New Business Tools
2018 Annual Report

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

mirren   **RSW/US**

MirrenTraining.com

Background

The Mirren-RSW New Business Tools 2018 Annual Report is an essential resource for agency executives. With clients demanding more for less, agencies need new business tools that fuel their growth strategies. Tools and technology that provide direct impact and play a vital role in an agency's new business efforts continue to be in demand.

In its sixth year, the New Business Tools 2018 Annual Report summarizes the findings from a little over 300 U.S. agency executives on the use and effectiveness of tools across a wide range of categories. The categories which are most critical to an agency's new business function, based upon usage rate and effectiveness findings from previous reports, are included.

Executives can use this report to:
• Make informed decisions about tools to add / remove from portfolio
• Gain practical insight on how to improve tool usage
• Understand how their new business tool usage compares to the industry

The New Business Tools Report includes practical insights for our readers. This includes best practices on customizing or "hacking" new business tools to make them more effective.

We also added a new tool category this year, Prospect Intelligence Tools, which consists of tools that are used to gather more in-depth prospect information. This ranges from more detailed biographical information, to insights into company culture and financial performance and projections. In other words, information that goes beyond what's provided by the majority of list building services and software.

Mirren Business Development and RSW/US's respective databases of senior agency executives were used for this study. The study was fielded in March 2018.

Background

ABOUT MIRREN

Organic Growth & New Business Training

Convert more business by bringing method, motivation and accountability to the pursuit of agency growth. We provide advanced training for senior teams with a focus across several key areas of growth:

- Convert more competitive reviews/RFPs
- Proactively build and convert a pipeline of qualified leads
- Generate more business from every client on your roster

With a training team that has experience client-side and at agencies that include Wieden + Kennedy and TBWA, our approach to generating business is down to a science – strategic and methodical. At the same time, our methods are often contrarian to more effectively separate you from the sea of agency sameness. Your teams will learn how to command a premium fee by becoming business partners to their clients, better correlating the agency's work to meaningful outcomes.

Ultimately, the goal is to empower your teams to more aggressively generate business from both current and new clients. We specialize in working with agencies in digital, PR, advertising, media, experiential, and more.

More information about Mirren can be found at MirrenTraining.com or by contacting Nadine Tull, Director of Agency Growth Strategy at nadine.tull@mirren.com

ABOUT RSW/US

RSW/US is the most complete outsourced lead generation/new business solution for marketing service firms. The new business process—creating a strategy, executing it, breaking through and following through consistently, are all components that are difficult to perform internally — especially while managing existing business.

RSW/US 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.

RSW/US has four service offerings to help marketing services firms: RSW/US Full Service Program, Launch-Outsourced Appointment Setting, RSW/lite-Outsourced e-Lead Generation, and RSW/Lists-Guaranteed Clean Marketing Contacts | Self-Service List Sales Website.

More information about RSW/US can be accessed at www.rswus.com or by contacting Lee McKnight Jr. at lee@rswus.com

Executive Summary

OVERVIEW

In its sixth year, the New Business Tools 2018 Annual Report highlights significant trend changes with respect to the usage and effectiveness of new business tools. **Tool usage was up in every single category this year, a first for this report**. In fact, Target Audience Research Services and Prospect Contact / List Building Software, saw the highest increase at +10%.

There are several reasons for this upward usage trend: 1) Booming economy, 2) Continued tool innovation and expansion and 3) Rise in competitive threats to the traditional agency model (e.g., consultants, in-house resources and automation). These factors contributed to making new business success an imperative.

TOP USAGE TRENDS
Respondents' new business tool usage is more diversified this year. When asked to list their top three "most essential new business tools," typically the bulk percentage of tools have centered on 2-3 tools in previous reports. That changed this year, as the cumulative number of responses for the "Top 5" list dropped by more than 20%, and over 150 tools were submitted.

Additionally, two new entrants made the top 5: SharpSpring and Google; further demonstrating the expansion of new business tool usage. A number of new tool entrants across each category are responsible for this broadening, with Target Audience Research service Kantar, making a strong debut in 2018.

While tool usage has gone up, the study found that there remains significant opportunity for agencies to improve implementation. Most agencies reported they are not satisfied with their tool usage. Respondents indicated that a lack of time, limited resources, leadership challenges and overall agency dysfunction get in the way of effectively using new business tools. So while usage might be up, agencies still struggle with making the most out of the tools they invest in.

On the flip side, agencies often blamed their low usage rates on the tools themselves. They suggest that with improvements to integration, on-boarding / coaching and overall tool quality, usage would be higher. However, as agencies are widely known to be plagued with a lack of proactive, disciplined sales efforts, we offer these findings with a bit of skepticism.

TOP EFFECTIVENESS FINDINGS
No category had high effectiveness ratings. However, Marketing Automation, Target Audience Research Services and Prospect Contact / List Building, lead, while Social Media and CRM were below average. Two custom variables per category were used to assess effectiveness. Variables were determined based on insights about tool usage from prior studies.

Social Media Tools' low ratings were due to an inability to drive leads, except for LinkedIn. Contact Management / CRM Software were also rated low by respondents. **However, despite their low effectiveness ratings, both these tool categories are among the most used.**

Executive Summary

CONSIDERATION OF NEW BUSINESS TOOLS
Effectiveness, efficiency, and ease beat out cost in terms of what impacts new business tool consideration most. The top 6 considerations included: 1) Effectiveness 2) Efficiency 3) Ease 4) Cost 5) Customization and 6) Case Studies. These findings speak to the larger need for new business tools to drive real impact, despite the cost.

Ultimately, agencies are choosing categories of tools that are the easiest to use, as opposed to those that are most effective. For social media, the ease and lack of cost outweigh respondents' disappointment about effectiveness. Alternately with CRM, a lack of quality choice combined with a need to simply have a CRM system, explains the discrepancy in findings.

YEAR OVER YEAR USAGE TRENDS
Every single category saw an increase this year, with Target Audience Research Services and Prospect Contact / List Building Software leading the pack. Other significant gains included Contact Management / CRM Software (+8%) and Marketing Automation / Inbound Marketing Platforms (+5%).

Reasons for the increases:
1) Respondents are using multiple Target Audience Research Services to get a more complete picture of their customer.
2) Agencies were more proactive with outbound in 2018, requiring tools like Marketing Automation and List Building to support their efforts.
3) New tool entrants and increased choice drove up usage in several categories.

We introduced a new category: Prospect Intelligence Tools. Reflecting the need for resources that go beyond what typical list building software provide, the category debuted at 41%.

% of Agency Executives That Use New Business Tools

TOOLS	2018	2017	2016	2015
Social Media Tools	89%	87%	93%	93%
Contact Management / CRM Software	73%	65%	69%	70%
Marketing Automation / Inbound Marketing Platforms	37%	32%	37%	40%
Target Audience Research Services	54%	44%	40%	49%
Prospect Contact / List Building Software	69%	59%	48%	45%
Prospect Intelligence Tools	41%	----	----	----
Content Development Tools	15%	14%	17%	----

Executive Summary

EFFECTIVENESS OF AGENCY NEW BUSINESS TOOLS

The lack of a consistent proactive new business program by the majority of agencies resulted in low to average effectiveness ratings for most tools. In fact, many of the tools in this report were rated to not be effective and very few received an above average rating (i.e. a rating of 4+).

However, respondents indicated that the more they use a given tool, the more effective that tool becomes. Particularly with categories such as Marketing Automation, which require a sustained effort to experience success.

While few tools received a rating of a 4 or higher, there were several that did:

Tool	Category	Overall Score (1 to 5)
Winmo	Prospect Contact / List Building	4.1
Mintel	Target Audience Research Services	4.0
Pearlfinders	Prospect Contact / List Building	3.95
LinkedIn	Prospect Contact / List Building	3.95

Alternately, there were several tools reported by agencies that were rated poorly by respondents:

Tool	Category	Overall Score (1 to 5)
Freshsales	Contact Management / CRM Software	1.85
Pinterest	Social Media	1.45
Snapchat	Social Media	1.25
Tumblr	Social Media	1.15
Flickr	Social Media	1.15

Many of these lower ratings are not surprising. For example, in the case of social media, these ratings are more reflective of their being unsuited for B2B marketing, rather than the tools themselves. To be honest, we were surprised that some of these were in use as new business tools. Given the dominance of Instagram in the image sharing space, fewer people are using platforms like Pinterest (35%) and Flickr (33%).

NEW THIS YEAR

In response to what is missing in the new business tools market, many respondents listed improvements like technical integration and improved service. Others reported a gap in tools tailored to mid-size agencies, while some suggested that matchmaking tools which include higher volume RFPs are warranted.

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Respondent Size Representative of Agency Landscape

Respondent makeup represents current distribution of the marketing services industry. The largest representation, with 29% of respondents, came from firms of 25 employees or less. Agencies with 26-50 people were a close second at 28%. Agencies with 100 to 500 employees accounted for 21% of respondents.

How many employees do you have nationally at your agency?

- ■ <25 (29%)
- ■ 26 - 50 (28%)
- ■ 51 - 99 (14%)
- ■ 100 - 250 (16%)
- ■ 251 - 500 (5%)
- ■ 501 - 1500 (4%)
- □ 1500 + (4%)
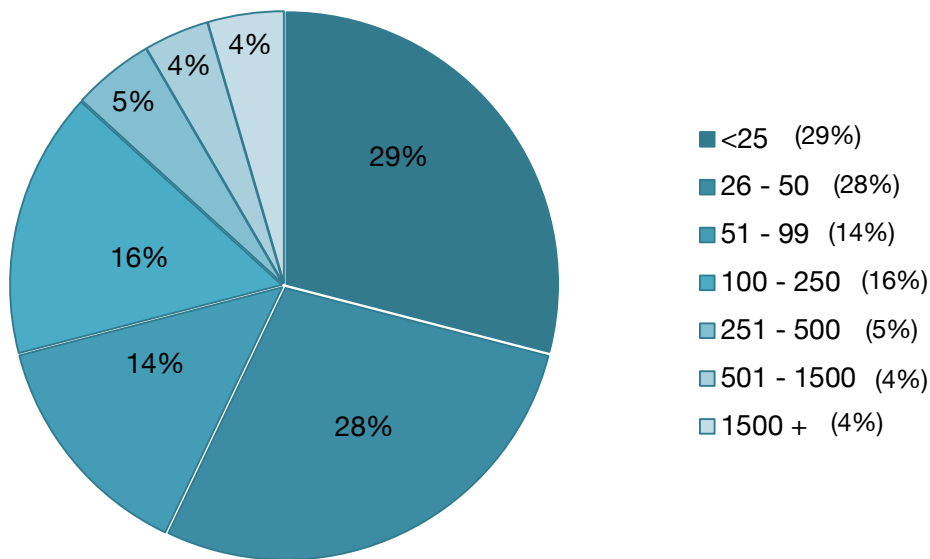
New Business and Senior Executives Make Up Majority of Respondents

The survey makeup reinforces the importance of new business with an agency's management team. While New Business Executives (46%) were the largest number of respondents, Management Team / Department Heads represent a significant percentage of respondents (38%).

This year Strategic / Account planning make up the third largest group at 5.5%. This is a shift contrasted to previous years where Client Services / Account Management titles have usually represented the third highest group of respondents.

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

- Management Team / Department Head (38.4%)
- New Business (46.1%)
- Strategic / Account Planning (5.5%)
- Client Services / Account Management (4.5%)
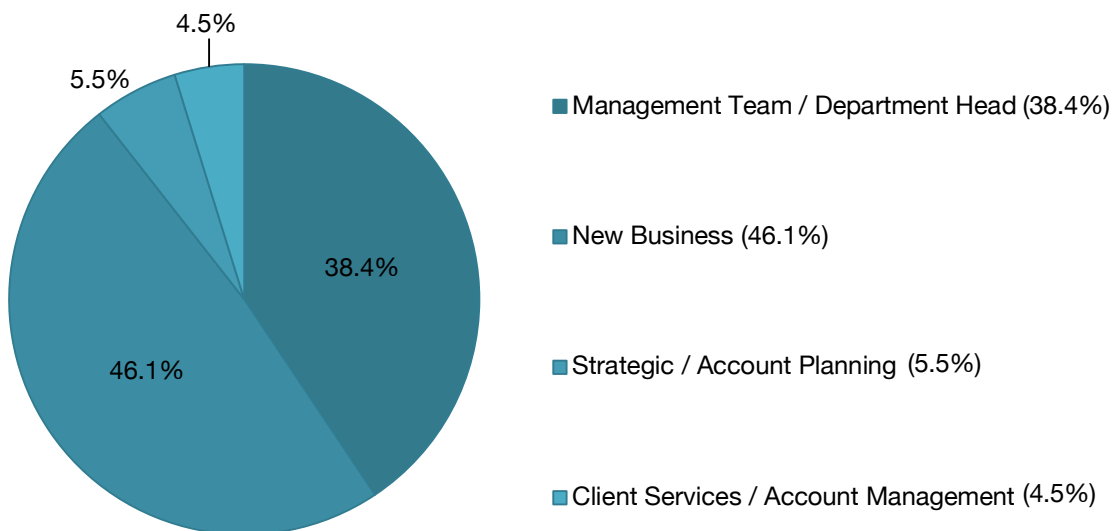
Top 3 Overall Tool Usage Decreases
With More Tools in the Mix

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

Early in our survey, we asked agencies to identify the three tools they found most essential for driving new business growth. We're seeing agencies use more tools than ever, as **this year the individual number of tools listed was the highest in the history of our survey, at 153.**

To provide initial year-over-year perspective, here were the top five tools as chosen by agencies in our 2016 survey: LinkedIn, Salesforce, Winmo, HubSpot, and The List rounding out the top five.

In 2017, the top five were: Winmo/The List, LinkedIn and Salesforce, HubSpot, and Access Confidential.

While this year sees similarities to years past, there were four key changes to highlight in 2018. Before pointing those out, a percentage comparison between 2017 and 2018:

Tool	2017
Winmo/The List	19%
LinkedIn	16%
Salesforce	12%
HubSpot	9%
Access Confidential	7%

Tool	2018
Winmo/The List	17%
LinkedIn	13%
Salesforce/Hubspot	6%
Google Tools	4%
SharpSpring/Access Confidential	2%

<u>4 Key Changes</u>

1) An overall percentage drop for each of the top five tools.
2) Two tools tied in two spots for the top 5 category.
3) Salesforce continues to drop from it's second place status in 2016, to its largest drop of 6 percentage points this year.
4) Two new entries, with Google and SharpSpring entering the top 5 for the first time.

With these changes, we see a wider range of tool usage than in years past, and a greater number of agencies listing a wider range of multiple tools more often, bringing the percentages for the top five tools down across the board. Overall, this means **agencies are increasingly open to trying tools that don't necessarily fall into the top 5 every year**.

This can be seen in the list on the next page, which outlines the tools that were provided as a "Top 3 Most Essential" by multiple agencies in their responses.

Additional Tools That Were Submitted (to Lower Degree) as Agency's Three Most Essential

Outside the Top 5 listed on the previous page, below lists additional tools that were submitted, albeit less frequently, as an "essential new business tool".

Any tools new to the report are listed in the glossary at the end of the report for further description.

(Note that not all these are single tools/platforms, as opposed to a full suite of services, but are still included):

Access Confidential	Marketo
Active Campaign	Mintel
Act-on!	Pardot
Box	Pearlfinders
Constant Contact	Pipedrive
In-House Content	Prosperworks
Proprietary CRM	Redbooks
DiscoverOrg	Rocket Reach
Email	SharpSpring
Excel	Slack
Hoovers	Trade Publications
Lead Forensics	Client Website
Leadlander	Zoominfo

Agencies Report They Aren't Using New Business Tools as Effectively as They Could Be

We asked agencies, as it relates to effectiveness, if they are using tools as well as they could be, and where any issues lie – with the tool or with the agency. **While a very small percentage of agencies are satisfied with how they are using new business tools, the vast majority indicated they are nowhere close to using them effectively**. Much to many respondents' dismay, they cited the agency as the culprit, as resources, time, leadership problems and overall agency dysfunction get in the way.

More than any other question in this report was a sense of frustration and even contrition (e.g., we know we can and should do better!). They cite proactivity as a continual challenge, including investing in and consistently using new business tools. Some of the strongest responses are included below:

> "Agency dysfunction and lack of time/capacity get in the way."
>
> "No. Those who are in charge of new business are saddled with other tasks."
>
> "We have not been proactive in sourcing new, new biz tools since our disastrous experience with the Winmo/SharpSpring/TheList combination."
>
> "We are very passive when it comes to new business and want to make an investment in more tools, but don't know where to start."
>
> "I believe that we drastically underuse new business tools. The barriers to use include costs, awareness by C-suite members, and understanding of alternatives."
>
> "No, low adoption and misuse of software."
>
> "There is resistance to doing things differently than has been done over the history of the agency."
>
> "People develop their own systems which means company systems do not have the up-to-date data."
>
> "We're at the very beginning stages of building our lead generation program."
>
> "We can always improve ... CRM system is effective, and LinkedIn is always expanding."
>
> "We get busy with client projects to the detriment of our own marketing."
>
> "We only use 10% of the functionality of our HubSpot subscription, and we know it could be far more valuable in qualifying inquiries and leads online."
>
> "Yes, we utilize all functionalities and it is a part of our daily routine."

Agencies Want Better Integration Across Tools

We asked agencies, "What's currently missing when it comes to the new business tool market? What do you wish there was a solution for?"

The answers tended to fall within three buckets, or categories: improvements agencies wish could be made to existing tools, tools agencies wished currently existed, and then issues related to tools, that are internal to the agency.

We received open-ended answers to these, which are presented below by category:

IMPROVEMENTS AGENCIES WISH COULD BE MADE TO EXISTING TOOLS

> "More integration across tools."
>
> "More User-friendly CRMs."
>
> "Better integration with LinkedIn."
>
> "Coaching on how to setup effective funnel activity."
>
> "I wish Hubspot's prospect management was easier and more intuitive. It's a lot more opaque than it seems, and doesn't track actual sales as a conversion."
>
> "Better help for middle funnel intent."
>
> "More accurate information on past client spending, especially in digital."
>
> "Easier research tools to identify key prospects."

Agencies Wish for Tools Created Specifically for Them

TOOLS AGENCIES WISH CURRENTLY EXISTED

"Project management tool embedded with lead management."

"A tool that seamlessly combines high quality customer/prospect intelligence with CRM and Marketing Automation."

"Medium size agency specific tools."

"Better quality lists."

"Identifying who visits the website directly."

"Report to know exact client's "agency buying" cycle - when they are searching for a new agency."

"Needs-services matching tools, more depth of media spend data."

"Simplifying the process of contacting and tracking progress of respective leads as this can be quite cumbersome."

"I wish the new business tool highlighting the largest media spend year over year."

"Higher volume RFPs. Many new biz tools offer access to RFPs, but they are generally very local and low volume."

"An email marketing tool that adjusts the sending IP address to ensure inbox delivery to each recipient."

"A simple and reliable, no frills contact management software program."

Agencies Admit Many Issues With Tools Are Internal vs. Tool Related: "The tools aren't the main problem, our success and discipline are the issues"

"More time."

"Automation. I think all the solutions are available, we are not utilizing them."

"There's no substitute for building trust with new prospects. It just takes time."

"The tools aren't the main problem, our success and discipline are the issues--it's taking the time."

"I think the tools are there. We need the rigor to do it."

"Coaching on how to setup effective funnel activity."

"Time :-). And finding opportunities outside of rfps, which are a drain on agency resources. And even when you find out about reviews, they are often invite only."

"Staff availability to pursue spec work, especially for competitive pitches."

Effectiveness, Efficiency and Ease Are Key Drivers of Tool Selection, Not Cost

Effectiveness or an ability to provide a direct impact was ranked as the most important consideration (78%). Following in close proximity were efficiency, or an ability to improve new business productivity (62%), and ease of implementation and use (55%). Surprisingly, customer service (11%) and integration with existing software & systems (14%) was not important enough to make the cut with the vast majority of respondents.

These findings speak to the overall importance of having tools that provide <u>direct impact</u>, as soft metric considerations did not receive high marks.

What most impacts your consideration of new business tools? Select your top three (3).

| Category	Percentage
Effectiveness - provides direct impact on new business objectives	78%
Efficiency - improves new business productivity	62%
Ease of implementation and use	55%
Value / impact on efforts for the cost	43%
Ability to customize our specific needs	33%
Proven to work for agencies / case studies	24%
Recommended by someone I trust	21%
Integrates with our existing software & systems	14%
Customer Service	11%
Quality of product reviews	5%

Social Media Tools

CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Social Media Is the Most Used Tool Category

Respondents (89%) indicate they use social media because it's an efficient way to promote thought leadership. Additionally, an ability to share agency work and custom content are also reasons it's a favorite. This represents a significant lead over the next highest tool category in this report, CRM Software (+16%).

Interestingly, when we looked at how usage varies by agency size, we found that agencies with 1500+ people, don't use social media much for new business purposes. Explaining this, larger agencies typically rely upon competitive pitches as a way to drive new business, not outbound social media initiatives.

Do you currently use Social Media Tools to support your agency's new business efforts?
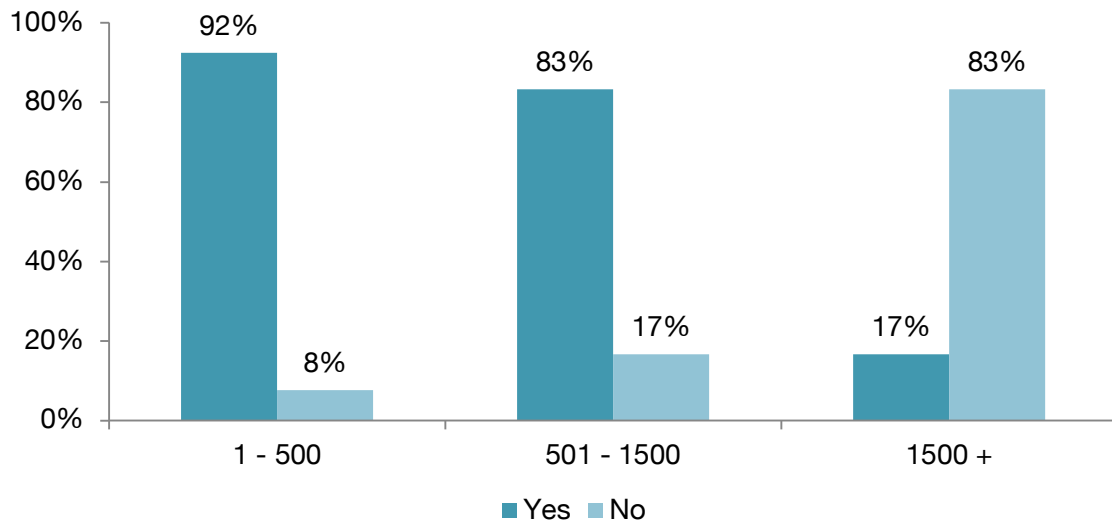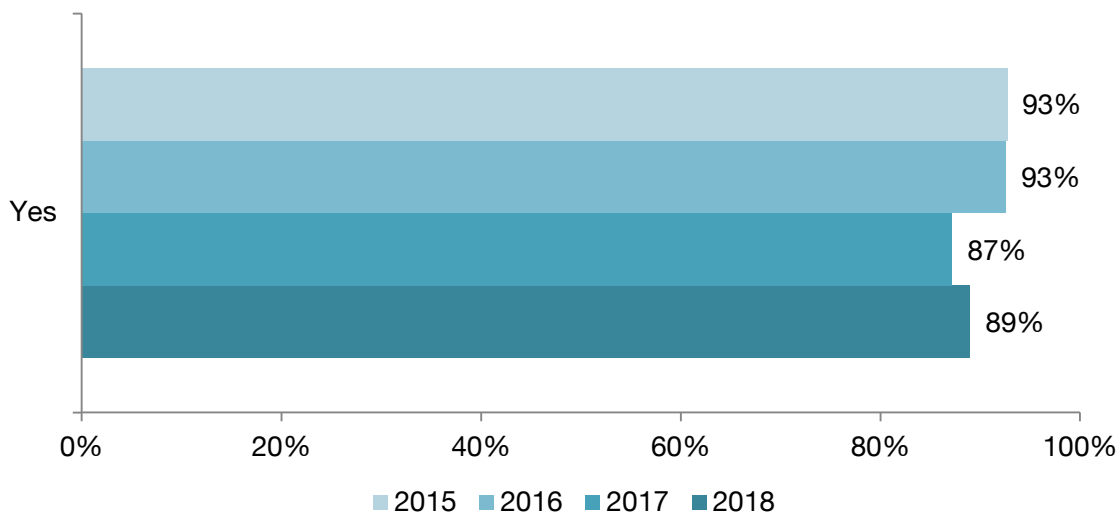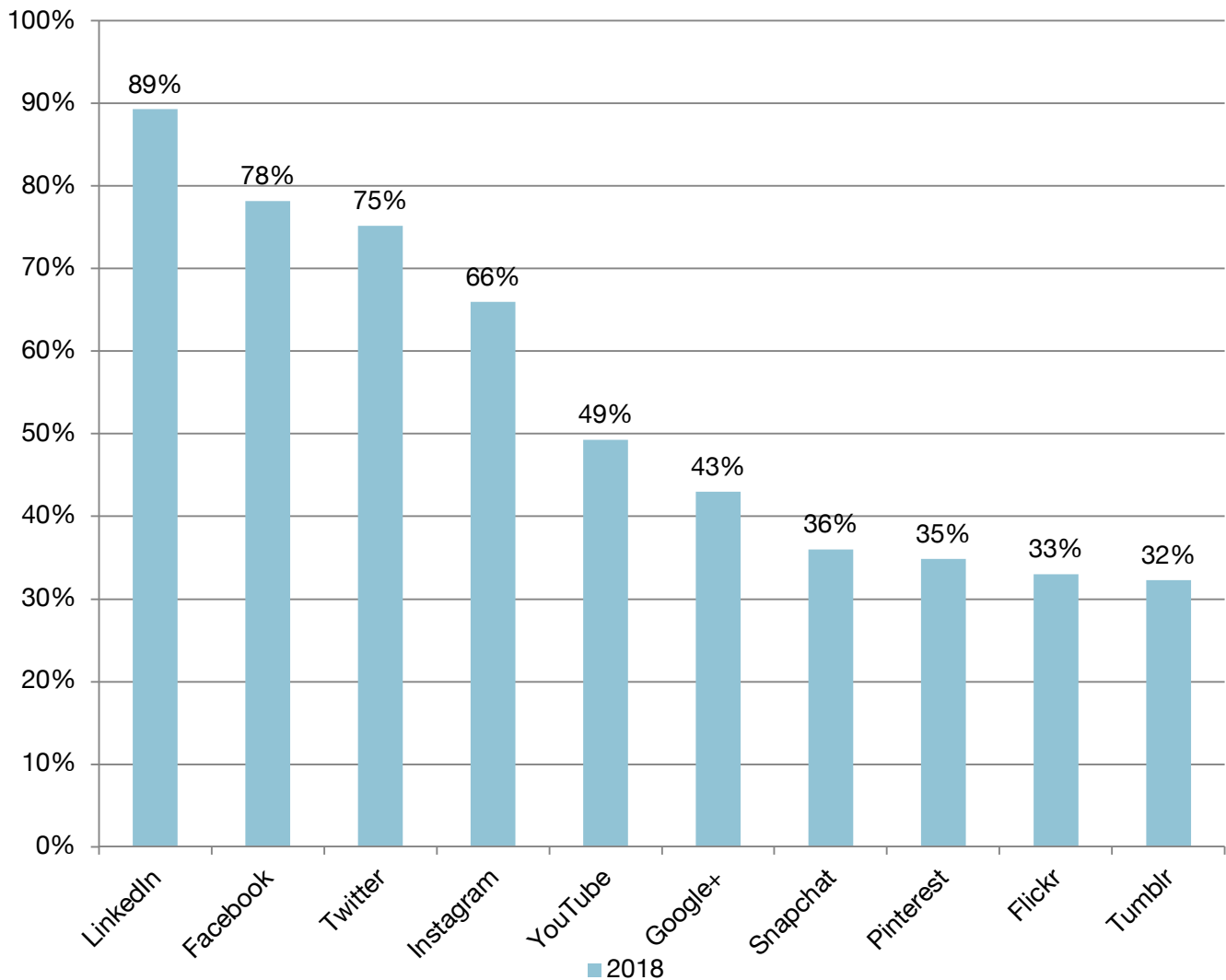
CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

LinkedIn Is the Dominant Social Media Tool for New Business

Respondents report that LinkedIn is an effective way to communicate thought leadership, build personal brands, and ultimately hook prospects, therefore leading the pack. In fact, some report it to be one of the most effective ways to communicate their agency POV.

As with years past, 4 social media platforms lead usage: LinkedIn (89%), Facebook (78%), Twitter (75%) and Instagram (66%). However, both Twitter and Facebook had a noteworthy decline vs. 2017, at -5%and -6%respectively. Qualitative insights reveal this is due to a lack of direct new business impact.

Finally, tools like Pinterest (35%) and Flickr (33%) have minimal usage, closely reflecting the larger image sharing technology industry.

Current Usage of Social Media Tools

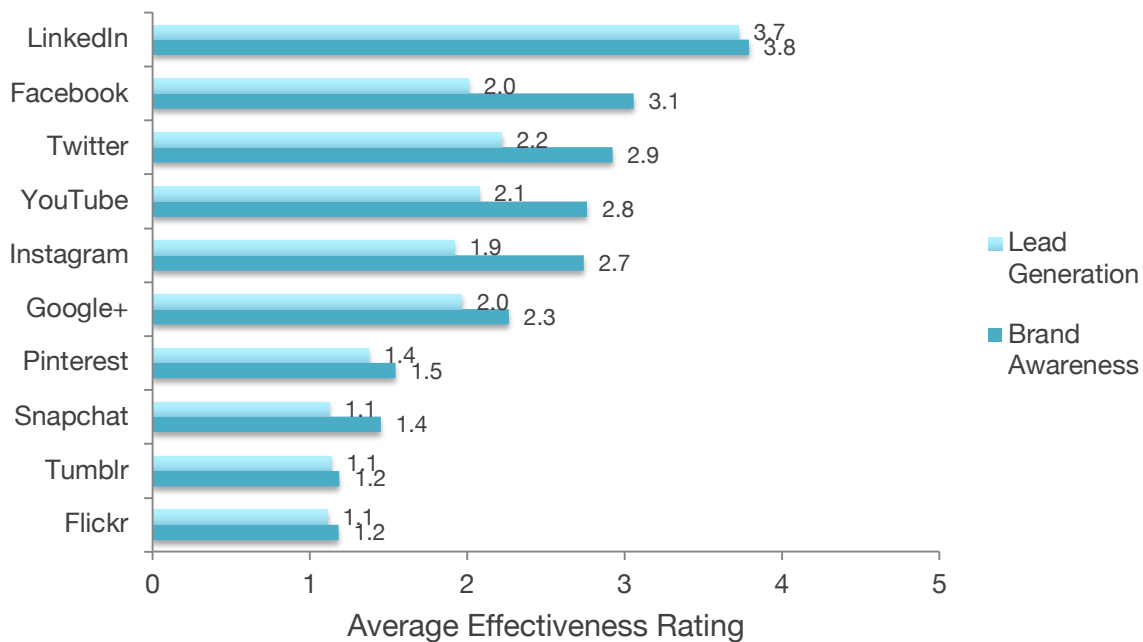| Tool	2018
LinkedIn	89%
Facebook	78%
Twitter	75%
Instagram	66%
YouTube	49%
Google+	43%
Snapchat	36%
Pinterest	35%
Flickr	33%
Tumblr	32%

■ 2018

CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

LinkedIn Is By Far the Most Effective Social Media Tool for New Business

We looked at brand awareness or an ability to drive agency visibility. Additionally, lead generation or an ability to drive a clear CTA, was also used to measure effectiveness.

Complimenting its high usage rates, LinkedIn is the clear winner when it comes to being an effective social media tool, receiving a 3.8 rating for driving brand awareness and 3.7 for lead generation. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram received moderate ratings for driving awareness and fairly low ratings for lead generation.

The remaining tools had relatively poor marks on both metrics. As revealed in some of the qualitative findings, only a handful of social media tools are considered effective for awareness and few are considered effective at driving leads.

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

Horizontal bar chart titled with x-axis "Average Effectiveness Rating" (0 to 5). Legend: Lead Generation (light blue), Brand Awareness (dark blue).

Tool	Lead Generation	Brand Awareness
LinkedIn	3.7	3.8
Facebook	2.0	3.1
Twitter	2.2	2.9
YouTube	2.1	2.8
Instagram	1.9	2.7
Google+	2.0	2.3
Pinterest	1.4	1.5
Snapchat	1.1	1.4
Tumblr	1.1	1.2
Flickr	1.1	1.2

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CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Social Media Is an Effective Way To Promote Agency Work, Publish Content, and Highlight Corporate Initiatives

Supporting the quantitative findings, most respondents do not find value in social media as a lead generation tool, with the exception of LinkedIn. However, strong approaches for making social media tools more effective include:

1) Having separate content strategies per channel
2) Using google tools in conjunction with lead gen tools to streamline efforts
3) Using LinkedIn to track, follow-up and maintain contact with prospects
4) Having agency executives actively engage and post on their personal social channels
5) Using Facebook primarily to promote culture, values and work

However, there were many agencies who indicated they don't have a social media strategy due to a lack of focus and resources. Additionally others said they haven't seen results from their efforts—this appears due to lacking a consistent, well thought out, strategic effort.

Please provide more detail on how you are using Social Media tools to make them more effective. Provide 1-2 examples.

> "Set google news alerts for brands that I'm tracking. Any relevant news or articles I tag into Sales Navigator or our CRM."
>
> "We have a content theme strategy by platform, and post on a regular cadence."
>
> "I don't think the use of social media is an effective way to attract new business prospects. They are more effective in influencing a perception of the agency."
>
> "LinkedIn has been most effective for connecting with a potential client or follow-up after networking."
>
> "Gmail allows you to integrate extensions very easily which help with lead gen such as Name2Email, Rapportive and Clearbit."
>
> "LinkedIn is the ultimate social media took for lead gen and awareness. I use every day to find who works for who in combination with Gmail tools to find email addresses along with direct InMail's to drive awareness and conversation."
>
> "To be honest, social media is not a big driver for our sales. It is brand awareness and maybe leads to long term prospects, but SM is not a sales tool for us."
>
> "We push out offers of downloadable content and blog posts to CMOs and other new business prospects via LinkedIn, engaging with LinkedIn groups, etc. Our blog - the agency's #1 new biz tool - is distributed via email, LinkedIn and Twitter."
>
> "We've tried multiple social media sites for pushing our POV on industry matters and stimulating dialogue, but it doesn't do much for us. Mostly use LinkedIn to find contacts."

CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Most Respondents Have Not Customized Their Social Media Tools to Make Them More Effective

Perhaps if agencies invested more time in customizing social media tools, we'd see an increase in the effectiveness ratings. With that said, a small number of agencies did share some great insights and tips for ways they've customized their tools to make them more effective. This ranged from creating custom algorithms to tagging high value individuals when publishing LinkedIn content.

One agency said it creates content based on trending hashtags. Another uses social media listening tools to monitor prospects and then develops posts that speak directly to them. The most interesting reported hacks for social media tools are included in the box below.

What's one way you've customized or "hacked" your Social Media tools to get more out of them?

"

"We've been very specific with our targeting which seems to have helped our efforts."

"Subscribed to recruiter tool vs user tool for LinkedIn."

"Custom algorithm."

"Set up fake avatar admin on LinkedIn to allow for multiple source logins and a catch-all for content."

"Sharing LinkedIn posts across our team members and tagging high value individuals to get visibility into their high value channels."

"Used Medium as a thought leadership and content platform that feels less like agency propaganda and more like relevant information clients can use."

"We try to create content that incorporates trending hashtags as often as possible."

"Well, paying to boost a post on Facebook is certainly worth it and increases engagement."

"Utilizing SharpSprings "Social Listening" feature, we are able to monitor our prospects and develop social posts that speak directly to that group of people at the right time."

"We use bit.ly links for all content postings so we can track clicks across channels."

"We can target people one-to-one on Facebook by finding their actual I.Ds and sending custom ads."
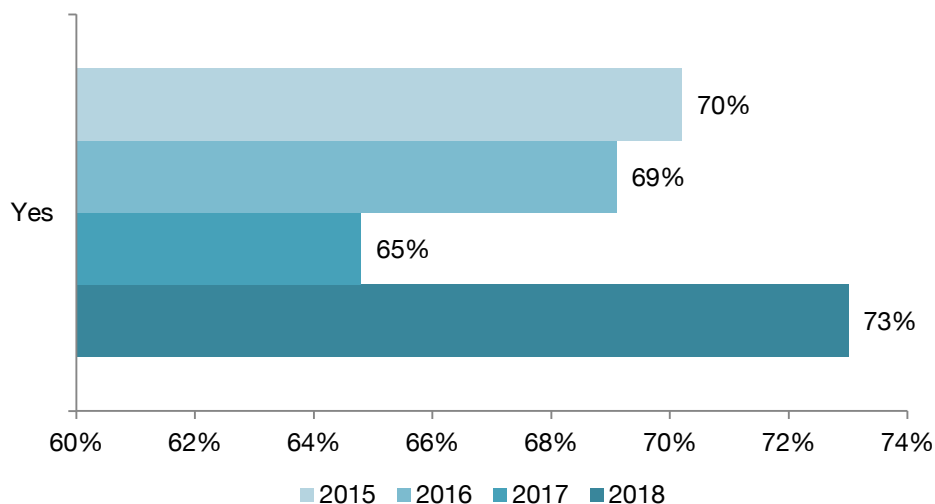
"

Contact Management / CRM Software

CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS
CRM Software

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

CRM usage in this year's survey is at a 4-year high, surpassing 2015's height of 70%. We'll explore reasons for this uptick and why agencies are finding them effective.

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.
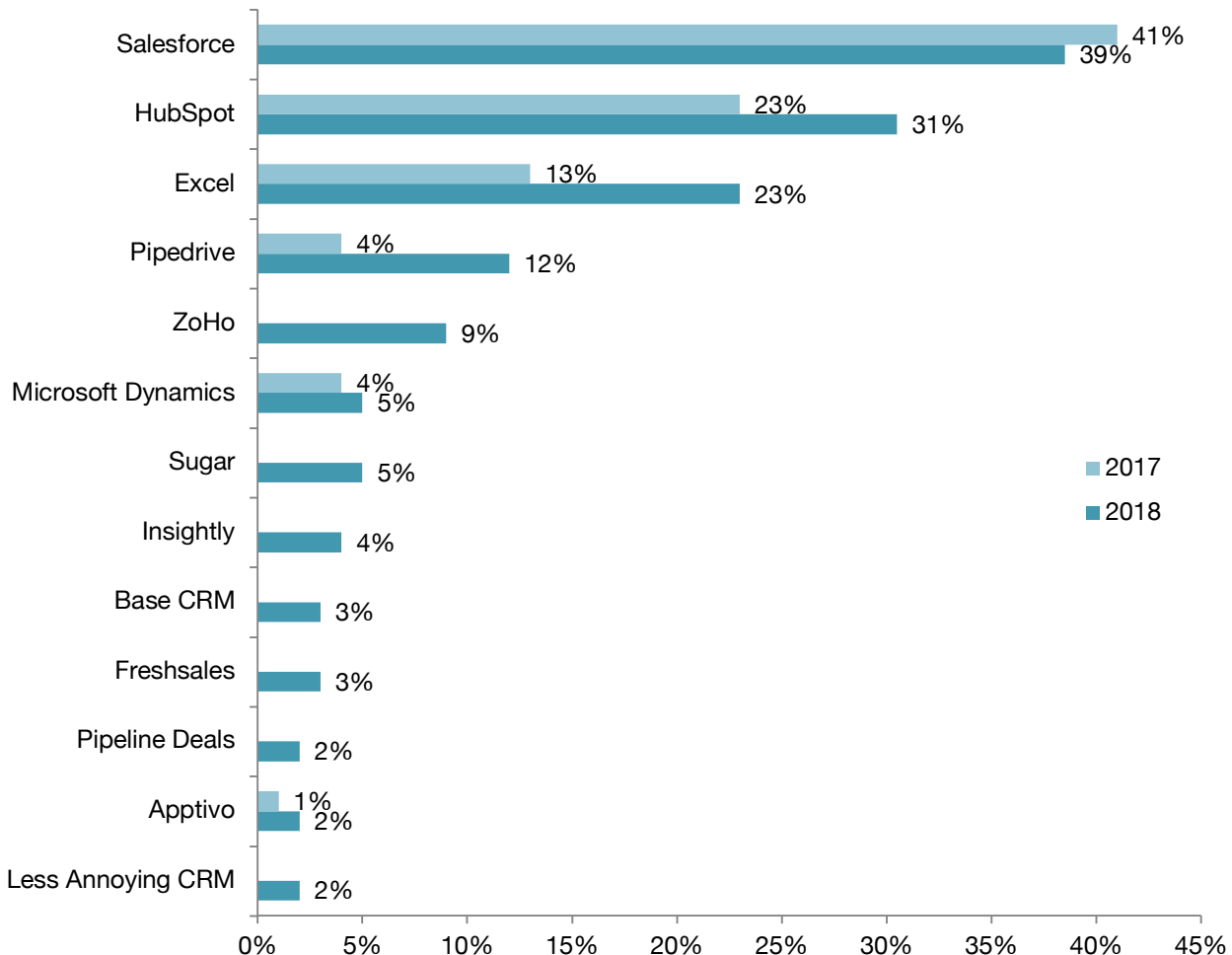
CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

The CRM category sees biggest shakeup since 2014

Salesforce is the leader again in the CRM category at 39%, dropping 2 points from 2017. HubSpot comes in second, only 8 percentage points behind the leader (versus 18 points last year), at 31%. Excel (technically not a CRM, as we've pointed out in past years) rounds out third, as it did in 2017, with 23% usage, although did increase its 2017 total by 10 percentage points. As in 2017, the "other" category technically tied Pipedrive at 12% (although noteworthy-only 4% in 2017), showing, along with an overall increase in usage this year, that **agencies continue to explore a wide variety of CRM tools.**

We also saw a **sizeable shakeup, unlike any in the past 4 years in this category, regarding the makeup of tools in this 2018 list**. We saw 4 disappear completely: SalesLogix, Oracle, Infusionsoft, and typically high-ranking ACT! and **6 brand new appearances**: Less Annoying CRM, Freshsales, Base CRM, Insightly, Sugar and ZoHo.

Current Usage CRM / Contact Management Software platforms
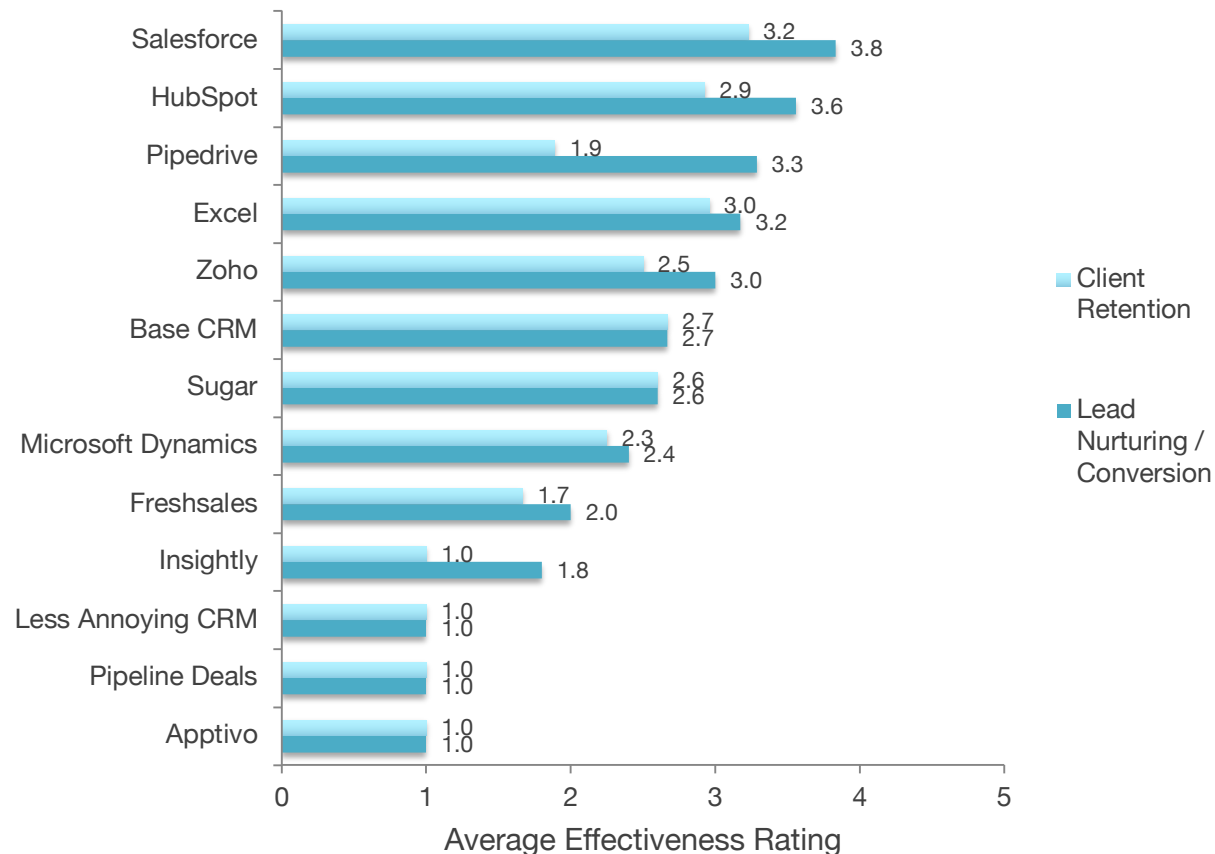
CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Salesforce Edges Out Hubspot to Take the Top Spot in Lead Nurturing Effectiveness

We asked agencies to rate the CRM tools they used in two ways: in terms of client retention and lead nurturing/conversion.

In a change this year, **Salesforce edged out HubSpot to take the top spot in lead nurturing effectiveness, at 3.8 out of 5.** Also notable is HubSpot's drop in effectiveness this year: 3.6, versus 4.1 last year, as well as Pipedrive's ascendancy to the third spot at 3.3, rounded out by Excel and Zoho in 4th and 5th place. On the following page, we take a closer look at lead nurturing effectiveness year over year.

Similarly to last year, agencies aren't using their CRM tools for client retention to a great degree. Most numbers are dropping; for example, HubSpot was at 3.4 in 2017 and this year stands at 2.9, and although no CRM broke the 3 mark in 2017, this year there are two: Salesforce and Excel.

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

Tool	Client Retention	Lead Nurturing / Conversion
Salesforce	3.2	3.8
HubSpot	2.9	3.6
Pipedrive	1.9	3.3
Excel	3.0	3.2
Zoho	2.5	3.0
Base CRM	2.7	2.7
Sugar	2.6	2.6
Microsoft Dynamics	2.3	2.4
Freshsales	1.7	2.0
Insightly	1.0	1.8
Less Annoying CRM	1.0	1.0
Pipeline Deals	1.0	1.0
Apptivo	1.0	1.0

Average Effectiveness Rating

CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Agencies Point To Key Platforms Increasing Effectiveness: Are These Platforms Easier To Use In The Long Run?

Below is a year-over-year comparison with the 6 CRM tools that made the list in 2017 and 2018, and a comparison of their effectiveness ratings between both years.

Salesforce, Pipedrive and Excel saw an increase in effectiveness, according to agencies surveyed, while HubSpot, Microsoft Dynamics and Apptivo saw drops. Setting aside platform updates, none of these tools relaunched or drastically changed in 2018, so we expect that agencies find these higher-performing platforms easier to understand and learn over time.

Current Usage CRM / Contact Management Software platforms

Lead Nurturing Effectiveness Year-Over-Year (Out of 5)

Tool	2017	2018
Salesforce	3.6	3.8
HubSpot	4.1	3.6
Pipedrive	3.0	3.3
Excel	3.0	3.2
Microsoft Dynamics	3.0	2.4
Apptivo	3.0	1.0

CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

CRM Software: Agencies Are Adapting These Tools

So with the dramatic increase in CRM usage this year as a backdrop, we asked agencies to provide more detail on how they are adapting and using CRM tools (or in some cases, not).

Agencies are still looking for an agency-centric CRM solution. However, this year's increased CRM usage shows agencies, more than ever, grasp the importance of CRM tools. They're adapting their CRM's directly in a number of ways, via reporting customization, persona creation or zeroing in on pieces of their CRM functionality that most directly impact new business strategy.

Below are a sampling of agency responses to the question of CRM adaptation and usage.

> "We have a smart sheet for all new business in the pipeline that outlines active prospects that are in the discovery/proposal/pitch phase, submitted/on hold, and closed/new clients. Smartsheet also allows you to attach RFPs, Q&A, submitted proposals, work in progress, etc to specific prospects. It also allows you to share the sheet with team members and sends them reminders for deadlines."
>
> "We are customizing and tagging our prospects into personas groups for specific industries and roles. We are sending out personalized communications."
>
> "It's simple, we make sure every office lead manages their portion of the system as closely as possible so we can track the progress of specific opportunities."
>
> "We have developed more customized reports that make it easier to see our funnel and recognize longer term challenges earlier."
>
> "Having everything in one place. Making sure you and only you are attacking the prospect."
>
> "We are trying to be more consistent with entering info into the CRM, and linking it to our email activities."
>
> "Attempting to leverage various tools for what they are good at...must continue to integrate."
>
> "CRM tools are only as good as the info that's being input into them."
>
> "We use excel as a stopgap when we need to...but we have not found the right CRM solution."
>
> "We only use the email part of the tool and to store contacts. We could be using all of the tool but it isn't set up well enough."

CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

CRM Software Practices and Hacks: Streamlined Solutions Are a Top Priority

We asked agencies to tell us about best practices and/or methods they use to make CRM usage more efficient. The answers 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.

And most importantly, agencies want streamlined CRM functionality. All the responses we received reflected this in some manner, with agencies trying to hack into existing tools to become more streamlined, or tactically attempting to instill more streamlined best practices within new business teams.

"As our sales team went through many changes and I was operating as a "one man band", I had to rebuild the CRM to make sense to me, for my own."

"We've tried to hack our intranet and HRIS systems to be CRMs for us and they didn't work out well. It was an effort to use less systems and to be efficient."

"We've began using personas to group prospects into particular categories to be able to develop messaging specific to that persons job title."

"I'm not sure it's a true hack, but we have implemented Chatter across our agency to help drive growth collaboration and conversation"

"Simplified the use cases for when to put data in and what we need to capture. Eliminated all other 'nice to know, but non-actionable' data entry."

"Excel proficiency."

Marketing Automation / Inbound Marketing

CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Marketing Automation Is One of the Least Used Tool Categories in the Report

Beating only Content Development tools, 37% of respondents use Marketing Automation / Inbound Marketing tools. Respondents indicate they don't have the time or resources to sustain marketing efforts that drive inbound leads, which are the core purpose of marketing automation technologies.

Put another way, Marketing Automation tools require agencies to be proactive, which is something most struggle with. Given this, it's no surprise agencies see a lack of usage or investment in this category.

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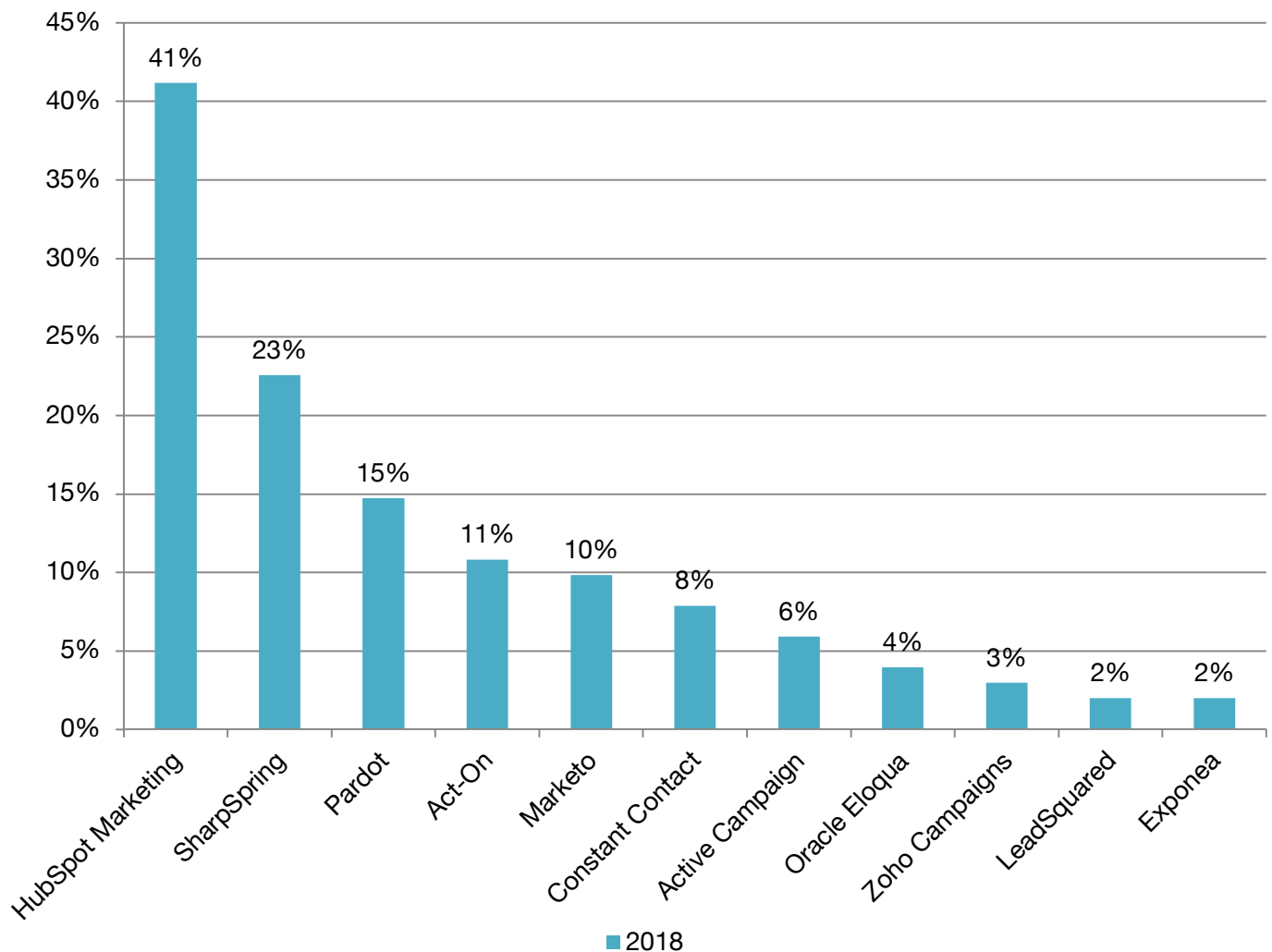

Bar chart: Yes — 2016: 37%, 2017: 32%, 2018: 37%. X-axis from 28% to 38%. Legend: 2016, 2017, 2018.
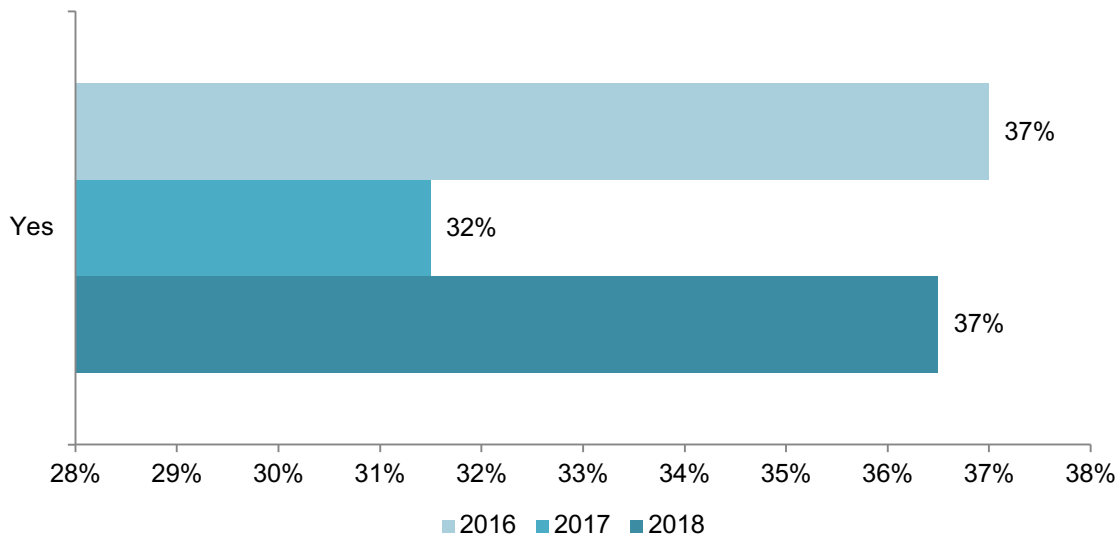
CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

HubSpot Leads Marketing Automation by a Wide Margin

Hubspot leads with a wide majority at 41%, trending 5% up from 2017. Following is Sharpspring (+4%), Paradot (+1%), Act-On (+3%) and Marketo (+1%). As Marketing Automation / Inbound Marketing tool's usage findings are typically a direct correlation to agencies' proactive sales efforts, the slight increases are a positive sign.

Different than CRM, Marketing Automation technologies automate marketing activities across an array of channels to drive website leads. Clearly, not enough agencies are using these tools to get out of the never ending cycle of reactive new business strategies.

Current Usage of Marketing Automation / Inbound Marketing

Bar chart showing current usage percentages: HubSpot Marketing 41%, SharpSpring 23%, Pardot 15%, Act-On 11%, Marketo 10%, Constant Contact 8%, Active Campaign 6%, Oracle Eloqua 4%, Zoho Campaigns 3%, LeadSquared 2%, Exponea 2%. Legend: 2018.
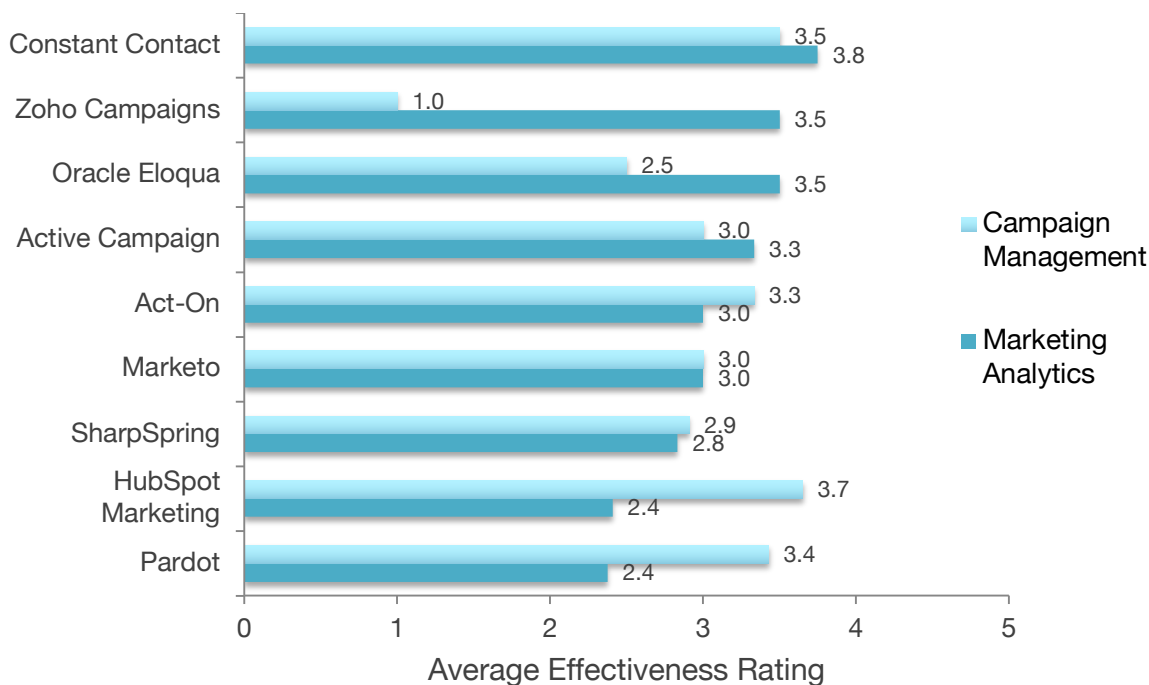
CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Marketing Automation Technologies Receive Average Marks on Effectiveness

While the #1 used tool, Hubspot received high marks for campaign management (3.7), it received relatively low marks on analytics (2.4), bringing down its overall rating.

Campaign management and marketing analytics were used to assess effectiveness. Marketing automation tools received average effectiveness ratings, in line with their disappointing usage ratings. Leading the pack on both measures was: Constant Contact (3.65), Active Campaign (3.1), Act-On (3.1), Marketo (3.0), Oracle (3.0) and Sharpspring (2.85).

Overall effectiveness continues to be pretty disappointing. While these tools likely have areas they can improve upon, success is dependent on consistent, sustained usage. Many agencies have indicated that a lack of this has contributed to low effectiveness.

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

Tool	Campaign Management	Marketing Analytics
Constant Contact	3.5	3.8
Zoho Campaigns	1.0	3.5
Oracle Eloqua	2.5	3.5
Active Campaign	3.0	3.3
Act-On	3.3	3.0
Marketo	3.0	3.0
SharpSpring	2.9	2.8
HubSpot Marketing	3.7	2.4
Pardot	3.4	2.4

Average Effectiveness Rating

*Note, due to low respondent numbers, the ratings for Exponea & LeadSquared are not included in our analyses.

CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Only Half of Agencies Using Marketing Automation Have Adapted Them to Be More Effective

At first glance this finding seems promising. However, for Marketing Automation Tools to be effective, adapting them is key. Given only half of respondents have done this, it's a pretty disappointing finding. Supporting this, many executives indicated they have subscribed to them, but have yet to use them. However, **many respondents indicate they have only just begun to use these tools or are at the implementation stage.**

The examples of adaptation that were provided included, creating separate campaigns and workflows for different targets, or to stages of the funnel. As part of this, customizing and automating workflow was indicated as important to making the most of the tools. More granular segments and personas were also highlighted. Finally, integrations with other tools, like Salesforce, were also listed as a way to make them more effective.

Some of the most useful examples are included below.

Please provide more detail on how you are adapting and using Marketing Automation tools to make them more effective.

"We have uploaded and categorized multiple lists with tagged contacts."

"Creating more granular segments and personas."

"We use Pardot to manage our mass emails. We do not know how to effectively use the tool. We are in the process of teaching someone and have yet to use for a marketing campaign."

"Creating customized workflows for each stage of the funnel. Industry specific messaging for each persona."

"Custom templates, automated workflows."

"In partnership with Salesforce to issue campaigns."

"Landing page development; gated and non-gated content distribution; lead scoring."

"Pardot had slick looking reporting but it was difficult to use Pardot to support ABM. We have recently implemented Act-On and SugarCRM together."

"We are able to monitor the effectiveness of each campaign we launch and create paths for each level of engagement. For instance, to encourage people to learn more about our work we sent out a short teaser video. We were able to monitor those who viewed the video and placed them into various nurturing automation based on how deep they explored."

CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Most Agencies Are Not Yet Customizing Their Marketing Automation Tools

Interestingly but not surprisingly, there were very few customization suggestions or "hacks" offered by respondents. The vast majority of people in this report aren't using these tools and those that are find themselves in the very early stages of usage.

Those few agencies who are being proactive not only by using marketing automation but also in their actual usage of them, provided several hacks. They included syncing the tools with buying cycles, marking them by source and association, creating custom campaigns by target sector and finding integration synergies where possible.

What's one way you've customized or "hacked" your Marketing Automation tools to get more out of them?

"Made it sync (as best we can) with client buying cycles."

"We have yet to do."

"I haven't used any of these tools."

"Marked by source and association."

"SharpSpring has already done the customizing for us. Every campaign that we develop is unique to our new business goals and efforts. Utilizing all of their features has allowed us to develop custom campaigns for each of our target industries and sectors."

"Simplify and be realistic of what we ask of them. If effective email broadcasting is the core task - use it for email marketing. If social broadcast is the core task - use it just for that and make sure each tool works in collaboration with one-another."

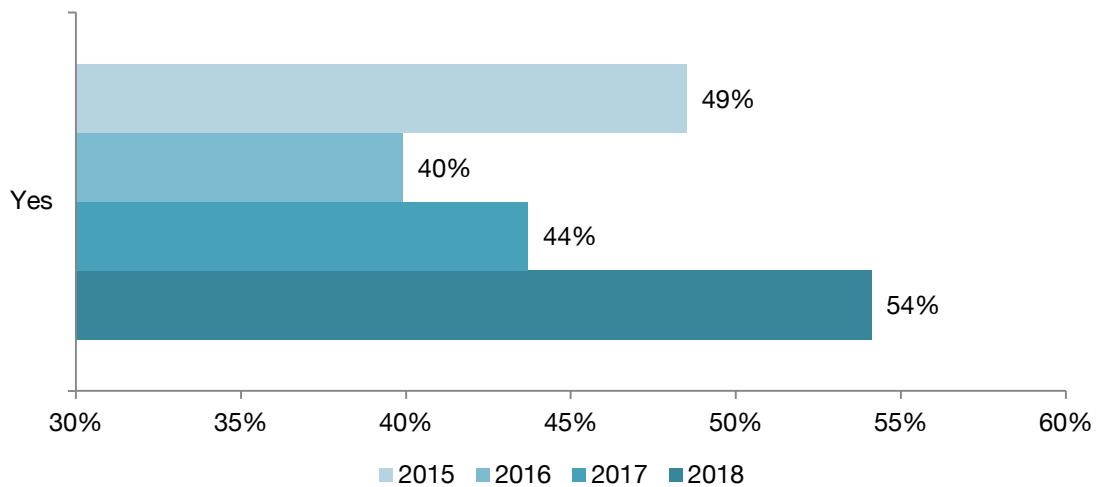"Integration synergy is essential."

CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Target Audience Research Services

CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Target Audience Research Services Saw a Significant Increase in 2018

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

2015	2016	2017	2018

Target Audience Research Services grew in usage this year, +10%, versus 2017. In fact, it marks the highest usage we've seen for the category.

Respondents indicated they use multiple resources because targeting continues to be complicated. More sources equals a more robust consumer view. Additionally, some revealed that they have to use many sources, because no one source is complete enough or has strong enough data on its own.
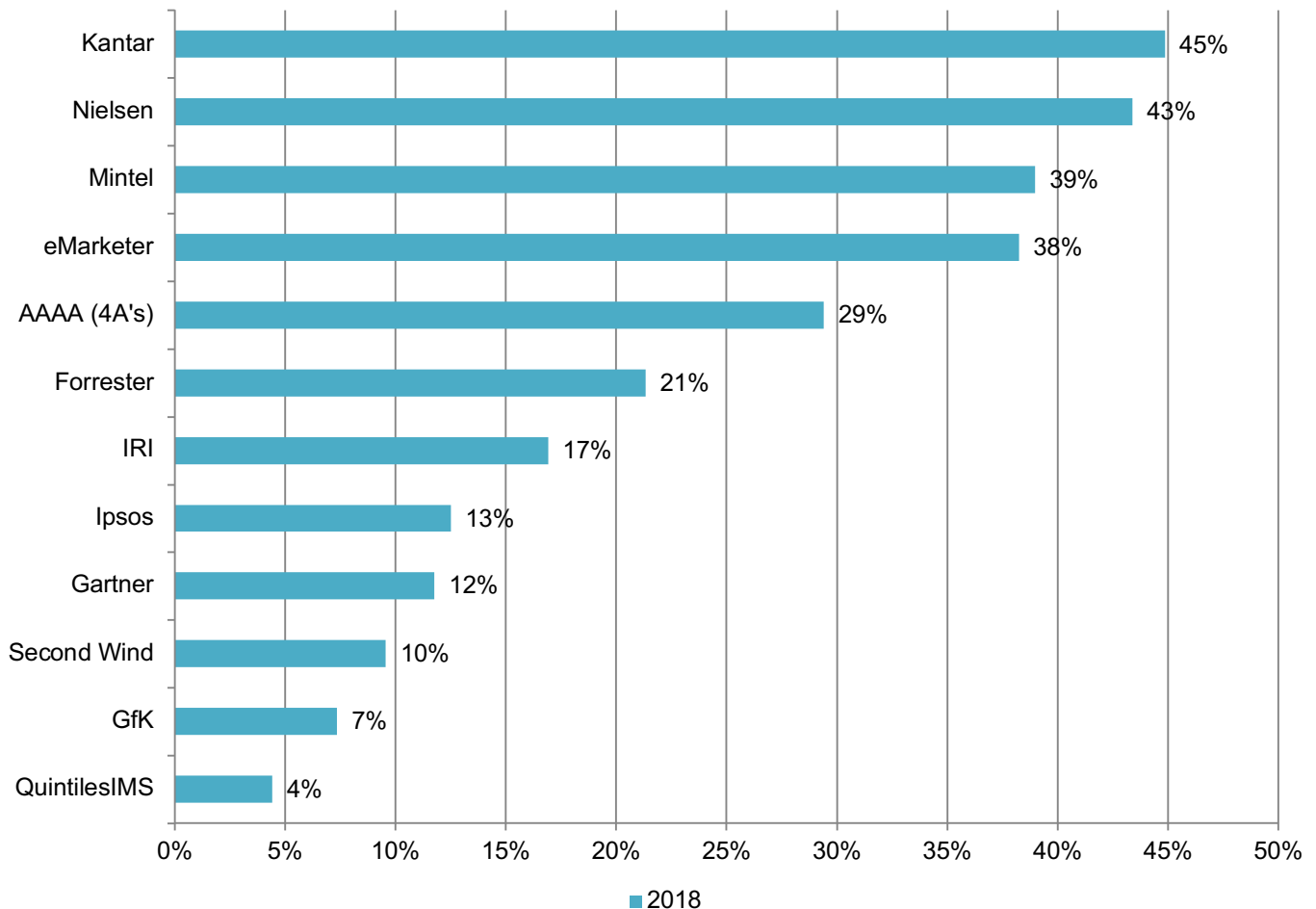
CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Kantar & Nielson Dominate Target Audience Research Services Usage

Kantar, which was only added to the survey this year, lead the entire pack at 45%. Following was Nielson (43%), Mintel (39%) and eMarketer (38%). Tools used the least included Second Wind, GfK and QuintilesIMS. Finally, the 4As saw a significant decrease in usage this year, by -16%.

Despite the overall increase in usage, it's interesting that roughly half of respondents don't use target audience research services. Based on the qualitative findings, it appears a lack of satisfaction with the quality of any one tool combined with a move towards building proprietary systems, has impacted usage.

Current Usage of Target Audience Research Services

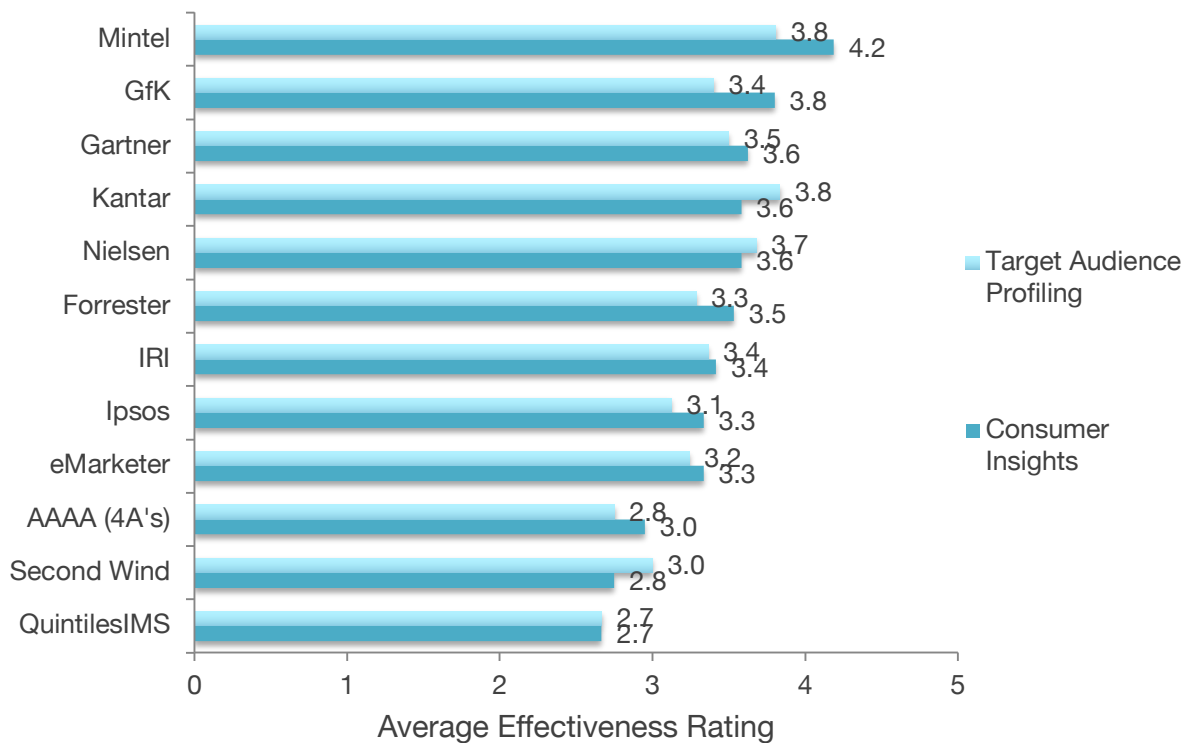| Service	2018
Kantar	45%
Nielsen	43%
Mintel	39%
eMarketer	38%
AAAA (4A's)	29%
Forrester	21%
IRI	17%
Ipsos	13%
Gartner	12%
Second Wind	10%
GfK	7%
QuintilesIMS	4%

CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Target Audiences Tools Receive Slightly Above Average Effectiveness Ratings

The quality of target audience profiling and consumer insights were used to measure effectiveness. **Overall, respondents view these tools as roughly equal on both measurement criteria, with consumer insights slightly higher.**

Mintel led the pack, with a combined rating of 4.0. Following were GfK, Gartner, Kantar and Nielson. All were rated pretty much at parity with one another, Kantar leading in target audience profiling and GfK in consumer insights (both 3.8). Interestingly, even though Kantar and Nielson are not consumer insights tools, or target audience data tools, both received relatively high marks on insights.

At the bottom in usage and now effectiveness were Second Wind and QuintilesIMS. Contrasted with GfK who scored well on effectiveness, but low on usage.

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

Tool	Target Audience Profiling	Consumer Insights
Mintel	3.8	4.2
GfK	3.4	3.8
Gartner	3.5	3.6
Kantar	3.8	3.6
Nielsen	3.7	3.6
Forrester	3.3	3.5
IRI	3.4	3.4
Ipsos	3.1	3.3
eMarketer	3.2	3.3
AAAA (4A's)	2.8	3.0
Second Wind	3.0	2.8
QuintilesIMS	2.7	2.7

Average Effectiveness Rating

CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Agencies Offer Interesting Ways They Are Making Target Audience Research Services More Effective

Combining data from multiple sources, using the research services to compliment proprietary efforts and smarter prospecting were key themes. One agency said they use their target audience research tools prior to every meeting to better understand their client's customers. Another indicated they use Mintel as a way to generate reports as a means to prospect and start new business conversations.

However, overall there was a lack of satisfaction with what any one tool has to offer. Disappointment about accuracy, recency of data and a lack of depth was conveyed.

Please provide more detail on HOW you are using target audience research tools to make them more effective. Provide 1-2 examples.

"We're using Simmons and MRI to round out consumer audience profiles for new business pitches and client work."

"Not sure we are using them to make them more effective. We use them, but could probably improve on that use."

"We source from many sources to check data because one is not better than another in complete data."

"Information from each service is very different. We have found ways to combine information into one database for better insights."

"Use this prior to every customer meeting to understand who our clients customers are."

"Very disappointed with the lack of accuracy, recency and the depth of audience intel from all programs tested."

"Use Mintel to generate reports for new business and clients; Have started a lot of conversations using it for new business."

"Building prospect lists for categories new to our mix."

"Use to understand who we are trying to reach and the cultural implications that need to be under consideration when creating campaign ideas for pitches."

"Conduct our own research rather than hire a service."

"Exploring trends and insights for business opportunities."

CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

However, Customizations or 'Hacks' of These Tools Were Far and Few Between

Respondents didn't have many customizations or "hacks" to suggest when it came to Target Audience Research Services. Many indicated they didn't know how to customize or have dedicated resources to better customize. As with the prior question, the primary hack was combining data sets, not relying upon any one source.

Additionally, several indicated they built their own target audience tools and resources. Others indicated using the tool's representative and support packages to get the most out of them. Finally, a few respondents included ways they use them to support content initiatives, including as a source of inspiration or for press briefings.

What's one way you've customized or "hacked" your Target Audience Research tools to get more out of them?

"Our Mintel rep is amazing, and will always help us find 'hidden' references and insights."

"Built upon our own persona development tools."

"Have been able to identify specific client targets based on viewership demos."

"We built one from scratch."

"Not skilled enough to do hacks here."

"We use them as inspiration for content we publish on our own."

"Use the team on your account. Provide accurate briefs to their customer support people and press for a sense of urgency."
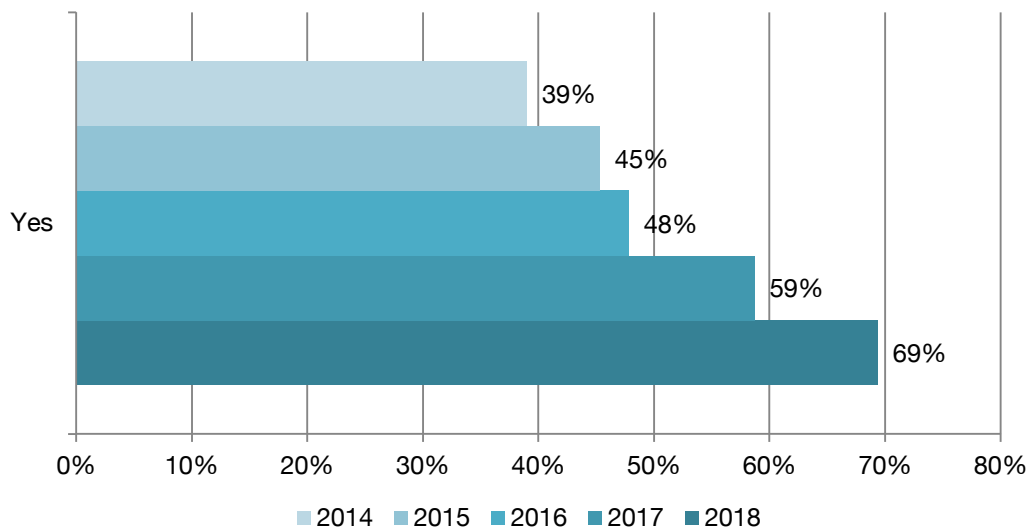
CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Prospect Contact/ List Building

CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

List Building Platforms See a Five-Year High of 69% in Usage

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

2018 sees a 10% increase in the list building category from 2017, adding to last year's 11% increase, taking the category to a five-year high of 69%.
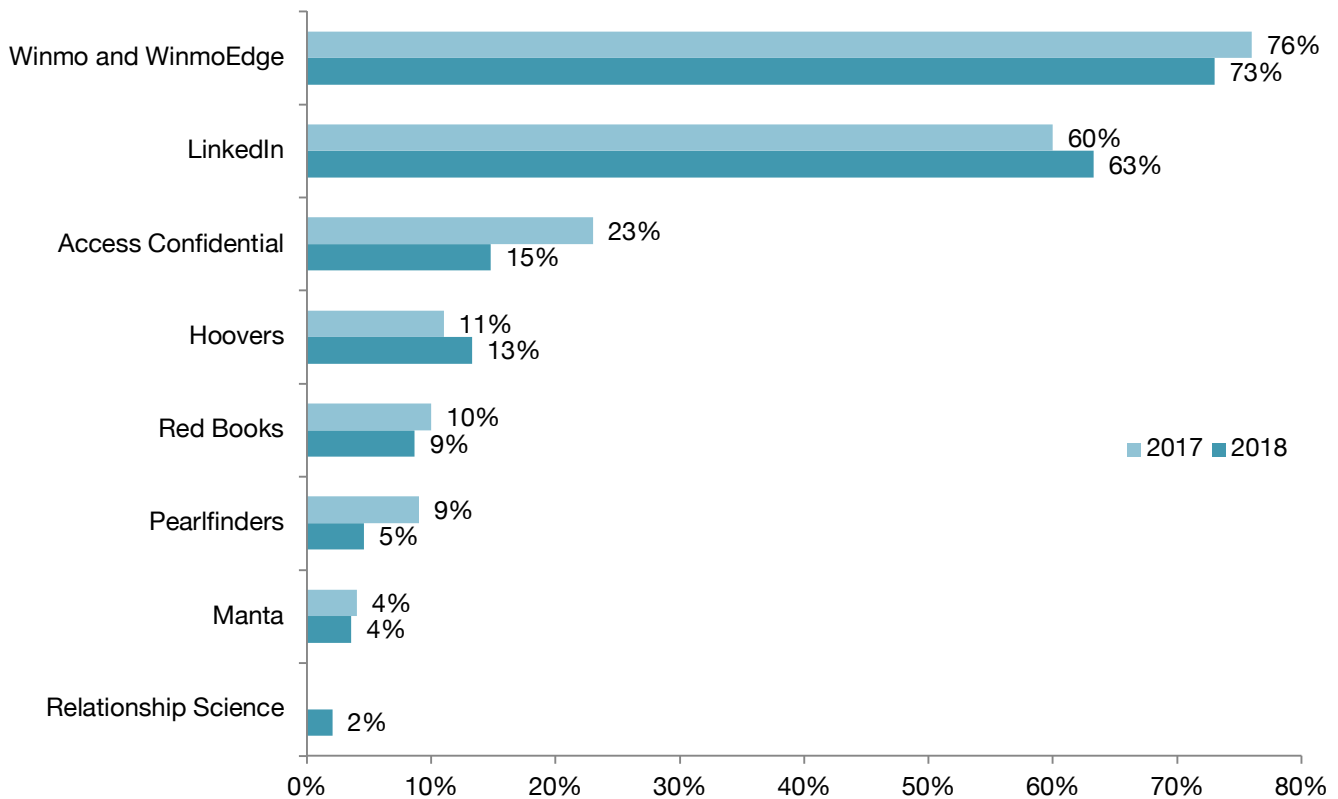
Agencies obviously continue to find value in outsourcing this critical, but time-consuming, function.

CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Top Two Tools Account for Lion's Share of Usage

Winmo leads the pack this year at 73%, a 3% drop from last year. LinkedIn continues to climb, with a 3% increase over last year to come in second at 63%. Access Confidential takes third again this year with 15%, although sees a significant drop of 8% . Initial takeaway: **the top two tools represent the lion's share in usage**. And similarly to last year, agencies continue to use LinkedIn as a list building tool in an effort to assume control of the process in-house, or as a cost-saving measure predominantly.

Current Usage Prospect Contact / List Building services

Tool	2017	2018
Winmo and WinmoEdge	76%	73%
LinkedIn	60%	63%
Access Confidential	23%	15%
Hoovers	11%	13%
Red Books	10%	9%
Pearlfinders	9%	5%
Manta	4%	4%
Relationship Science		2%

CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Key Platforms See Notable Increases in Quality of Prospect Identification and Overall Lists

We asked agencies to rate each tool in two ways: in terms of effective prospect identification (PI) and overall list quality (LQ). Similarly to last year, the top 3 leaders hold high marks in prospect identification and list quality effectiveness but there are **three new takeaways worth mentioning:**
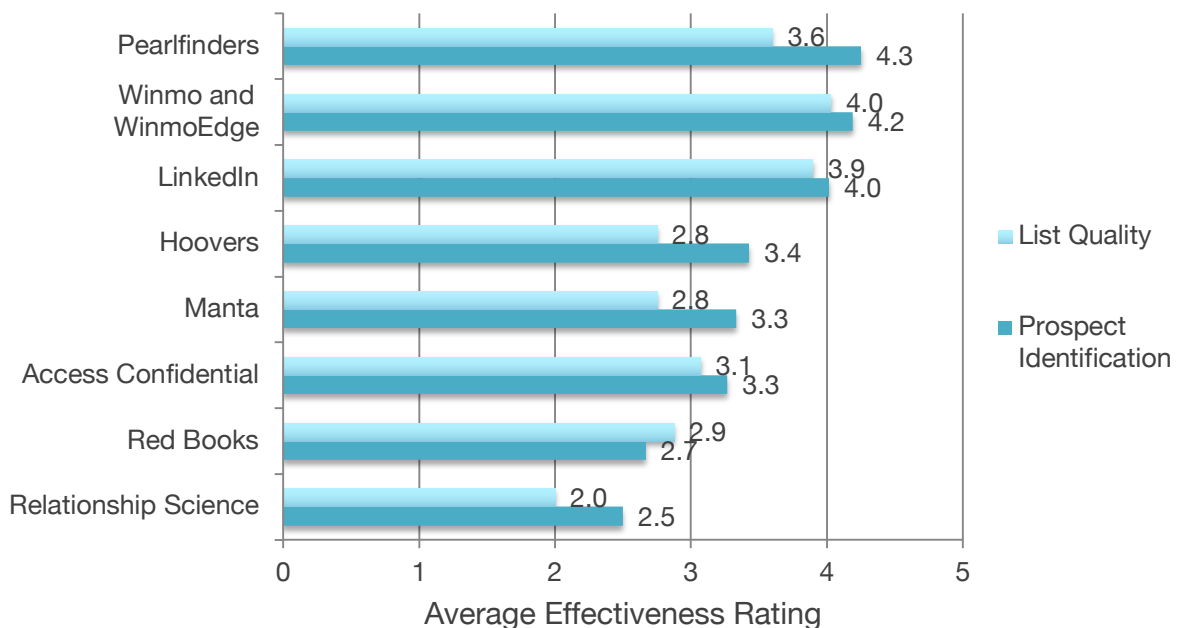
First, unlike past years, only two platforms fell out of the list, Data.com and AdDataExpress.

Second, and for the first time in our survey, none of these platforms dropped in PI effectiveness-they either stayed at the same level, or **increased,** and only one, Relationship Science, dropped in LQ this year, a small drop from 2.1 in 2017 to 2.0.

And third, some of those year-over year increases were notable: Pearlfinders leads the increase in PI, with 4.3 this year and 2.6 in 2017. Other notables are Hoovers with a PI of 3.4 this year/2.6 in 2017 and Manta with a PI of 3.3 this year/2.2 in 2017.

Pearlfinders leads the year-over year increase in list quality (LQ) at 3.6 this year/2.5 in 2017. Others of note are Manta, with an LQ of 3.3 this year/2.0 in 2017 and Redbooks, with an LQ of 2.9 this year/2.2 in 2017.

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

Average Effectiveness Rating

Tool	List Quality	Prospect Identification
Pearlfinders	3.6	4.3
Winmo and WinmoEdge	4.0	4.2
LinkedIn	3.9	4.0
Hoovers	2.8	3.4
Manta	2.8	3.3
Access Confidential	3.1	3.3
Red Books	2.9	2.7
Relationship Science	2.0	2.5

CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Prospect Contact / List Building Sees All Time High Ratings

List building as a category sits at an all-time high, with effectiveness ratings up, almost across the board. So agencies are obviously using these platforms to a greater degree, and are finding them more effective. A trend that remains from previous years, however, is LinkedIn as a highly-used list building tool, which, like Excel on the CRM side, it technically is not.

We asked agencies the below question to dig deeper, and a selection of their open-ended answers is below:

Please provide more detail on WHY you find the Prospect Contact / List Building tools you use effective or ineffective.

"Some very effective at identifying key decision makers (The List) while others provide more information about the person and their background (LinkedIn) and personal connections we may have."

"Winmo does very good job of providing new biz leads via Daily Vista, particularly like their tools to create customized lists by geo, media spend, category, job title, etc."

"Several provide good context on prospects - company background, marketing spend, contacts, ad/marketing history. But all-in-all, we still run into data quality issues (old or inaccurate data)."

"Current, accurate data to build prospective client contacts quickly."

"Most don't have a way to update/check regularly, other than by calling them. Needs to be more accurate, real-time updates. LinkedIn is way more accurate. Seems like they should cross connect data better."

"It would be more effective if I could pull a target list specifically per industry, vs. searching for contacts individually."

"Individual brand marketers do a better job of updating their own profiles (LinkedIn) than Winmo, Access Confidential and Pearlfinders do. Also, they opt-in to LinkedIn and are open to content they view there, particularly if liked by others they trust."

"We utilize the list building tools to identify target contacts and accounts and synch their information into our CRM. We also utilize these tools to help track industry targets and try to stay ahead of our competition."

CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

# Prospect Intelligence Tools

CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Prospect Intelligence Tools-A New Category Bringing Together Multiple Tools and Platforms

We added this new category for the 2018 report to incorporate intelligence-gathering tools that help drive new business. Some of the choices fall into other existing categories, but typically for a different purpose. So this is in some sense a catch-all category, but a needed one, as it brings together multiple tools that can defy singular categorization.

Given that that the choices do cross over multiple categories, it was positive to see 41% of agencies reported using these tools.

We also added this category in the hopes that you find a previously unused tool, or outlet, to help drive your new business program.

Do you currently use Prospect Intelligence Tools to analyze your prospect's business and management team?
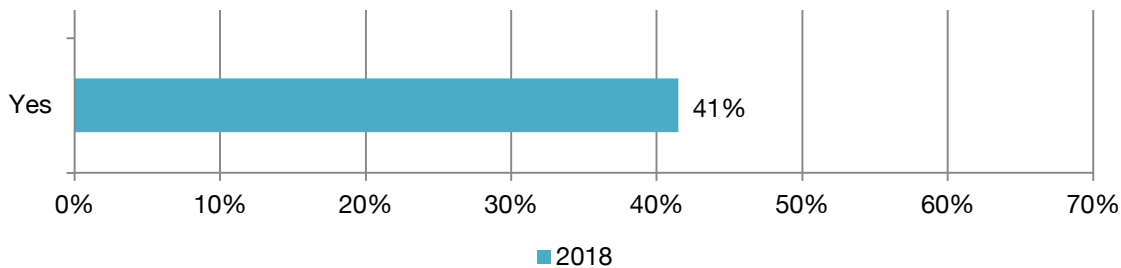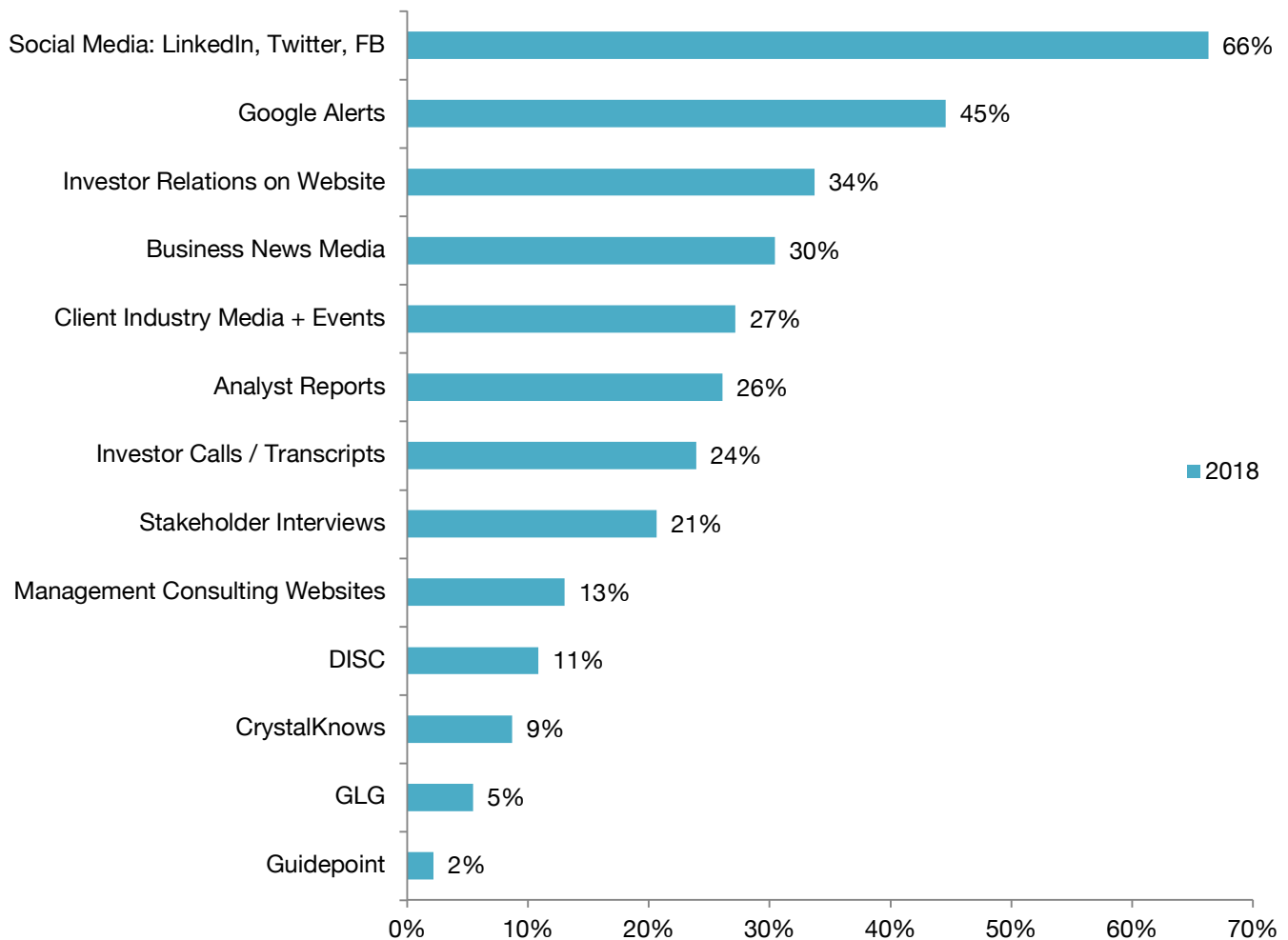
CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Investor Relations, Calls, and Analyst Reports Recognized as Tools Agencies May Not Be Using, But Should

Being a new category for the survey, it's encouraging to see a variety of platforms, tools and outlets that don't get mentioned as often within the realm of ad agency new business.

Unsurprisingly, social media channels take the top spot at 66%, with Google Alerts coming in second at 45%. Business news media and industry events hold fourth and fifth, **but more interesting are investor relations at 34%, analyst reports at 26%, investor calls at 24% and stakeholder interviews at 21%.** Not that these are new sources of intelligence gathering, but as mentioned previously, they tend to stay under the radar as tools often mentioned.

Current Usage Prospect Intelligence Tools

Tool	2018
Social Media: LinkedIn, Twitter, FB	66%
Google Alerts	45%
Investor Relations on Website	34%
Business News Media	30%
Client Industry Media + Events	27%
Analyst Reports	26%
Investor Calls / Transcripts	24%
Stakeholder Interviews	21%
Management Consulting Websites	13%
DISC	11%
CrystalKnows	9%
GLG	5%
Guidepoint	2%

CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Agencies See the Necessity of Prospect Intelligence Tools, and Unsurprisingly, Gravitate to Those That Take the Least Amount of Time to Use

We asked agencies to provide more detail on HOW they use Prospect Intelligence tools, as well as further detail on the effectiveness of these tools overall.

One tenet of new business that will never change: clients have to come first, and so we see a smattering of agencies on one end conducting in-depth research on prospects, agencies doing very little on the other end, and the majority using easy-to-set-up alerts or LinkedIn as a go-to research tool.

> "Just use Google alerts to let us know if anything pops up unexpectedly."
>
> "We use LinkedIn as a our primary source; very active audience base therefore they are telling us what is important and what they're interested in. We've built credibility through our LI usage. Stakeholder interviews are also very effective for us; we get in front of our customers and hear directly from them on what's important or relevant."
>
> "I find that any info on investor portions of web sites is "gold" as it details the real story. Worth the time and effort to dig in."
>
> "Key words and topics using Google alerts and HubSpot alerts."
>
> "The majority of our outreach comes through thought leadership provided by insight publications and speaking engagements. Also attend the yearly CMO summit."
>
> "We're always paying attention to what's happening in the sectors we're serving."

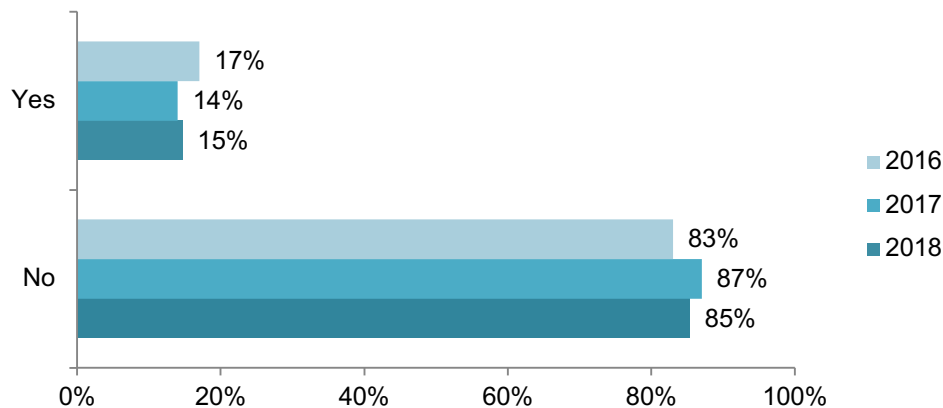**CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS**

Content Development Tools

CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Content Development Tools Are the Least Used New Business Tool Category

The vast majority of respondents do not use content development tools to support their new business efforts, with only 15% indicating they use them. This is clearly a marked difference compared to other industry verticals. This is likely due to agencies having many of tools in-house, given the nature of their business.

However, qualitative insights also revealed that agencies don't produce enough custom content to warrant outside resources and those that do are able to manage their efforts using in-house resources. Given the innovation and advancements that have happened in this category by way of new technologies, it seems to be a missed opportunity that agencies should consider in the year ahead.

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

Yes
- 17% (2016)
- 14% (2017)
- 15% (2018)

No
- 83% (2016)
- 87% (2017)
- 85% (2018)

Legend: 2016, 2017, 2018

CHANNEL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Agencies Aren't Focused on Content Development Tools, Let Alone Improving Their Effectiveness

Few respondents had examples of how they are making content development tools more effective, due to low usage rates. Even those who are using them, indicated they hadn't spent much time exploring ways to make them more effective or customizing for their needs. In line with other findings in this report, agencies were quick to admit that a lack of resources and new business proactivity as the culprit.

For those who are actively trying to get the most out of these tools, using freelancers to execute on an executive's or strategy team's content idea was listed as a successful way to use these tools. Also, listed was transforming written case studies into video content. Finally, using them to simply increase the agency's publishing volume was also indicated.

Please provide more detail on HOW you are using Content Development tools to make them more effective. Provide 1-2 examples.

> "We are using them to increase the volume of our thought leadership content."
>
> "Constant training, conferences."
>
> "We engage a freelancer for blog and website content."
>
> "Transforming case studies from text to video."
>
> "We are not currently using content marketing to boost our new business pipeline."
>
> "We have in-house designers and production do most of what we need."
>
> "Consulting team provides hypotheses & POV; Writers turn their thinking into finished articles."

A Few Closing Thoughts

While usage went up this year, effectiveness ratings did not. We stand by our hypotheses that if agencies dedicate more resources to consistently using new business tools and making the most out of them, effectiveness ratings will rise. One key finding from this report that cannot be ignored:

> **The agencies who shared best practices on customization, creative hacks and regular usage, were also the the ones who found them to be the most effective.**

In a year that's seen high U.S. economic growth, the agency industry saw only moderate growth, at roughly 5%*. Commoditization, consultants and a move towards building more in-house resources have been slowly chipping away at the agency business for years.

That's why we use these final words to implore agencies to get serious about proactive new business efforts. Build a strategic, consistent practice that's fueled by new business tools, which exist to make you successful. The resources are available, as technology innovation continues to flourish. However, it's up to agencies to take advantage of what's available to them.

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

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* https://www.mediapost.com/publications/article/311011/agency-forecasts-look-for-growth-in-the-4-5-ran.html

GLOSSARY

New Tools, or Tools Making Their First Appearance

Box:
Box Platform enables you to build custom applications in the cloud without having to build and maintain your own content management services

ActiveCampaign::
Integrated email marketing, marketing automation, and small business CRM

DiscoverOrg:
Want to generate better leads? **DiscoverOrg** is the leading marketing and sales intelligence solution

Rocket Reach:
Rocketreach finds email, phone & social media for 250M+ professionals

Base CRM:
CRM software geared towards scientifically making your small business, mid-market or enterprise sales team 10x more productive

Freshsales:
Make calls, send emails and see conversations being auto-logged and linked to the right record

Less Annoying CRM:
Thousands of small businesses use Less Annoying CRM to manage contacts, track leads, and stay on top of follow-up

Insightly:
BeyondCRM. Over 1.5 million worldwide small and mid-size business users build relationships, accelerate sales and deliver projects with the Insightly CRMs

Zoho:
Run your entire business with Zoho's suite of online productivity tools and SaaS applications. Over 30 million users trust us worldwide

Leadsquared:
Complete Marketing Automation and CRM software for businesses

Exponia:
Improve every step of conversion funnel with unique combination of analytics and automation in one integrated experience cloud

IRI:
IRI integrates the world's largest set of otherwise disconnected purchase, media, social, causal and loyalty data to help CPG, retail, over-the-counter health care and media companies grow their businesses

GLOSSARY

New Tools, or Tools Making Their First Appearance

Ipsos:
Ipsos is a global market research and a consulting firm

GfK:
GfK is the trusted source of relevant market and consumer information

CrystalKnows:
Crystal shows you the best way to communicate with any prospect, customer, or coworker based on their unique personality.

Guidepoint:
Guidepoint is the second-largest expert network, providing business professionals with opportunities to talk with industry experts who can answer their specialized industry questions before making investment or business decisions.

Thinglink:
Thinglink develops tools for image interaction that allow content sharing via online images

Snappa:
Snappa makes it easy to create any type of online graphic. Create & publish images for social media, blogs, ads, and more

Wideo:
Create professional animated videos for your marketing campaigns in minutes. Make explainer videos, product presentation videos, promo videos and much more.

Venngage:
Join over 1 million people creating their own professional graphics with our easy to use infographic maker. Sign up for free and choose from 1000+ infographic templates

NoNotes:
Record your calls with the option to transcribe using Call Recording By NoNotes.

Designspiration:
Designspiration is the hub for discovering great art, design, architecture, photography, typography and web inspiration.   :

PhraseGenerator:
Generates random phrases and sentences, poking fun at political rhetoric, blog headlines, action movie titles and more.

GLOSSARY BY CATEGORY

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT

Contently
Freelance Writers
Snappa
Wideo
Venngage
NoNotes
Checklist
Designspiration
PhraseGenerator
ThingLink

RESEARCH SERVICES

AAAA (4A's)
eMarketer
Forrester
Gartner
Mintel
Nielsen
Second Wind
Kantar
QuintilesIMS
GfK
IRI
Ipsos

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Google+
Facebook
Twitter
YouTube
Flickr
Instagram
LinkedIn
Pinterest
Snapchat
Tumblr

MARKETING AUTOMATION / INBOUND MARKETING

LeadSquared
HubSpot Marketing
Marketo
Oracle Eloqua
Constant Contact
Zoho Campaigns
Active Campaign
Exponea
SharpSpring
Pardot
Act-On

PROSPECT INTELLIGENCE TOOLS

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

PROSPECT CONTACT / LIST BUILDING SERVICES

Access Confidential
Hoovers
LinkedIn
Manta
Pearlfinders
Red Books
Relationship Science
Winmo

EMAIL MARKETING SERVICES

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

CRM

Zoho
Salesforce
Sugar
Freshsales
Pipedrive
Apptivo
Insightly
HubSpot
Microsoft Dynamics
Excel
Base CRM
Pipeline Deals
Less Annoying CRM