

STATE OF PRODUCT MARKETING 2017



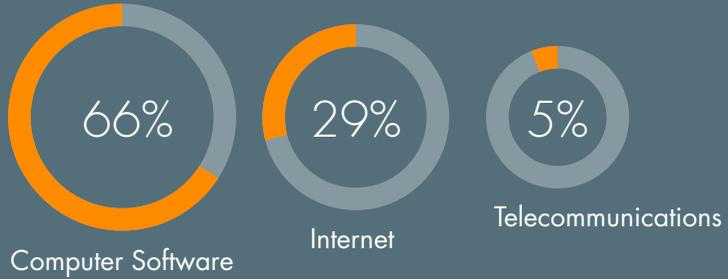
INTRODUCTION

In our earlier study (*State of Product Marketing 2015*), we noted how product marketing had changed dramatically in the digital age. Today, our tools and technologies enable us to more efficiently deliver our offerings to customers, wherever they may be. But more technology brings more complexity. And with business getting more and more competitive, marketers are often caught between the need to grow their customer base versus engaging their existing customers more meaningfully. So we decided it was time to speak with product marketers once again, to discover what has changed, what hasn't and how marketers are finding their way in this complex maze.

Here's what we found.

RESPONDENT PROFILE

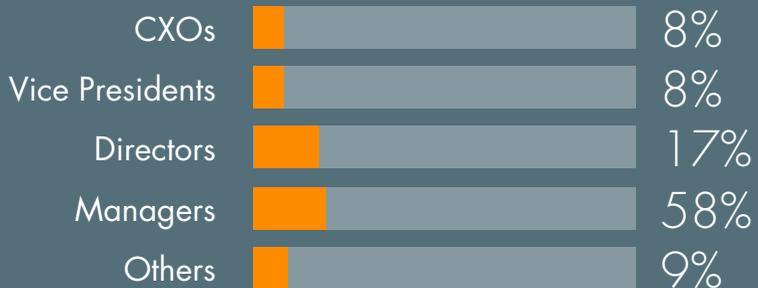
INDUSTRY BREAK-UP



REVENUE BREAK-UP



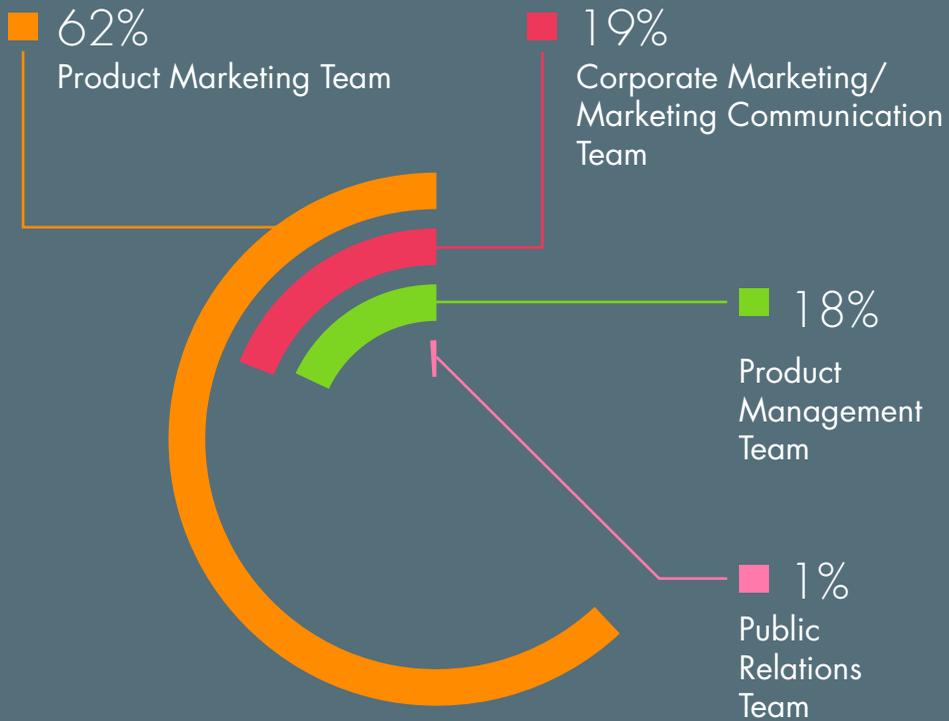
LEVEL



Product marketing teams own product launch activities

62 percent of organizations we spoke with identified their product marketing teams as owners of their product launch activities.

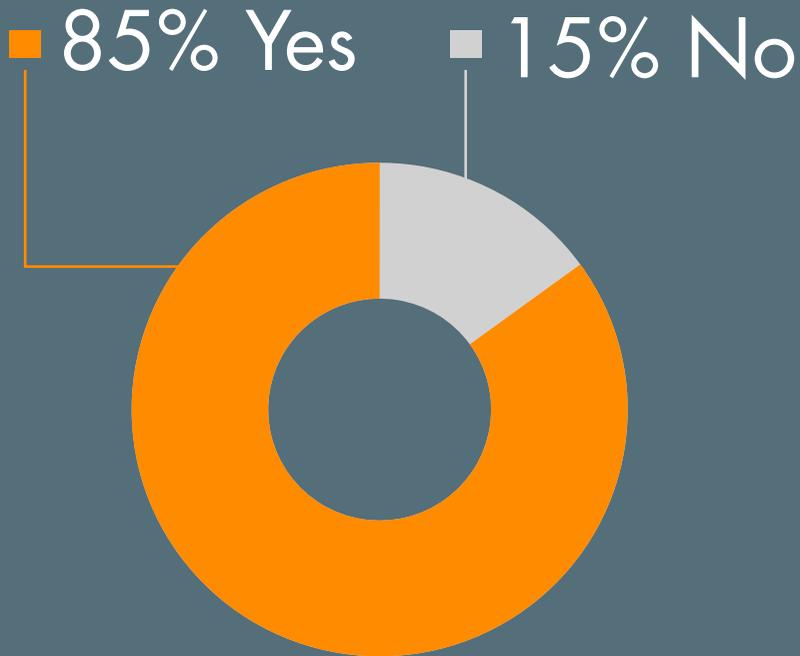
// Which of the following teams own product launch activities in your organization?



Majority of organizations invest in product marketing

85 percent of respondents said their organizations invested in product marketing while 15% said theirs didn't.

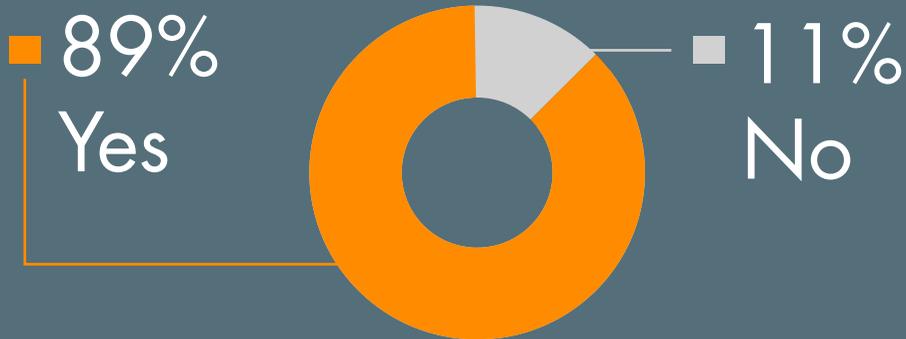
// Does your organization invest in product marketing?



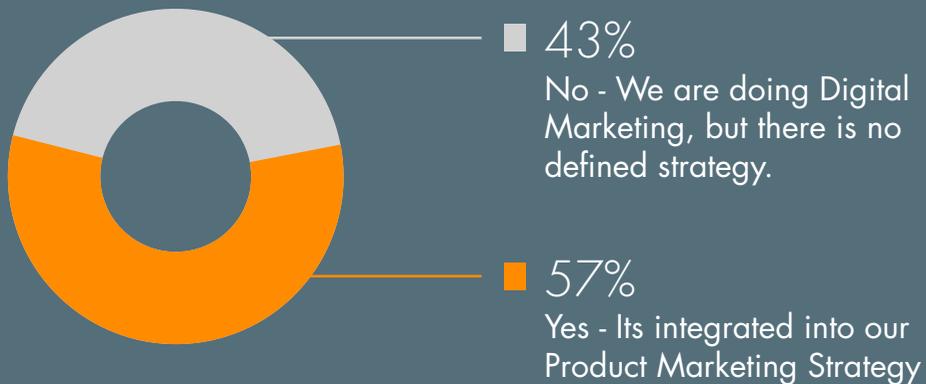
Digital marketing, although an integral part of product marketing, needs strategic support

While 89% of marketers said digital marketing was an integral part of their product marketing, only 57% admitted to having a clearly defined digital strategy. 43% of respondents said they were using digital marketing but with no defined strategy.

// Is Digital marketing an integral part of your product marketing?



// Does your organization have a clearly defined Digital Marketing strategy for product marketing?



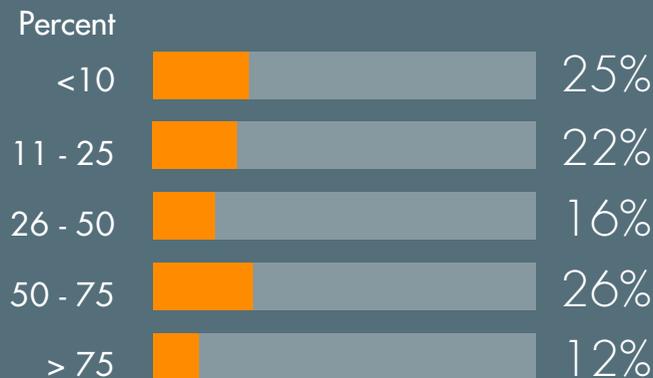
While online sales remain low, digital marketing budgets appear well represented

64 percent of organizations had online sales less than 10% of their overall product sales. However, 54% of them had a digital marketing budget that accounted for over 25% of their overall product marketing budget. This is indeed a positive trend since extensive product research at the pre-sale stage by buyers happens online.

// What proportion of your product sales is online?



// What proportion of your product marketing budget is digital?



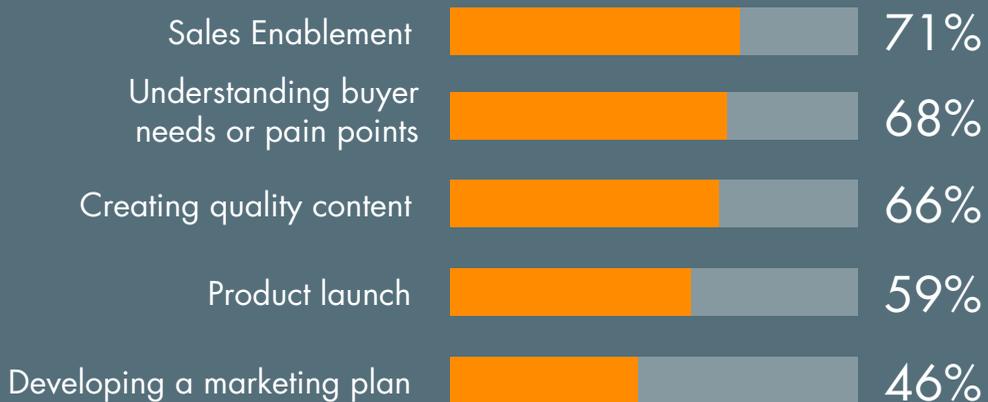
'Sales Enablement' and 'understanding buyer needs' top the list of activities that marketers invest time in

When asked to list the top 5 activities in which they invested time to achieve their product marketing goals, 71% of marketers chose *sales enablement*. This was followed by *understanding buyer needs or pain points* (68%), *creating quality content* (66%), *product launch* (59%), and *developing a marketing plan* (46%).

While a high score on sales enablement is understandable given the current pressure on sales, it was surprising to see only 14% of respondents mentioning *customer journey mapping* and 20% mentioning *building buyer personas* as priority activities. We think these are actually integral to the success of a sales enablement program.

Interestingly, in an earlier study (*Refer: State of B2B Marketing 2016*), understanding the customer journey was cited by marketers as the most important requirement for digital marketing initiatives over the next three years, an apparent shortcoming between intent and practice that may need to be bridged.

// Of the following activities, which are the top 5 that you invest your time in to achieve your product marketing goals?



'Website' is the most effective digital channel

In keeping with trends seen previously (*Refer: State of B2B Product Marketing 2015*), *website* (79%) was chosen as the most effective online/digital channel for meeting product marketing goals, followed by *organic search* (60%).

In contrast, *email* (45%) and *social media* (41%) had sharply dropped from their previous rankings.

// Which of the following digital/online channels have you found to be most effective in meeting your product marketing goals?

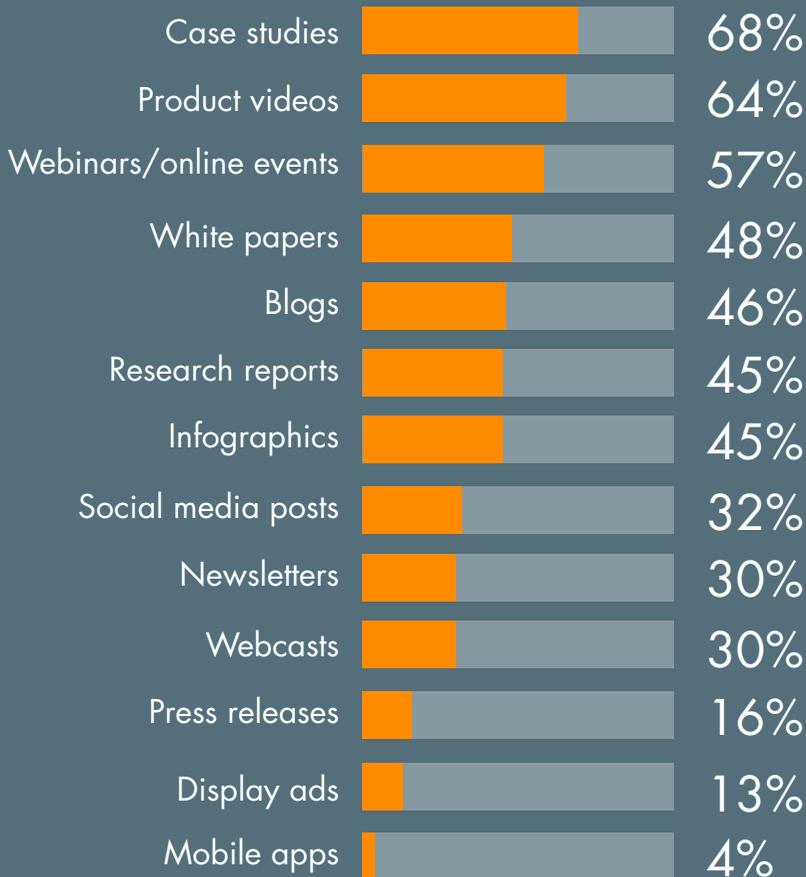


'Case studies' and 'product videos' are the most preferred digital assets

Case studies (68%) and *product videos* (64%) were picked by marketers as the most effective content assets in their product marketing program. This appears to be an affirmation of the rising popularity of video in B2B marketing and the increasing consumption of video content both in B2C and B2B marketing.

Mobile apps (4%) and *display ads* (12%) were the least preferred content assets.

// Which of the following digital content assets have you found to be most effective in your product marketing program?

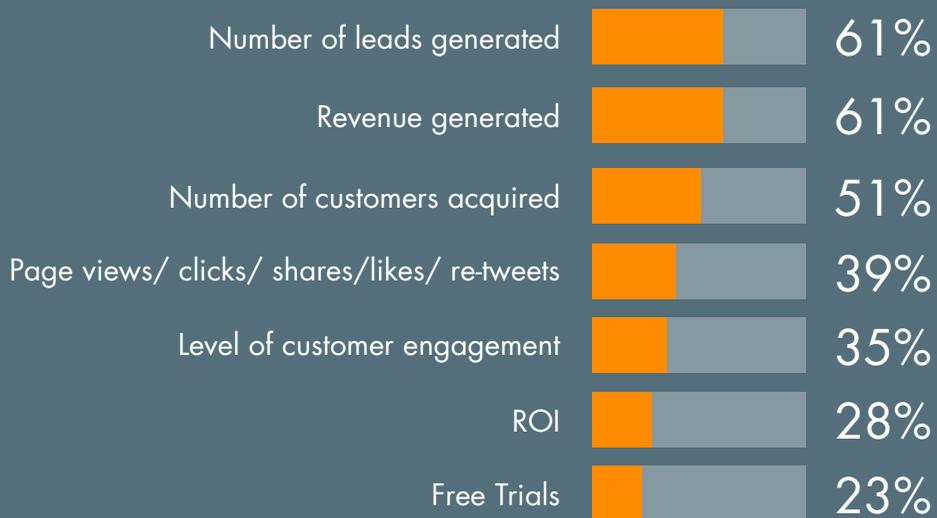


Sales metrics are by far the most popular for measuring the impact of product marketing

Revenue (61%), *number of leads* (61%) and *customers acquired* (51%) were the leading metrics that organizations used for measuring the impact of their product marketing efforts.

Customer engagement (35%) continued to lag in priority.

// Which of these metrics does your organization use for measuring the impact of product marketing?



Producing quality content is the key challenge faced by product marketers

56 percent of respondents cited *time constraints in producing quality content* as the key product marketing challenge they faced. Other top ranking challenges included *aligning objectives with sales teams* (42%) and *generating quality leads* (42%).

// What are the key product marketing challenges you face?



Webinars, emailers, and social media updates drive customer engagement

Webinars (68%), emailers (66%) and social media updates (56%) were the most popular ways in which marketers engaged with their customers on a regular basis.

Here's the interesting thing: while email and social media were not highly-rated as effective channels for meeting product marketing goals – which, as we've seen, are primarily sales-related – they seem to work well in meeting the post-sale customer engagement objective.

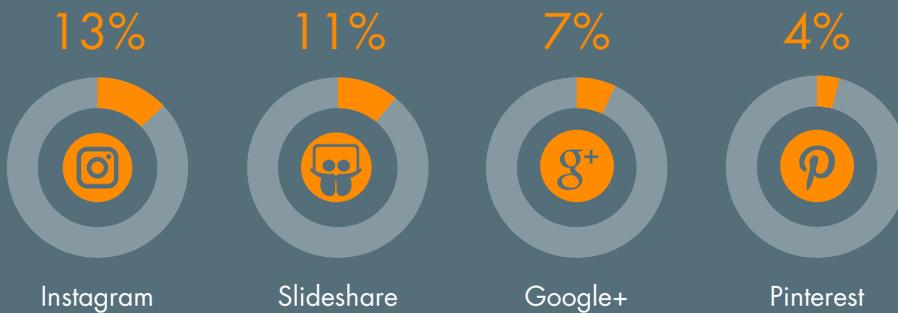
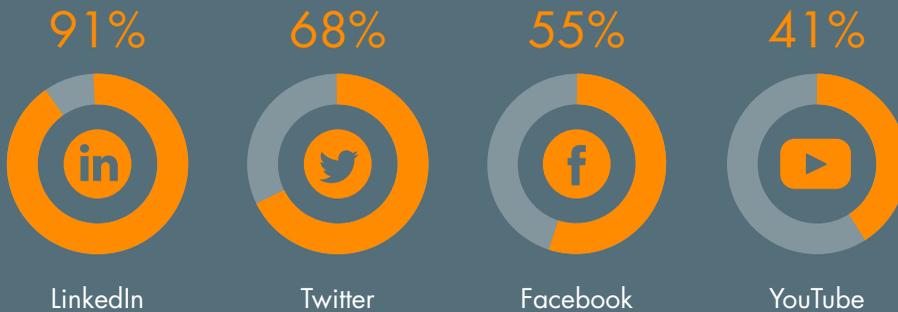
// How do you engage on a regular basis with your existing users?



LinkedIn continues to be the most preferred social media platform for B2B marketers

91 percent of marketers chose *LinkedIn* as their preferred social media platform, followed by *Twitter* (68%) and *Facebook* (55%).

// Which are your most preferred social media platforms?



FINAL THOUGHTS

It is said, the more things change, the more they stay the same! Well, that holds true for a lot of what we stumbled upon in this study.

For one, a majority of organizations continue to invest in product marketing. That's the good news. On the other hand, while digital marketing has been integrated to a large extent into the product marketing function in most organizations, many respondents admitted to the lack of having a clear digital strategy to drive it.

Sales and revenue generation continue to be the overarching concern of marketers. As a result, relationship metrics like customer engagement have received less than their share of attention.

The website, often taken for granted, has managed to retain its position as the most effective digital channel for product marketers. Interestingly, we saw less enthusiasm this year for email and social media as channels for meeting product marketing goals.

Mobile continues to receive less patronage from B2B marketers. With the world going progressively more mobile, we see a huge opportunity here for marketers to use this as a medium to engage with their customers.

Creating quality content continues to be a challenge for marketers. While sales enablement topped the list of activities that marketers invested their time in, deconstructing the customer journey and building buyer persona are two activities that appear to suffer from neglect. As messaging becomes more personalized, understanding the customer at a granular level will become necessary, and organizations need to put a process in place and adopt newer technologies to be able to do this.

ABOUT ANALYSTS



Ravish Kamath
Senior Director, Products

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Ravish Kamath has over a decade of experience in bringing products and ideas to life. At Regalix, Ravish is responsible for driving the overall product strategy and its execution. He is passionate about prototyping, evangelizing new technologies, building and mentoring teams and of course launching new products.



Arunh Krishnan
Senior Analyst

Arunh started his career with consumer product marketing, moved to brand management, and been involved in new product launches. In his various roles, he has had deep involvement with consumer and product research. Arunh is currently involved in studying emerging trends and understanding consumer behavior in the digital space.

ABOUT SHAREDDEMOS

ShareDemos is an enablement platform that provides solutions for sales and technical marketing teams. The platform has been built from scratch to solve issues around authoring, organization, privacy and analytics.

ShareDemos is a product developed and managed by Regalix Inc., a digital marketing agency with a focus on enablement content. After being in closed beta for over a year, the platform now powers various enablement initiatives within VMware, NetApp, SilverPeak and similar companies.

ABOUT REGALIX RESEARCH

Headquartered in Silicon Valley, we help the CMO organization leverage emerging digital practices for creating marketing leverage as they bring new products and innovation to market.

Regalix Research helps marketers through research-based insights, consulting and peer-to-peer programs that guide marketing strategy development and execution. Our focus is helping Technology companies leverage innovation and best practices to create real differentiation.

Our analysts are practitioners with a successful track record of delivering real marketing results for both leading Fortune 500 companies as well as venture backed firms.

For more information

To find out how we can help you,
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