

WHERE B2B IS AND WHERE IT'S GOING:

MAKING MARTECH WORK FOR YOU IN 2022... AND BEYOND



The past few years have seen a continuing acceleration in use of marketing technology (MarTech) in B2B. MarTech is clearly one of the industries 'of the moment'.

But while many B2B organisations have started with ad-hoc usage of these shiny new tools, there's a rising need to consider how to make MarTech really work for businesses and drive return on investment.

We felt it was a good time to take a closer look at where organisations are at with MarTech today and where it's heading in the future.

More specifically...

- **How do people view MarTech?**
- **How is it being used right now?**
- **What are the challenges?**
- **How will usage evolve in the future?**
- **What do teams want from agency partners?**

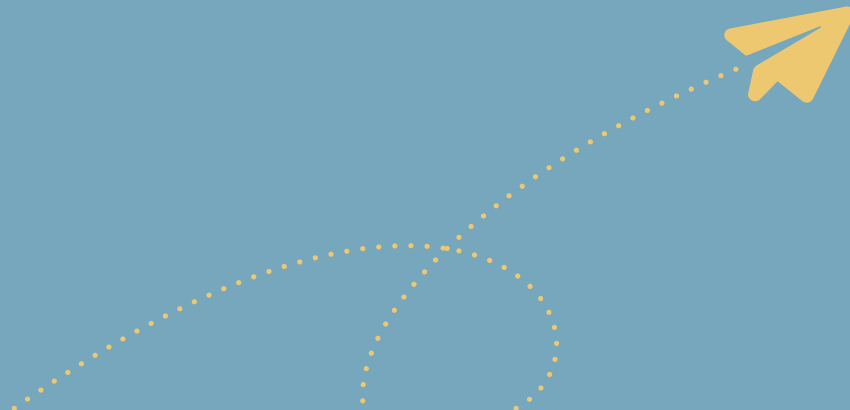
We found that there are some strikingly consistent gaps among marketing teams. But more encouragingly, we found some distinct areas where marketing departments can realise gains in 2022 and beyond.



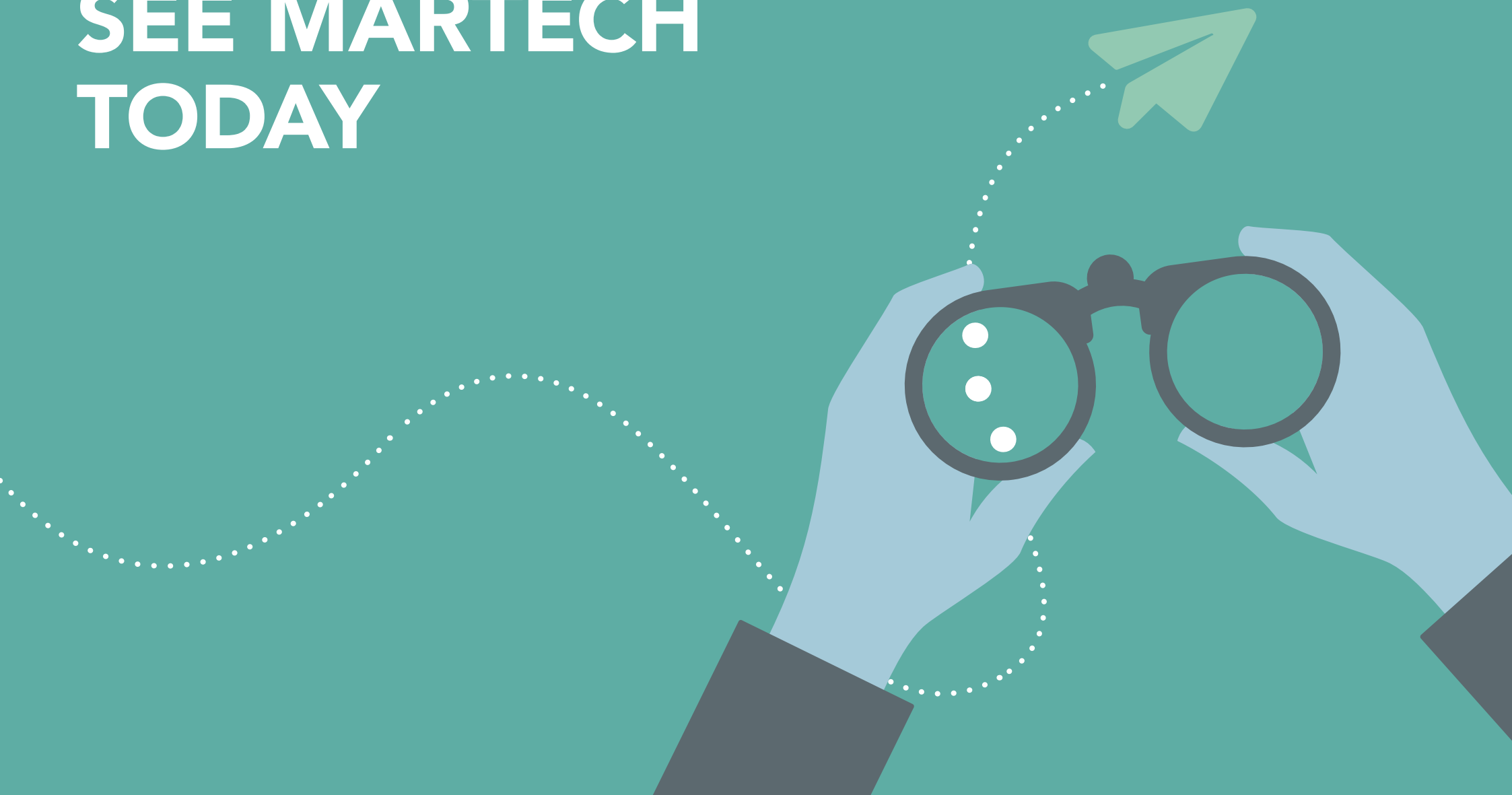
Methodology

We spoke to directors and heads of marketing within large, international B2B-focused organisations. We also conducted interviews with MarTech consultants.

This was supported by a review of recent papers and research on the current thinking of opinion leaders and key influencers in the MarTech space.



HOW PEOPLE SEE MARTECH TODAY



"MarTech describes the range of tools and software that marketers use to achieve their goals and objectives, assisting with marketing workflows; customer acquisition; and retention; brand and communications; content and social; and data analytics."

– MarTech Report 2021/21, MarTech Alliance

The above definition is a useful one for sure. But what are others saying? How do they really see MarTech?

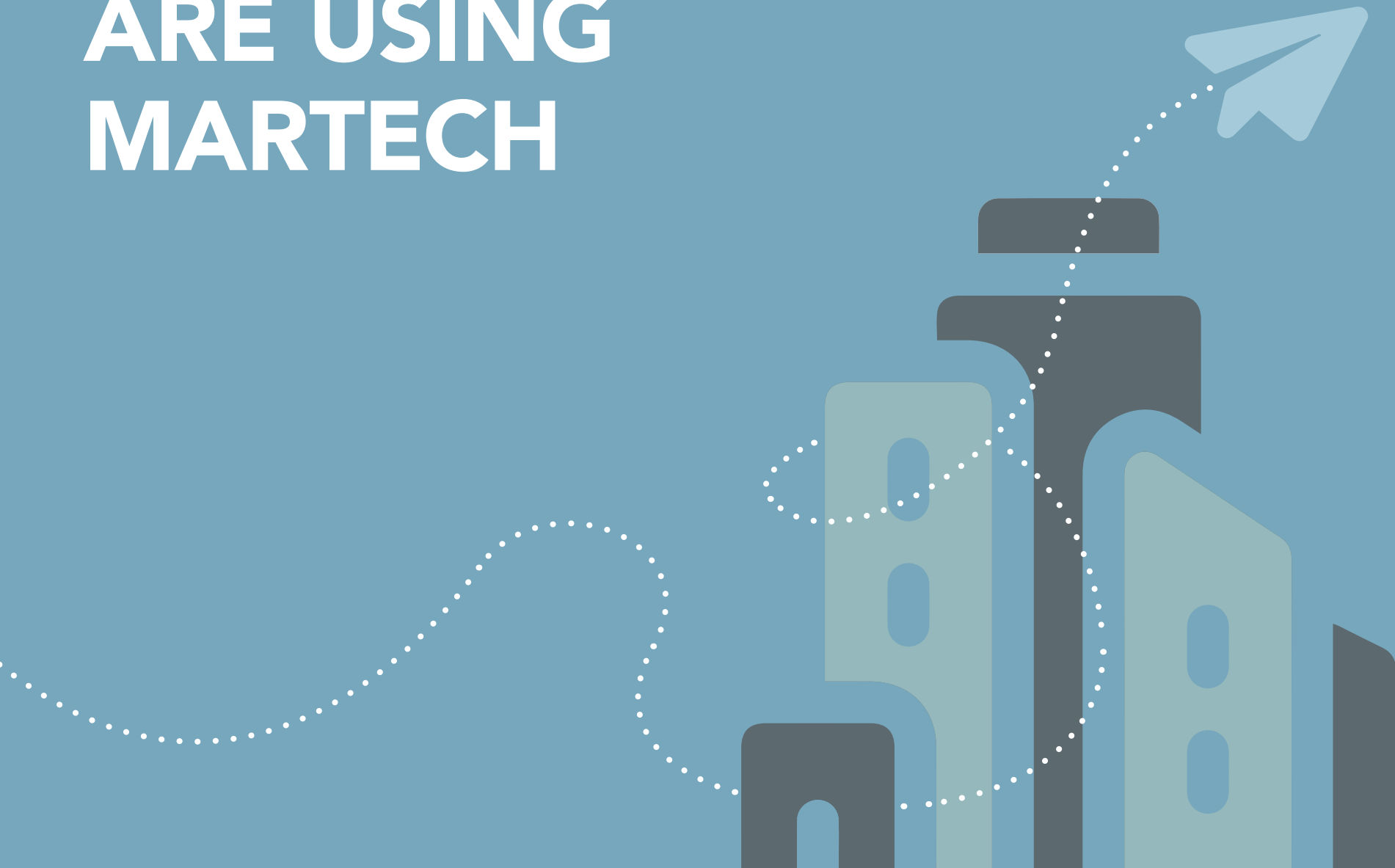
Our findings revealed a general consensus; MarTech refers to tools that help organisations manage and improve customer journeys – with a clear emphasis on acquisition and management of leads.

However, there are some subtle differences in how people define MarTech based on the scale of their business and how systemic its adoption is within their organisation. So, the greater the scale/adoption, the more strategic/less tactical the definition. Think lead acquisition vs. customer journey.

And most tellingly, driving return on investment was inferred rather than expressly stated.



HOW BUSINESSES ARE USING MARTECH



In terms of where organisations are on their respective MarTech journeys, we discovered many are in the early stages of usage and adoption. That means email, rather than end-to-end customer journey management. And businesses are not fully set up to deliver on the promise the technology offers.

Obstacles centre around governance and data. Marketing teams are still looking to mobilise and segment sales databases in a compliant and optimal way. And operational challenges of integration and implementation persist.

As a result, many have yet to leverage MarTech beyond email. Yet, all organisations agree there is great potential in MarTech.

“We have only scratched the surface. There is huge potential. But we are still learning. Still evolving.”

How do we overcome these obstacles? Skills and knowledge will be vital if organisations are to succeed. While it's clear tech has advanced rapidly, training has lagged behind and teams are still learning.

MarTech skills need to catch up with tech development. Until this happens, there is a reluctance to invest in more technology.

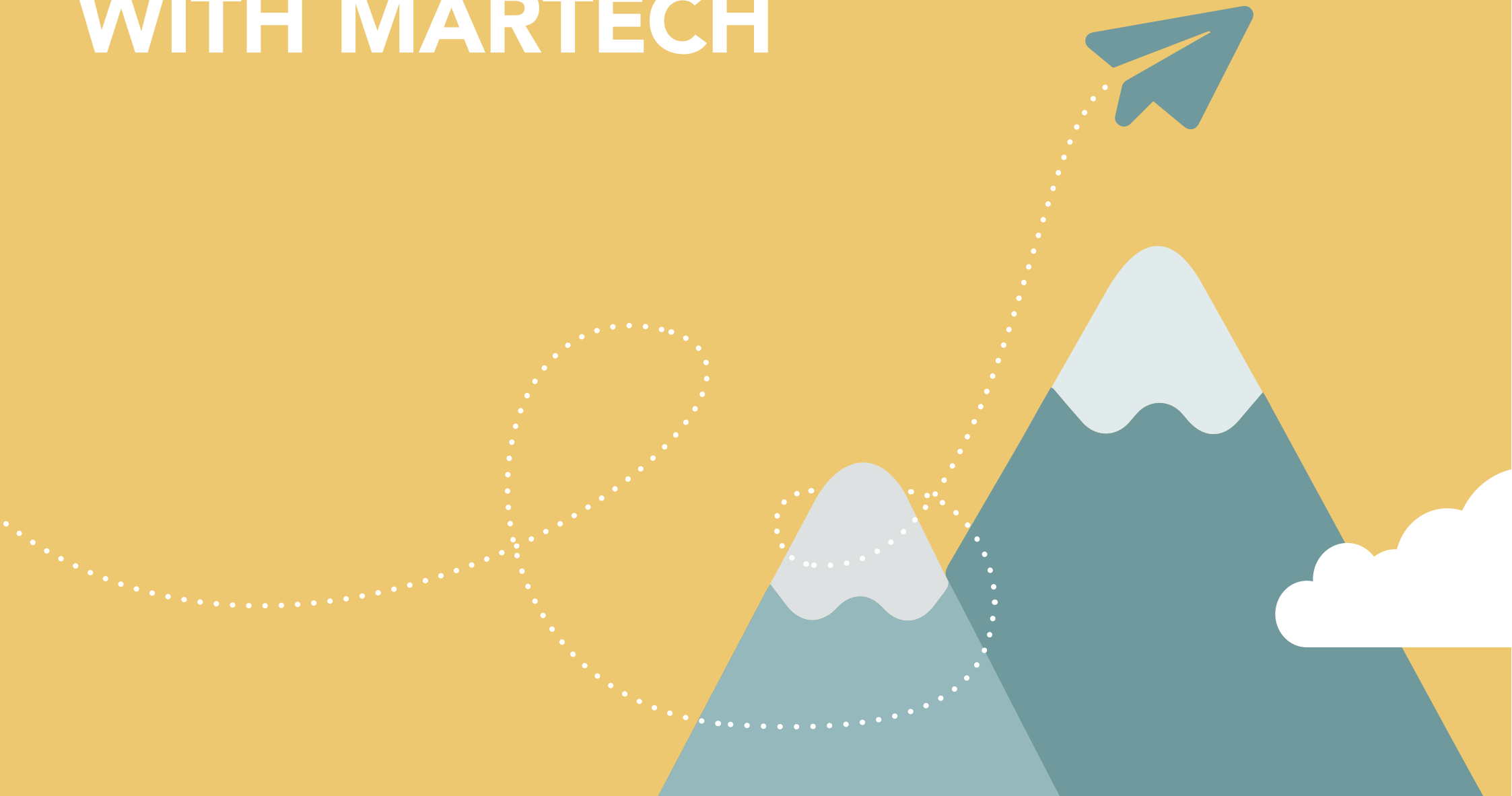
The Agency Inc take

We believe that organisations who prioritise learning and integration of MarTech skillsets will be well placed for success. Key areas to focus on include training, MarTech talent acquisition and business-wide engagement.

Accelerating programmes in all three areas will overcome the challenges of today and tomorrow.



KEY CHALLENGES WITH MARTECH



Challenges broadly fall into two areas. And it's no surprise they can be categorised by that age-old divide between sales and marketing.

Sales

The core pain point revolves around the interlock with the marketing team. Despite MarTech's best intentions to bridge this gap and improve efficiency, there continues to be a disconnect.

Sales have reservations regarding not only the quality of MarTech communications, content and timing, but also the quality of leads that result from such endeavours. As a result, leads are often not followed through and cynicism abounds.

"Sales would rather find prospects the way they have always done it."

Compounding these problems is the complexity of local execution. Many larger, global businesses find that MarTech fails to provide a solution for local translation campaigns – literally and conceptually. For example, best practice in the Middle East can result in regulatory problems in China.

And there is work needed to develop internal resourcing/training at a local level as well as internal buy-in across borders and business unit silos.

The Agency Inc take

We believe organisations that empower their sales teams via internal campaigns with clear, tailored messaging and insights are more likely to secure that all-important interlock.

That means involving sales and key stakeholders from the start to set objectives and outcomes they can expect. Keeping them informed of activities will build excitement and help secure buy-in.



Marketing

The flipside is that marketing teams need to fuel their MarTech with the right content, and be ever-ready to respond at just the right time.

Copy, visuals and video all need to fit with MarTech. And one size does not fit all. Different customers need customised content. Different personas require personalised, emotive storytelling across different segments.

And there's currently a gap between the content businesses *have* and the content businesses *need* for MarTech.

"In an ideal world we would have a pool of tailored content for personas, but this takes time."

While some organisations are transitioning from email to omni-channel journey planning, there is still a way to go. As the content gap continues, a completely connected customer experience will remain elusive.

For marketing teams, this fragmented experience extends to reporting they are still getting to grips with. Having multiple data dashboards is great, but making them accessible across their organisation and make sense is another matter.

The Agency Inc take

We believe organisations who avoid creating content for content's sake will win. Replacing technical content with simple, emotive storytelling focused on your customer's needs will hit home across that integrated omni-channel experience.

When developing content, think about your brand and customer holistically for best results. Content testing and best-practice pilots will provide the results you need to share across your organisation and secure greater buy-in.



HOW MARTECH USAGE WILL EVOLVE



MarTech today



344.8bn
industry

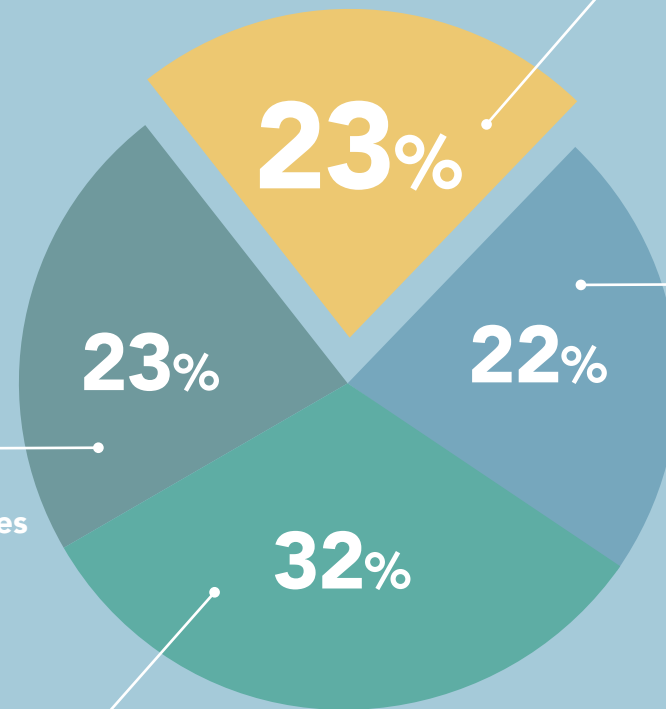
Overall marketing budget spend



spent on
agencies services



on staff
& labour



spent on
MarTech



spent on
media

We have a picture of where many are at with MarTech today. But where is it headed?

People see usage evolving in a practical sense. Teams want digital marketing to become more sophisticated and more measurable. Indeed, one business leader we spoke with hoped for "one clear, integrated ecosystem...across divisions".

But beyond simply aiming for better digital marketing, the broader potential of MarTech was barely mentioned.

A general lack of clarity exists about the future of MarTech usage, accompanied by a consistent, disarming modesty about where many are today.

"We can't see ahead yet and we're not sure where to go next."

The focus now is more on learning how to use/get more out of MarTech, rather than worrying how tools will evolve in the next few years.



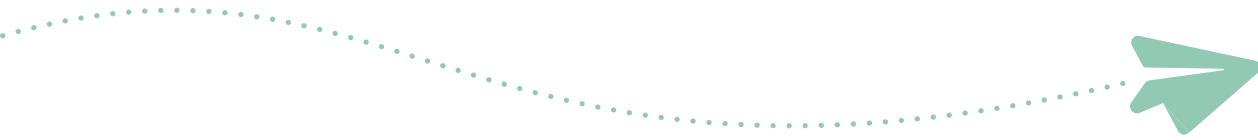
The Agency Inc take

We believe MarTech's evolution lies in better operational management of investment and adoption. Businesses must not keep throwing new MarTech over their shoulder to marketing and expect best-in-class delivery and ROI.

Organisations should set clear objectives on what they want to get from MarTech and go from there with a clear strategy. And the businesses that organise for continuous learning and support will win.

WHAT ORGANISATIONS WANT FROM MARTECH DELIVERY PARTNERS





Today, there are a range of MarTech solutions employed by different businesses, from HubSpot to Salesforce. And agency partners need to be familiar with 'my platform' to add real value. A generalist understanding is of little use.

Businesses expect their agency to know what to do, not ask, "How do I do this?" Most of all, they value fully integrated partners.

"One agency I work with uploads the whole campaign – landing page, campaign assets, all the reporting. It's great."

In the short term, businesses are looking for agency partners to provide more than just great campaigns. They want support with MarTech delivery so their teams can spend more time on campaign analysis, segmenting leads and working out value propositions.

In the long term, clients expect to take implementation back in house while agencies continue to deliver the story-led campaigns and content that fuel MarTech.

As always, the partners who deliver better storytelling, journey mapping and personalisation are highly sought after. One organisation we interviewed spoke of needing "storytelling with the right tone, a common thread and consistent use of visuals and graphics." They're not alone.

The Agency Inc take

We believe there is an opportunity for businesses to bring in agency partners and develop MarTech skills together. It is vital both share learning and best practice to ensure success.

Joint investment in learning will pay dividends as marketing delivery evolves into more end-to-end customer journey management.

CONCLUSION



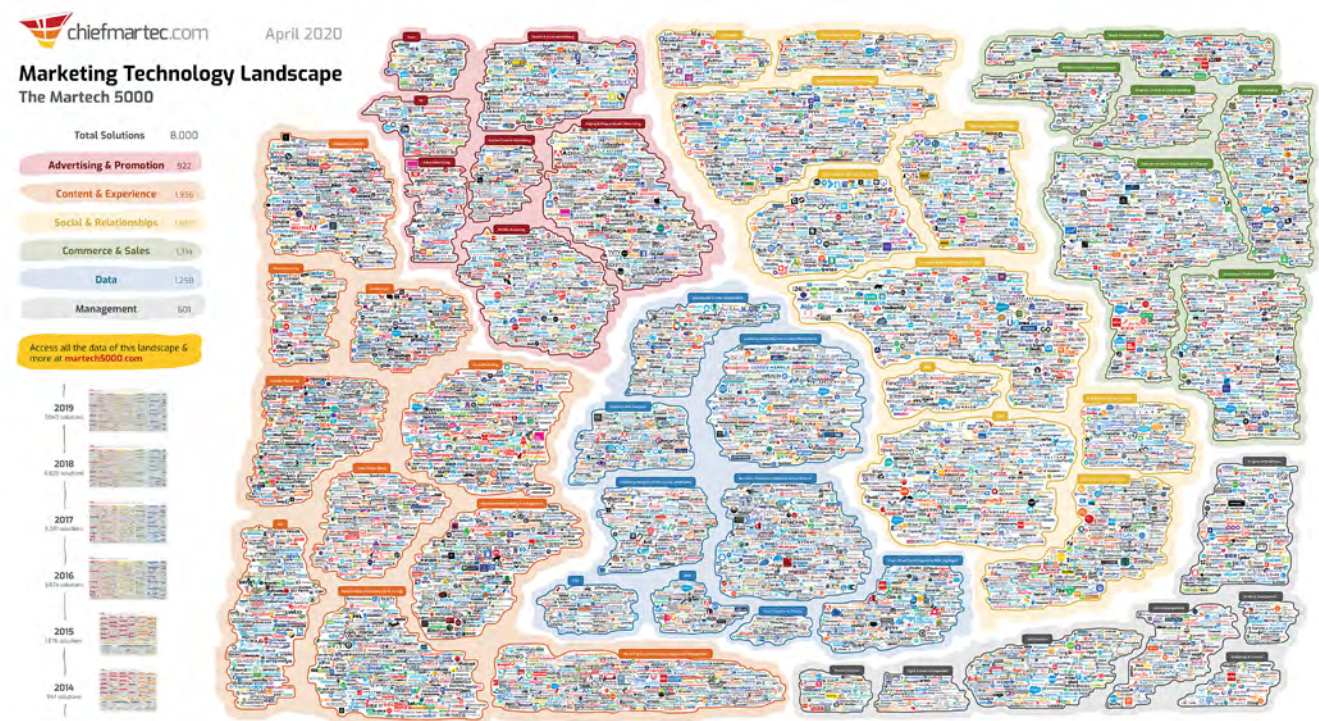
Conclusion

When looking at Scott Brinker's famous map of MarTech (shown page right), it is natural to feel as though all big, international businesses have huge, integrated tech stacks. And surely they must have armies of experts and colourful dashboards to present to the board to prove a ROI?

Not quite, as we have seen. The reality is very different. Disarmingly so.

The truth is, everyone is struggling to work out how to deliver great marketing with MarTech. And many are still bogged down in integration, implementation and trying to justify their investment. As a result, organisations are delivering a limited number of tactics while working hard to transition to omni-channel journey planning that delivers on its promise.

So, if it all feels like hard work to you, don't worry. You're not the only one. The question is how do you make MarTech work for you?



Marketing Technology Landscape Supergraphic (2020): Martech 5000 – really 8,000, but who's counting, Scott Brinker

To make MarTech work for you in 2022, here are three areas to start with:

1 Bridge the skills gap, together

Tech development has outpaced adoption and skills development. There is a unique opportunity, now, for brand and agency teams to work together to accelerate skills development focused on how to use MarTech, not on buying more whizzy MarTech. We recommend co-investment for this journey. The winners will learn together, at pace, and share best practice across their organisations.

2 Focus on customer journeys and the content that fuels them

Everyone is struggling with the move from traditional campaigns to journey mapping, building engaging content around your customer and telling a simple, compelling and emotive story. The winners will focus on storytelling with the right tone, a

common thread and consistent use of visual branding. The agency partners who will be most valued are those who are gifted storytellers as well as skilled practitioners in delivering stand-out creative assets across MarTech platforms.

3 Pilot different approaches, roll out best practice

There is no single blueprint for success, and rarely one solution that works across all markets. Successful organisations will pilot different approaches, underpinned by clear objectives and strategy. Then, offer up best practice solutions across markets so that they can be accessed and implemented efficiently. The winners will have a plan for continuous learning that builds to omni-channel journey delivery anchored to return on investment.

This is an exciting opportunity for marketing and agency teams to work together on this journey. And the winners will be committed to learning at pace and sharing what really works.

After all, MarTech shouldn't be such hard work.



WE MAKE THE COMPLICATED SIMPLE