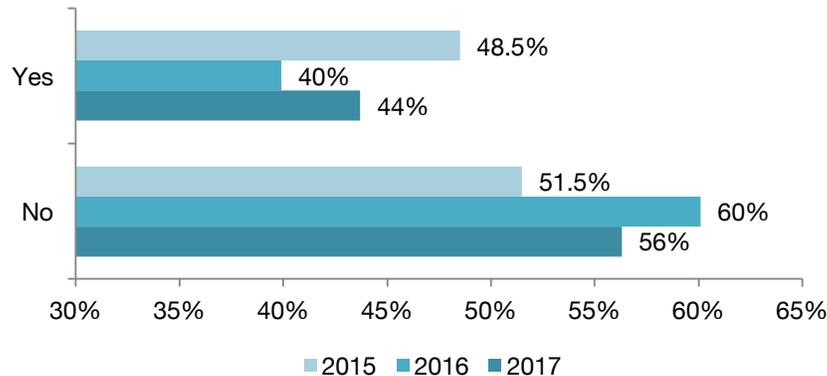
CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS



Target Audience Research Services

CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS**TARGET AUDIENCE RESEARCH SERVICES**

Do you currently use Target Audience Research Services to gather insights for your agency?



Target Audience Research Services were reported to be up in usage compared to last year, but down compared to 2015. Interestingly, 56% of agencies indicate they do not use Target Audience services to gather insights.

As insights are a key driver behind any new business win, it's remarkable that more agencies are not using these types of tools. However, perhaps with the the amount of "insights" available for free on the web and via social media, agencies are finding they don't need to invest in syndicated research services.

CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

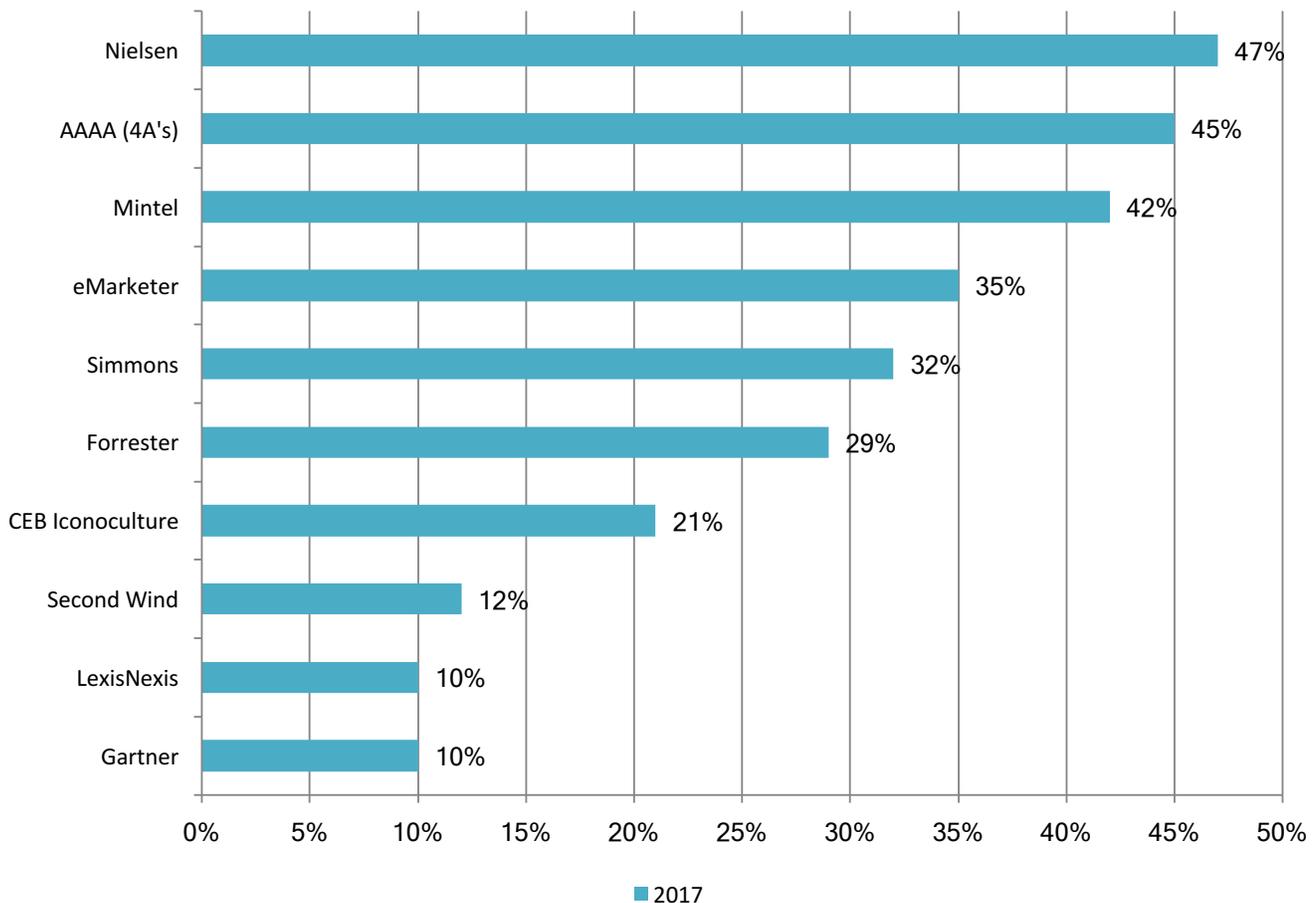
TARGET AUDIENCE RESEARCH SERVICES

Usage this year was driven by Nielsen (47%), AAAAs (45%), Mintel (42%) and eMarketer (35%). Tools used the least included, Gartner, LexisNexis and Second Wind.

It's surprising that these tools aren't being leveraged more in new business, given the importance insights play in a pitch. Based on this lackluster usage, perhaps research companies need to work harder at proving their effectiveness at driving new business insights. Additionally, some of the qualitative data highlighted later on in this report shows that agencies are finding more value in their own proprietary systems.

Finally, respondents also listed WARC, Datamonitor and NetBase as important research tools.

Current Usage of Target Audience Research Services



CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

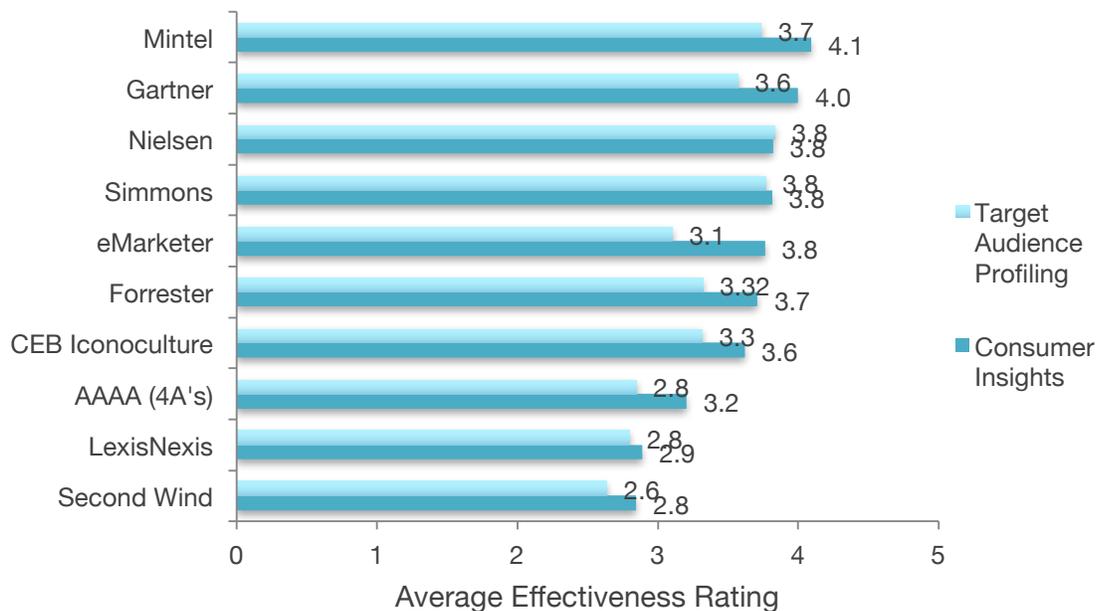
TARGET AUDIENCE RESEARCH SERVICES

The two indicators of effectiveness were **target audience profiling** and **consumers insights**.

Overall, the majority of respondents found these tools to be somewhat effective at target audience profiling and more effective at consumer insights. Some that stood out included Mintel, particularly for consumer insights (4.1), as well as Gartner (4.0). Additionally Forrester, eMarketer and Simmons received relatively strong marks.

However, it appears there is room for improvement when it comes to these tool's ability to deliver effective target audience profiling. All of the tools received mediocre ratings on this dimension.

Rate each tool on how effectively it supports your new business objectives.



CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS**TARGET AUDIENCE RESEARCH SERVICES**

There were some positive themes that emerged for Target Audience Research services.

Respondents highlighted their ability to provide insight into key trends, validate hypotheses, and to provide specific vertical intelligence.

However, respondents were clear that these tools ARE NOT strong when it comes to robust target audience profiling. Additionally, they are frustrated by an abundance of tools that are too general for their needs.

Please provide more detail why you find the Social Media tools you use effective or ineffective.



“I don't really find social media useful, other than perhaps LinkedIn, and even that is questionable as recent changes have made it less effective.”

“They are good to plant seeds but none of them are drivers. LinkedIn might be the exception.”

“Drive awareness, human interaction with prospects.”

“Great for brand awareness but as far as creating leads it is a mixed bag.”

“We use social media tools primarily to promote company culture.”

“We have not gotten one lead from our social media efforts.”

“Portray agency culture and share case studies.”



CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

TARGET AUDIENCE RESEARCH SERVICES

The most common theme was clear. Agencies who rely upon their **agency research teams** and other personnel who are experts at using these tools have the most success. Additionally, assigning a person in the agency to be responsible for mastery of target audience research services is another key winner. Finally, though not surprisingly, these tools are best used as a supplement to proprietary tools. They can be used to validate or negate a hypothesis, not to formulate one.

Finally, many of the respondents indicated they don't have any good hacks but were interested in learning some. Perhaps research companies would be well served if they were to provide deeper guidance to agencies on best practices for new business usage.

What are your best practices / hacks for getting the most out of your Target Audience Research Services?



"Assigning a dedicated "owner" at the agency who is responsible for pulling and organizing the research, otherwise it becomes "no one's job"

"The more specific you can get about the audience, the better. Then you have to pull out your own insights from all the information you are given."

"We start with a hypothesis and use the tools to try to validate/invalidate it."

"We use proprietary approaches, this makes us stand out from other agencies."

"Our Research Director has the skill to pull out key pieces of information and link together disparate sources into a compelling story. He is our hack!!"

"Leverage agency personnel who use them on a daily basis."

"Nothing specific. Would like to know hacks!"



CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

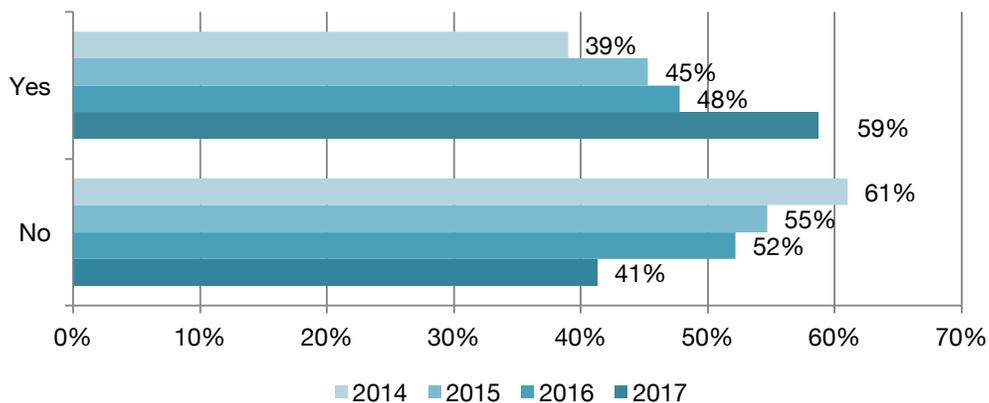


Prospect Contact/ List Building

CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

PROSPECT CONTACT / LIST BUILDING

Do you currently use Prospect Contact / List Building services to generate your new business prospect lists?



2017 sees an 11% increase in the list building category—a sizable jump, given last year’s minimal 3% increase.

Since tracking this category, 11% is by far the largest increase since we started the survey in 2013.

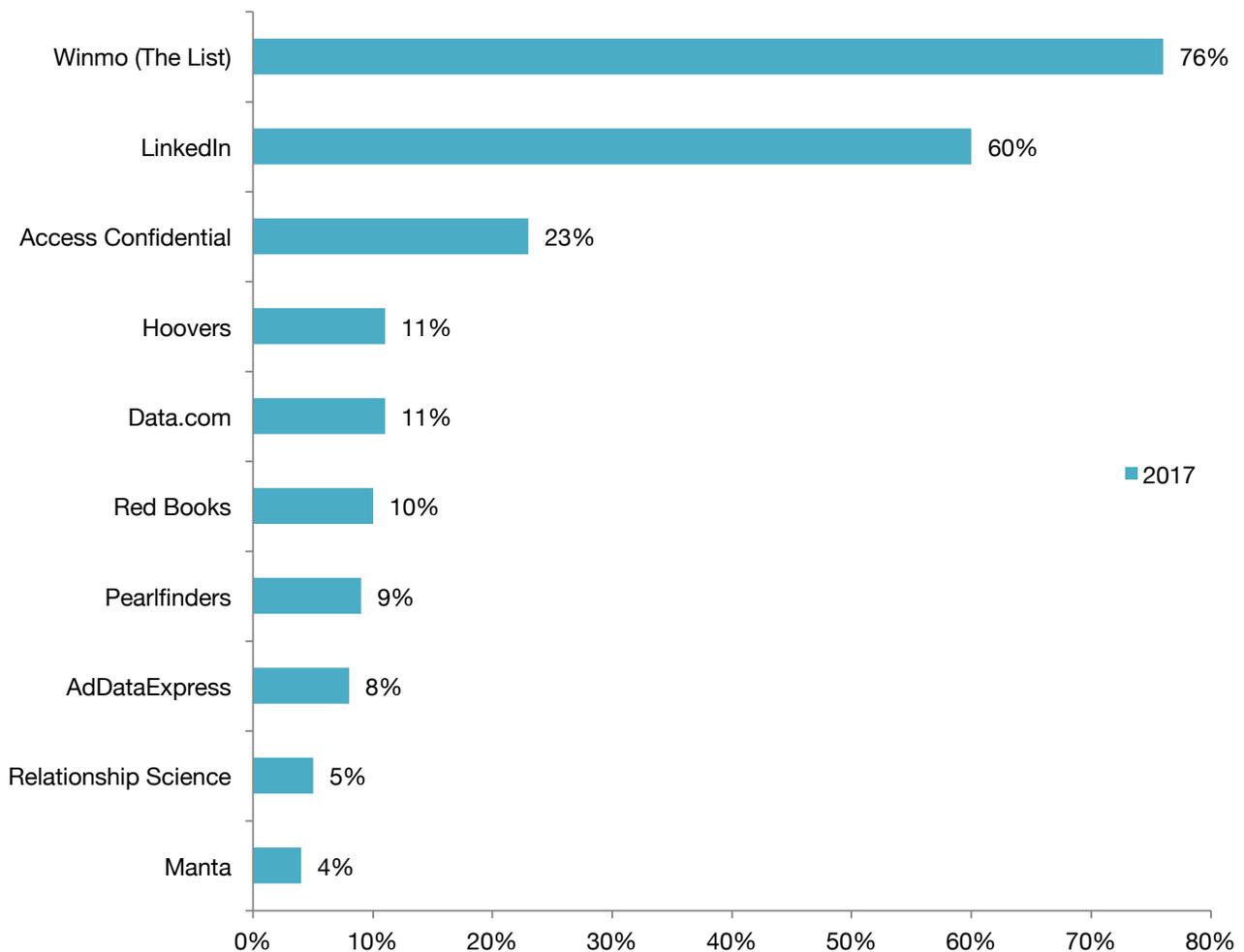
CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

PROSPECT CONTACT / LIST BUILDING

Winmo/The List is the clear frontrunner here at 76%, with LinkedIn coming in second at 60% and Access Confidential taking third with 23%. **Initial takeaway: the top two tools represent the lion's share in usage**, with significant drops (72%-53%) in all other tools at that point. **Second is the predominant usage of LinkedIn as a list building tool**, similar to agency use of Excel as a CRM.

It's a continuing trend from year's past, however, as we'll see in the open-ended comments, it's not so much that agencies are literally building whole lists from LinkedIn, but rather using it in conjunction with other list-building tools.

Current Usage Prospect Contact / List Building services



CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

PROSPECT CONTACT / LIST BUILDING

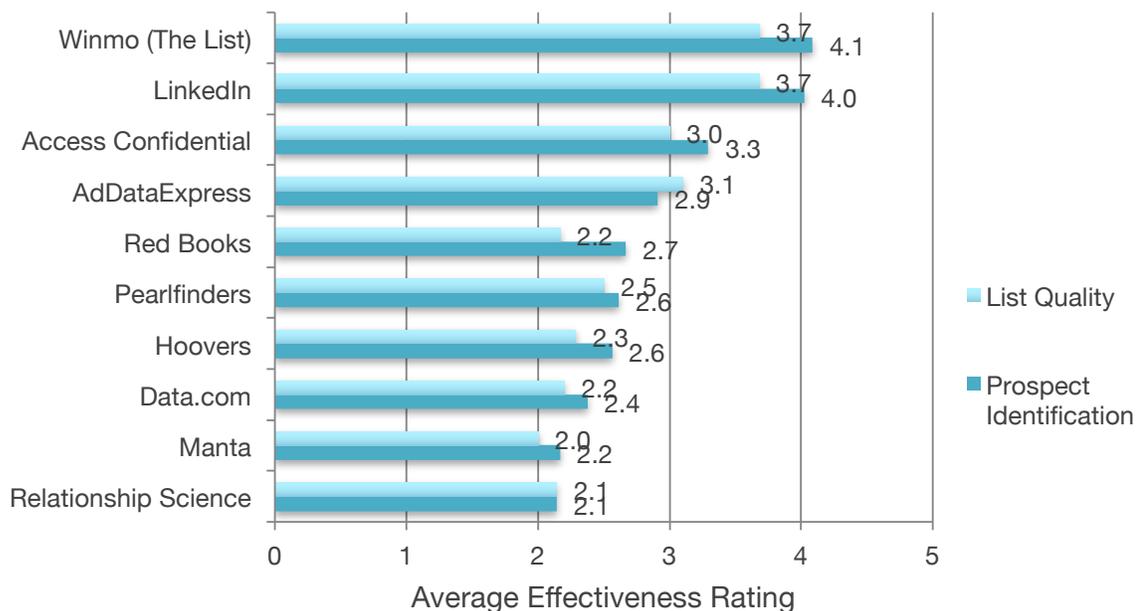
In order to provide a more accurate rating of effectiveness this year, we asked to rate each tool in two ways: in terms of effective prospect identification and overall list quality.

Unsurprisingly, the top 3 leaders hold high marks in prospect identification, and it's promising that, with a few exceptions, most platforms pass the 2.5 threshold of prospect identification effectiveness.

Similarly, **the top 3 leaders hold high marks in list quality effectiveness** as well.

Interestingly, only one tool, AdDataExpress, surpassed their prospect identification rating with a higher list quality rating. The remainder all had lower list quality ratings in comparison, but not to any alarming extent, important to remember if you're considering investing in this area.

Rate each tool on how effectively it supports your new business objectives.



CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

PROSPECT CONTACT / LIST BUILDING

List building in 2017 is at an interesting intersection—an 11% increase in overall usage, but drops in usage to varying degrees across the board in individual platforms.

The first question we wanted to explore: LinkedIn had the biggest percentage drop, but still rated highly in overall effectiveness and quality (while not technically a list-building tool). Yes, LinkedIn makes it easy to find individuals, but actually building a list of any quantity using LinkedIn is a time-intensive and laborious process. (Like using Excel as a CRM.) So why do so many agencies use it for list building? We asked agencies to provide open-ended comments:



“LinkedIn is most reliable because the person themselves are keeping it updated. The other sources don't get updated nearly as often.”

“LinkedIn is free, and honestly the best/most useful list databases above often don't have what company I'm looking for, or the right appropriate contacts. Why should we pay for a subscription service when I can find the same information for free on LinkedIn, or by just googling the company.”

LinkedIn is just one tool agencies listed, there are 8 others, all specific to list building, that agencies find value in, but there are concerns:

“We found a lot of the information to be outdated or too high level for us as a small agency. For example, we are not going to go after Pepsi or Nike, those are too large for us. So knowing their CMO resigned isn't as helpful as smaller regional clients.”

Ultimately, the greatest concern agencies have in this category is consistent updating of contact information and specificity of contact information within the desired geography. Obviously tools like Winmo/The List and Access Confidential, to name two, are considered effective and useful, and with a quality list being the foundation of any successful new business program, building a list of any quantity is a difficult task with LinkedIn alone.

Ultimately, an ongoing trend appears to be a combination of the two, per agency comments:

“Our list service is very effective at identifying key decision makers, while LinkedIn provides more information about the person and their background and personal connections we may have.”



CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS



Email Marketing Services

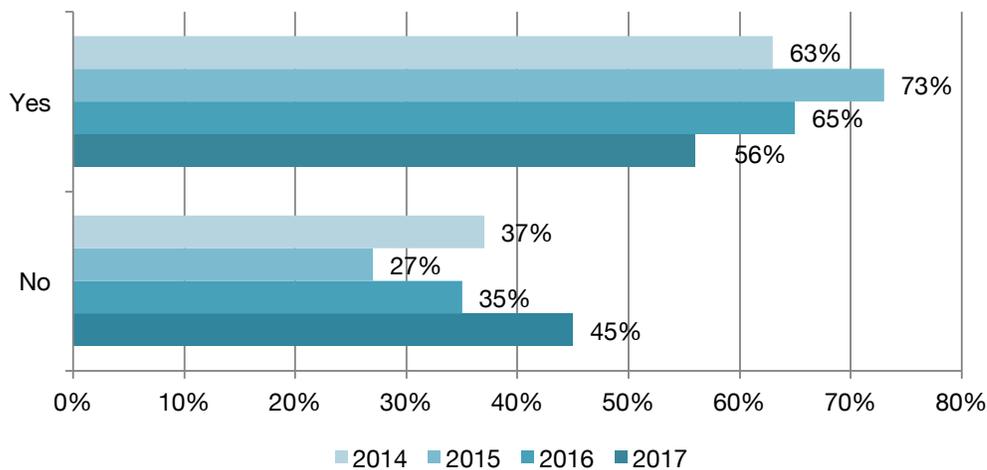
CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

EMAIL MARKETING SERVICES

Email marketing services have seen **year-over-year declines** since 2015, when the percentage of agency users reached 73%.

Last year, that figure dropped to 65%, and this year dropped further, to 56% overall, a 17% usage drop in 2 years.

Do you currently use Email Marketing Services to support your new business efforts?
(e.g. Emma, MailChimp)



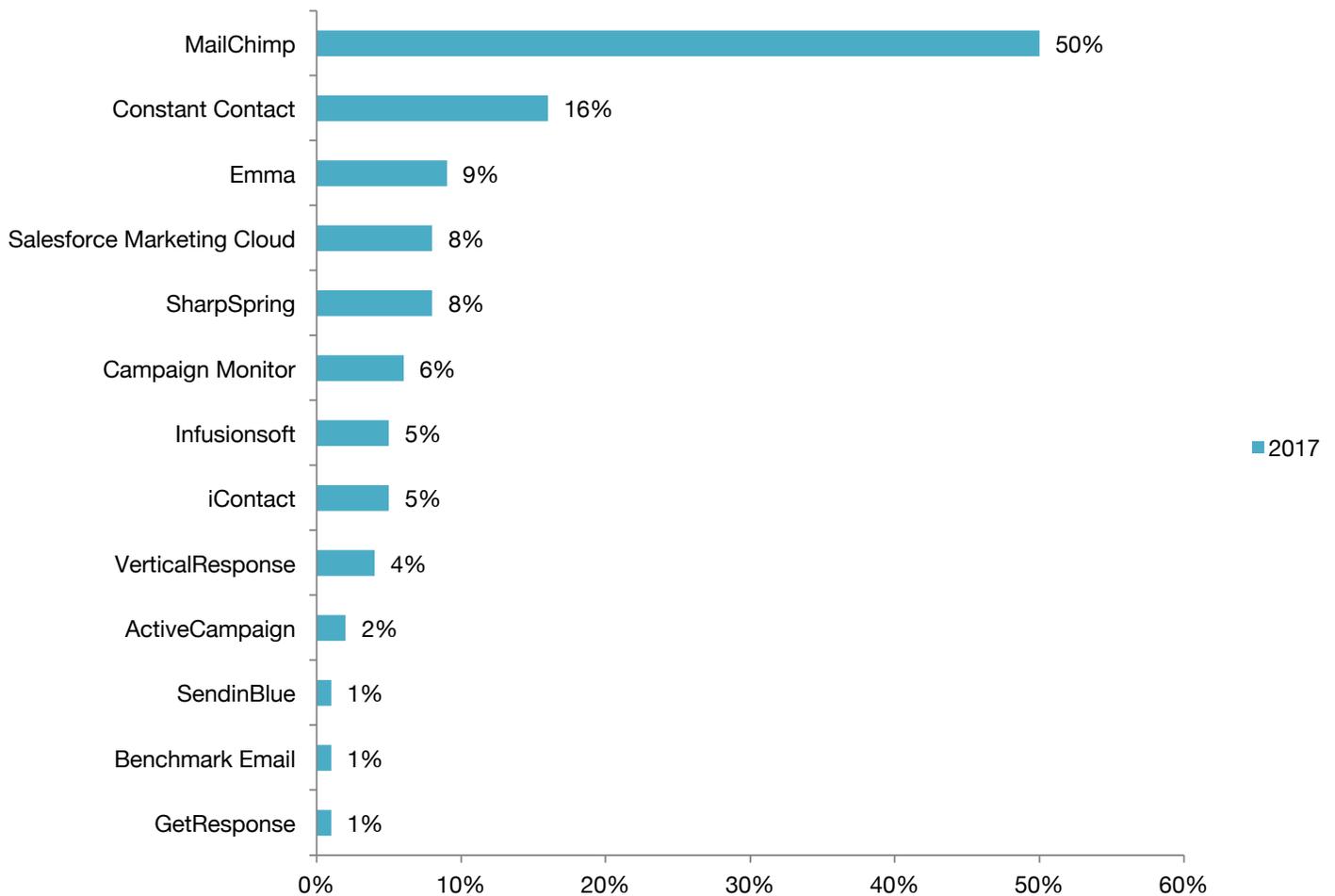
CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

EMAIL MARKETING SERVICES

MailChimp and to a lesser extent Constant Contact (by 34%) **dominate the field this year.** This has been the case in past years, but the difference this year are the precipitous drops after those top two (49-41%). Typically we've seen a more even playing field. For example, no one but the top two broke the 10% barrier this year.

As we'll see in this category, however, when it comes to effectiveness, agencies told us there was a much more even spread across tools.

Current Usage Email Marketing Services



CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

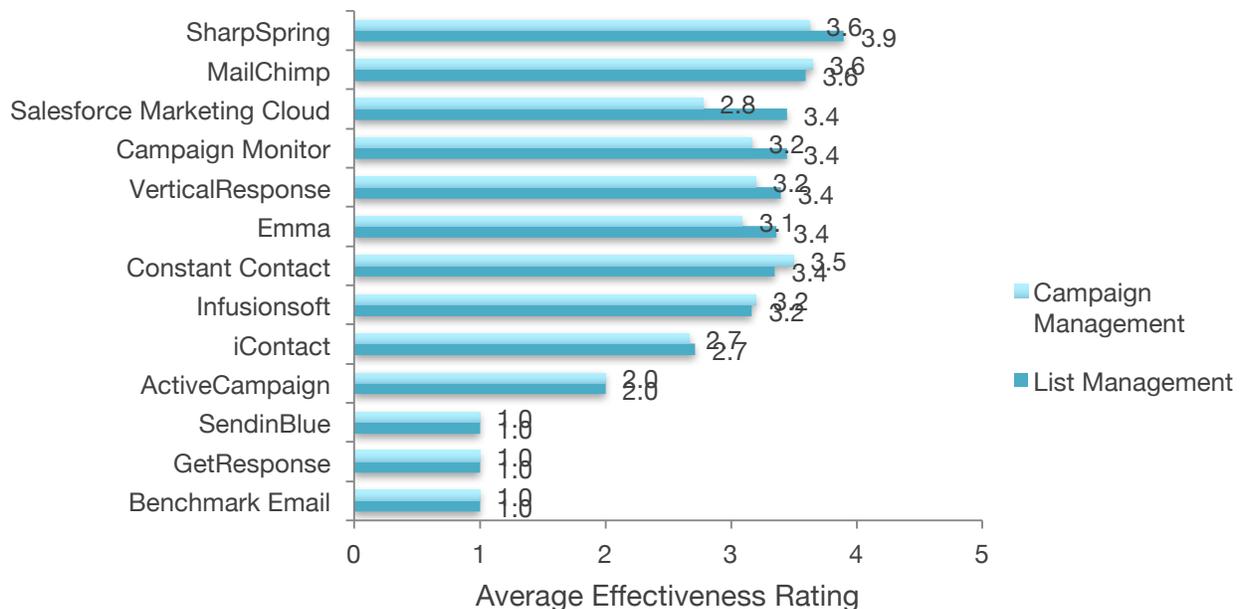
EMAIL MARKETING SERVICES

In order to provide a more accurate rating of effectiveness this year, we asked to rate each tool in two ways: in terms of overall campaign management and ongoing list management.

SharpSpring comes in with the highest rating at 3.9, followed by Mailchimp at 3.6. While a few tools received less than stellar marks, the majority of tools fell in the 3.4 to 3.6 range, indicating similar levels of list management service.

SharpSpring and MailChimp tied in the campaign management category, with Constant Contact right behind them at 3.5. Interestingly, only three email marketing tools had higher campaign management scores than list management scores (MailChimp, Infusionsoft, and Constant Contact).

Rate each tool on how effectively it supports your new business objectives.



CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

EMAIL MARKETING SERVICES

We asked agencies to give us further detail on the effectiveness of their Email Marketing services.

And while we saw previously that agencies find the majority of these services effective, **integration continues to be an issue** that requires better resolution.



“We are very happy with Mailchimp's ease of use, reporting, and list management. We use it on new business and for clients.”

“Would be more effective if MailChimp could integrate more seamlessly with our CRM tool. This functionality does not yet exist.”

“We were essentially managing this manually until we started using SharpSpring. The back-end analytics have helped us focus our efforts.”

“Constant contact was not integrated well into our existing marketing systems and HubSpot literally gives us everything in one place with far more intelligence on how recipients of our campaigns behave.”



CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

EMAIL MARKETING SERVICES

We asked agencies to tell us about best practices and/or methods they use to make their email marketing services more efficient.

Most of the answers employed a variation of the importance of the agency as the main driver of this category, meaning once they grasped the tactical pieces of the tool, and that happens fairly quickly within this category, the tool can only take you far. At that point, it's all about sound new business email principles.



“Effective and targeted lists”

“Weekly emails to entire vertical database”

“Really mine the data. Use the engagement data to figure out who might be interested in what based on the content they read and the events they register for (whether they attend or not!) If someone registers for a webinar on a topic relating to a service we provide, that is a pretty good indicator that they have interest in a service. And use the data historically to build a profile of the client.”

“And the BEST hack is to look at the people who DON'T engage. If they have not opened a news letter . . . you can bet that they DON'T know the updates/offers/announcements and they are potentially ripe for a phone chat. Or an in person visit.”

“Relevancy to the prospect. Fine-tuning messaging and frequency. Split testing continues to provide great insight.”

“Use the filters!”



CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS



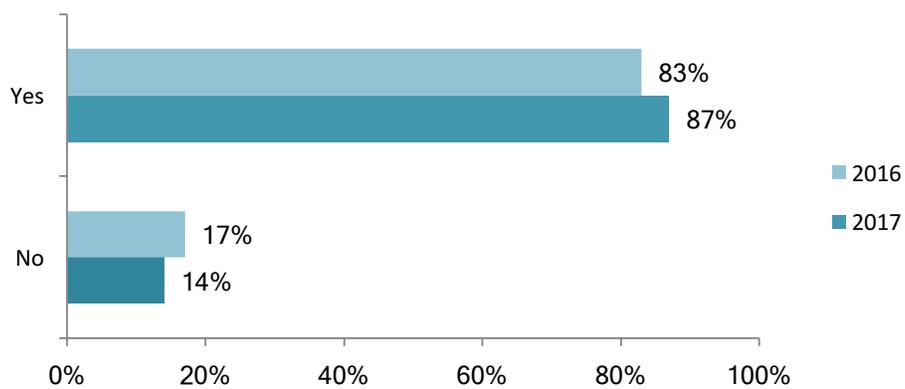
Content Development Tools

CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

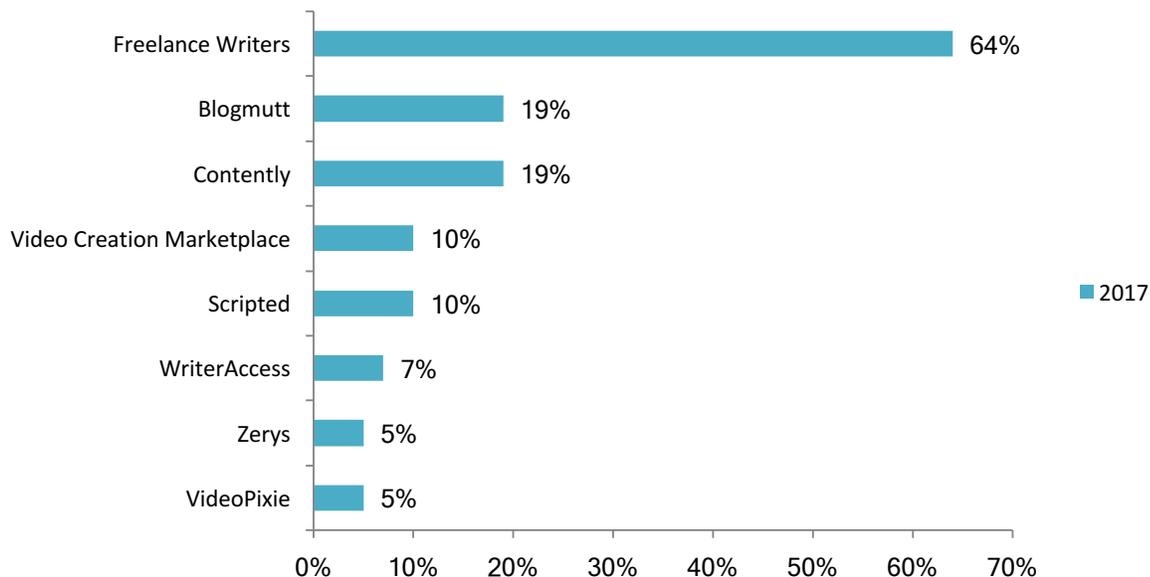
Eighty-seven percent of respondents use content development tools to support their new business efforts. Additionally, there was a 4% increase from 2016, suggesting the importance of content as a new business strategy is continuing to rise.

Do you use Content Development Tools to support your new business efforts?



The vast majority of respondents who use Content Development tools rely upon freelance writers (64%). The least used tools included VideoPixie and Zerys. Qualitative findings and low effectiveness ratings show that respondents have been disappointed with the vast majority of content development tools.

Current Usage of Content Development Tools



CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

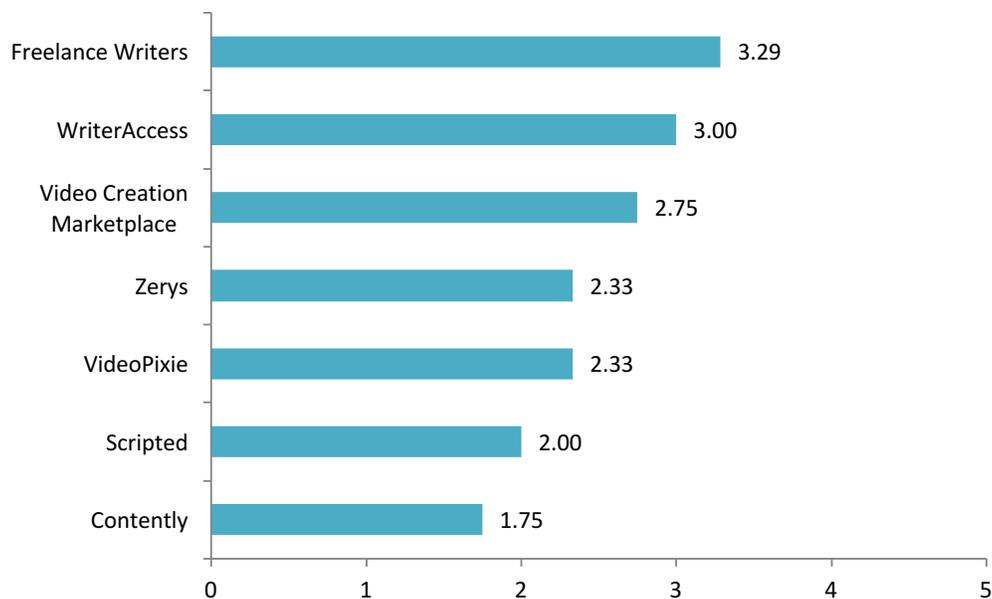
CONTENT DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

Overall, the respondents were relatively neutral when it comes to the ability of content tools to effectively drive their new business efforts. Freelance writers led the pack, rated as somewhat effective, while tools like Contently and Scripted were rated to be somewhat ineffective.

Supporting this, qualitative data showed that “off-the-shelf” Content Development tools fall short when it comes to quality. Instead, they were reported to be better for scale.

Of the following Content Development Tools / Services that you use, rate each one in terms of how effectively it helps drive your new business efforts. (1 = Not Effective; 5 = Very Effective).

The chart below represents the average rating of effectiveness given to each Content Development Tool.



CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONS

Many respondents indicated they manage content in-house. However, when they do outsource content one thing is clear: **Freelancers over “blog services” are preferred.** Because freelancers are able to invest time in getting to know their business, mission and brand voice, agencies find them to be more effective.

Please provide more detail why you find the Content Development Tools you use effective or ineffective.



“In-house team - dedicated support.”

“We have internal staff creating content - POVs, case study drafts, etc.”

“Freelancers invest to know your mission, while bloggmutt can generate lesser value volume.”

“These tools are built for scale, not quality”



When it comes to best practices, the respondents were aligned: **Leverage people with relevant expertise.** Other key themes included the importance of content promotion, as great content only matters if it's seen. Additionally, focus and quality was listed as more important than quantity.

What are your best practices / hacks for getting the most out of your Content Development Tools?



“Promotion through multiple channels”

“Writers need to be expert in your specific industries.”

“Being focused versus widespread.”

“Like any copywriting, create a brief/strategy and target subject matter expertise.”



CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

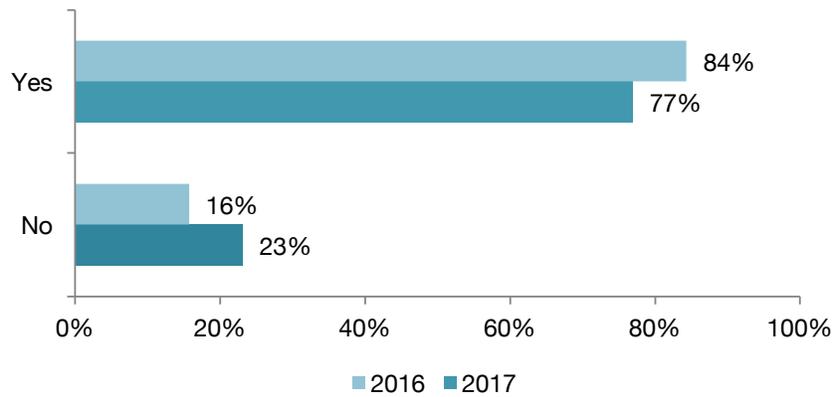


Meeting / Web Conferencing Software

CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS**MEETING / WEB CONFERENCING SOFTWARE**

In the second year to ask this question, slightly surprising to see a 7% drop from our 2016 report, although agency usage is still fairly high at 77% (from 84% last year.).

Do you currently use Meeting / Web Conferencing Software to support your new business efforts? (e.g. GoToMeeting, Skype)



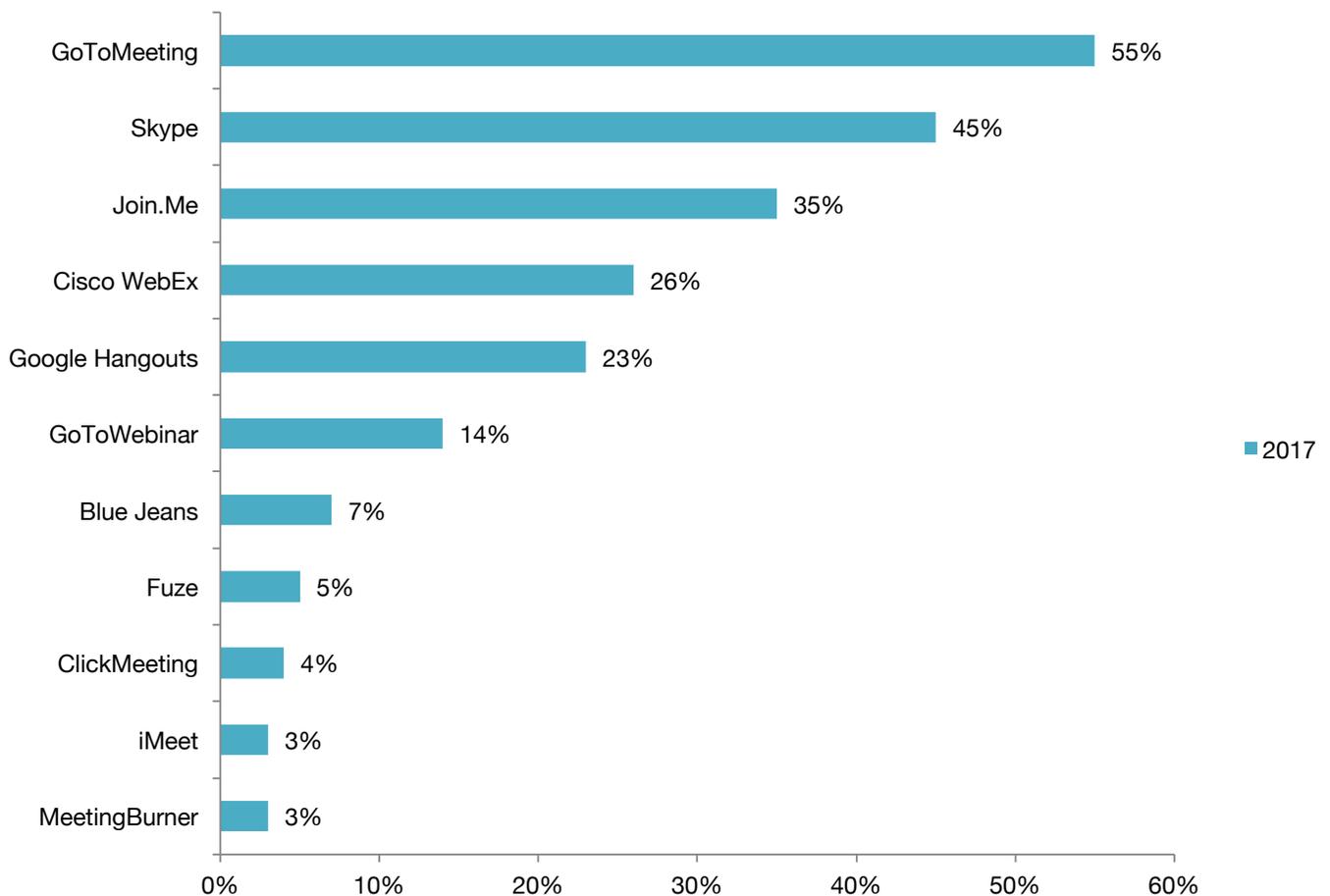
CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

MEETING / WEB CONFERENCING SOFTWARE

As in past years, this category sees agencies using multiple platforms, with GoToMeeting used by 55% of respondents. Skype comes in as the second most-used with 45% of respondents naming it as part of their Web Conferencing Toolkit. We see wider usage of multiple tools in 2017, although it's less surprising, **given many of these tools are either free, or have a minimal cost barrier for entry, versus other categories.**

Join.Me is a new entry to our report and came in third at 35%, with Cisco and Google rounding out the top five.

Current Usage Meeting / Web Conferencing Software



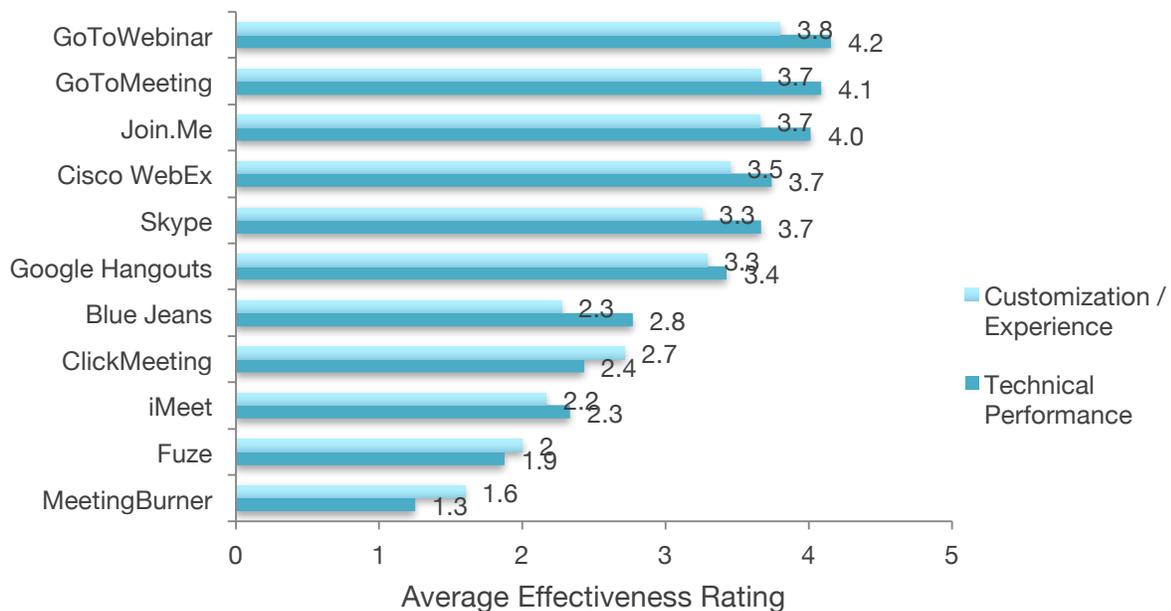
CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

MEETING / WEB CONFERENCING SOFTWARE

In regards to technical performance, which we'll see in the open-ended comments is a point of contention for many agencies, GoToWebinar, GoToMeeting, and Join.Me ranked first through third, all within .1 % of each other. Skype trailed slightly behind in the fourth slot, with a still-respectable 3.7 out of 5.

The leader in customization/experience was GoToWebinar at 3.8, with GoToMeeting and Join.Me tied for second at 3.7.

Rate each tool on how effectively it supports your new business objectives.



CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS**MEETING / WEB CONFERENCING SOFTWARE**

When we asked agencies to tell us further about the effectiveness of their web conferencing software, a large majority of comments were along these, mostly satisfied, lines:



“Ease of use and part of our communication SOP.”

Although, there is also a firm contingent in the “frustrated” category, some having issues bigger picture:

“The biggest issue with all of these tools is that none of them have an elegant solution for sharing video--a core component of our capabilities.”

Other agencies admit that perhaps part of that frustration stems from internal issues:

“GoTo meetings issues are typically User Error. Skype issues are with the technology. Skype does not work frequently, but not sure if it is the service, or company phone set up.”

And lastly, there are those agencies who find lacking a suitable marriage of technology and customization:

“I feel like you get two choices with most of these softwares: either it works great from a technical perspective and is blah, or you can customize the experience and you run into a host of technical issues.”

Agencies also told us the growth of these tools, on average, has been a boon, both in cost and time savings, however at the end of the day, several prefer to stick with traditional, more personal methods:

“The experience is never the same as an in person meeting and frequent technical or connection problems are frustrating and hamper the meeting dynamics.”





Proprietary Tools

Proprietary Tools

Customization & Proprietary Tools

In our final question we asked agencies about any custom integrations or proprietary tools they have built to support their new business efforts. As “off-the-shelf” new business tools trended downwards overall in terms of usage, the insights here provide some explanation as to why this occurred. In short, it looks like agencies are developing more of their own proprietary systems to address their unique needs.



We have an in-house CRM/pipeline building tool across all phases of business development

We are building a sales & marketing dashboard

We have consistently produced events in the past as a means to lead gen and relationship building

AC Nielsen is connected to our Salesforce instance and advertising spend is updated weekly by media platform and also shows a three year trend

CRM tool & we manage all content development and social media in-house

Our research is proprietary, including our Consumer Experience Journey Mapping product signify a deeper issue



A Few Closing Thoughts

As agencies continue to dedicate resources and practice consistency in their use of new business tools, we anticipate effectiveness ratings will rise. Additionally, the agencies who customize tools to their needs and integrate them with their other tool sets and systems appear to be having the most success.

With the vast amount of innovation that continues to happen in each of these categories, it's important that agencies learn to master current efforts before jumping onto the next "shiny object."

Finally, no tool can fill the gap of a discipline or new business practice that doesn't exist. These tools are meant to supplement existing efforts. Therefore, if an agency is having a problem with any tool category in particular it might signify a deeper issue.

If you would like to reproduce any of our findings in any format, please contact either:

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Or

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513.559.3111 or lee@rswus.com

GLOSSARY

New Tools (From Pages 9 & 10)

Slack:

Brings all your communication together in one place. It's real-time messaging, archiving and search for modern teams.

Toby:

Part tab manager, part productivity tool, and entirely customizable, Toby is being used to organize the work of over 70000 users - right in their browsers!

Rainking:

Marketing and Sales SaaS platform for IT sales and marketing professionals

Tableau:

Business Intelligence and Analytics

Statista:

online statistics, market research and business intelligence portal

Yesware:

Sales, Productivity, and Email Tracking

CubeYou:

technology, based on social data and predictive algorithms, that delivers customer insights without the need for expensive and time-consuming surveys.

Lucky Orange:

All-in-One Conversion Optimization Suite

Crystal:

Shows you the best way to communicate with any prospect, customer, or coworker based on their unique personality.

Speek:

Fee conference calling

Thankster

Easily Create And Mail Cards That Look Genuinely Handwritten.

Harvest

Simple Online Time Tracking Software

Prime Lingo

Unlock insights on your target audiences, markets and categories with Nielsen's user-friendly, web-based platform

Pocket:

The best way to save articles, videos and more. When you find something on the Web you want to view later, put it in Pocket

GLOSSARY

New Tools (From Pages 9 & 10)

Feedly:

The world's most popular RSS and blog reader with more than 15 millions users.

SalesLoft:

The Modern Sales Engagement Platform

NUVI:

Real-time data visualizations are what set NUVI apart.

Inside View:

Glens insights and relationships from business information, contact data, online news, and social media and customer CRM data

TrackMaven:

Marketing analytics software helps marketers prove ROI and improve results on 18 integrated digital and social channels.

Crimson Hexagon:

An enterprise social media analytics company providing insights for brand strategy, market research, and more.

Smapply

Create professional personas, journey maps, stakeholder maps in minutes

Proposify

Create beautiful proposals, streamline them in the cloud, and get faster sign-off with online signatures.

Canva

Makes design simple for everyone. Create designs for Web or print: blog graphics, presentations, Facebook covers, flyers, posters

Thriveleads Wordpress Plugin

The Ultimate List Building Plugin for WordPress

10,000 Feet:

Makes simple, collaborative software to help creative organizations thrive
Streak-Customer relationship management platform for Gmail

Leadlander:

Enhances the ROI of your inbound and outbound marketing automation efforts by showing you which website visitors are responding to your online ...

GLOSSARY

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Flickr
 LinkedIn
 Google+
 Facebook
 SlideShare
 Instagram
 Pinterest
 Snapchat
 Tumblr

CRM / CONTACT MANAGEMENT

ACT!
 Apptivo
 Excel
 HubSpot
 Infusionsoft
 Microsoft Dynamics
 Oracle
 Pipedrive
 Salesforce
 SalesLogix

MARKETING AUTOMATION / INBOUND MARKETING TOOL

Act-On
 Bizible
 Eloqua
 HubSpot
 Marketo
 Pica9
 Pardot
 Salesfusion
 SharpSpring
 Silverpop

RESEARCH SERVICES

AAAA (4A's)
 CEB Iconoculture
 eMarketer
 Forrester
 Gartner
 LexisNexis
 Mintel
 Nielsen
 Second Wind
 Simmons

PROSPECT CONTACT / LIST BUILDING SERVICES

Access Confidential
 AdDataExpress
 Data.com
 Hoovers
 LinkedIn
 Manta
 Pearlfinders
 Red Books
 Relationship Science
 Winmo (The List)

EMAIL MARKETING SERVICES

ActiveCampaign
 Benchmark Email
 Campaign Monitor
 Constant Contact
 Emma
 GetResponse
 iContact
 Infusionsoft
 MailChimp
 Salesforce Marketing Cloud
 SendinBlue
 SharpSpring
 VerticalResponse

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT

Contently
 Freelance Writers
 Scripted
 Video Creation Marketplace
 Blogmutt
 VideoPixie
 WriterAccess
 Zerys

MEETING / WEB SOFTWARE

Blue Jeans
 Cisco WebEx
 ClickMeeting
 Fuze
 Google Hangouts
 GoToMeeting
 GoToWebinar
 iMeet
 Join.Me
 MeetingBurner
 Skype