ACXIOM

Is partnership the key to martech success?

A brand perspective on service partners

Contents

Executive Summary

Acxiom partnered with research and strategy agency MTM to survey business decision-makers from across the UK and the US to gain insight into the state of the martech service partner landscape.

This whitepaper explores current approaches to martech service partnerships, the opportunities and challenges that partnerships present, and how brands and service partners can ensure the success of current and future martech service partnerships.

In today's digital economy, brands depend on marketing technology (martech) solutions to automate their workflows and to deliver the personalized brand experiences that their customers have come to expect at scale. As recent technological developments (such as the rise of AI and machine learning) have rendered solutions in the martech space increasingly complex, few brands have the capabilities and expertise to implement and manage a suite of solutions in-house. As a result, many brands choose to on-board an external martech service partner to act as a strategic advisor and to help with the deployment, integration and optimization of solutions.

Service partners boast comprehensive technical and marketing expertise, and can help brands to engineer tech stacks that will deliver against their marketing and business objectives.

Service partners can take many forms as a number of different types of organizations offer partnership services. Our survey suggests that brands typically engage large leading management consultancies or companies that specialize in a specific technology/solution.

Each service partner offers a unique set of specialized services that may be specific to a type of technology platform, an area of martech, or a certain stage of the tech lifecycle (such as implementation or day to day management). As such, our survey shows that brands will generally work with more than one partner at a time (on average three to four).

As the world of marketing technology rapidly evolves service partnerships are becoming increasingly important, and are therefore commanding an increasing share of martech budgets.

According to our survey, on average nearly half of martech budgets are dedicated to service partnerships, and this figure is predicted to grow over the next 12 months.

With an increasing amount of budget on the line, it is more important than ever that brands select a service partner that is a good fit for their organization to set themselves up for success. Our survey indicates that many brands embark on a lengthy and thorough selection process to find a partner that can demonstrate possession of both technical certifications/credentials and previous experience in their industry. Given the requirement for service partners to work with multiple teams across a business, many brands also look for a partner that aligns with their company culture.

The decision-making process can be difficult, as it often invites input from a number of stakeholders (e.g. marketing, data and analytics, IT, customer intelligence) with differing objectives and priorities.

Yet, even after brands have participated in a rigorous selection process, martech partnerships are not without their challenges. A number of respondents to our survey reported experiencing challenges with their service partner related to early mistakes made during the configuration process, and delays to the initial implementation timeline.

Ultimately, successful martech partnerships rest on the actions of both partners and the brands that engage them.

To help brands ensure the effective implementation and ongoing success of any martech investment, Acxiom has identified **seven key pillars for success**.

Our survey indicates that brands value partners that can help them understand their current and future martech needs, and that prioritize empowering teams with the skills necessary to manage a solution once a partnership has concluded. Overall, partners must be a source of trusted advice and continual support across the lifecycle of a service partnership.

While partners must ensure they deliver value over the course of a partnership first and foremost, they can also play a pivotal role in supporting brands to ready themselves for martech partnerships. Partners should look to offer advice on areas where brands are least confident (e.g. evaluating tech options) and should proactively address challenges that may arise by outlining plans for mitigation during the early stages of engagement.

#1

Technology evaluation

Decide the most suitable martech solution for your ecosystem taking into account platform fit, scalability, and customization needs

#2

Use case review

Determine how the solution will be used to meet your objectives

#3

Data evaluation

Define what data is needed to underpin the solution and consider availability, permissions, and destinations

#4

Operational readiness assessment

Prepare the business to onboard the martech tool factoring in skills, ownership, availability, and stakeholder buy-in

#5

Internal operational planning

Plan for the project and working with a partner, including assigning SMEs, completing impact assessments, and setting timelines

#6

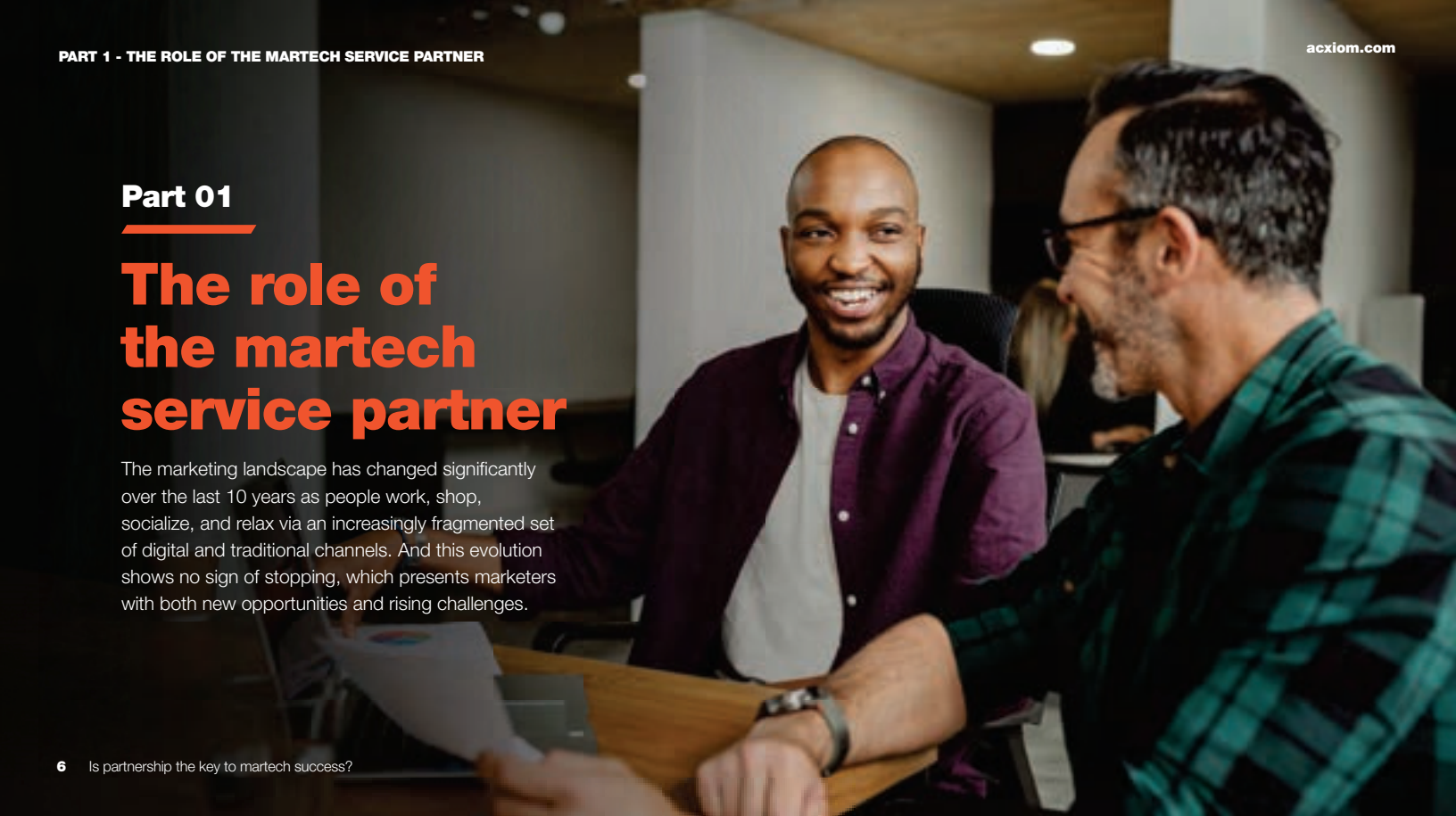
Project governance agreement

Create a model for execution that encompasses KPIs, forums, compliance, and project tracking

#7

Daily management plan

Define day-to-day operations and tools required to meet objectives



Part 01

The role of the martech service partner

The marketing landscape has changed significantly over the last 10 years as people work, shop, socialize, and relax via an increasingly fragmented set of digital and traditional channels. And this evolution shows no sign of stopping, which presents marketers with both new opportunities and rising challenges.

To cut through the noise and maintain a strong presence in their customers' minds, brands need to connect with each individual on an emotional level, in the right place, and at the right time. Personalized brand engagement is already an expectation and automation is the only way to deliver these customized experiences at scale.

Today, brands rely on marketing technology (or martech) to automate their workflows and optimize their marketing efforts. The martech sector includes solutions across a broad range of capabilities, including campaign execution and optimization, customer relationship management (CRM), and reporting and analytics, all of which must be underpinned by data. Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) are increasingly used to power solutions and are facilitating rapid technological advances in the martech space.

As the martech landscape becomes progressively more complex, few brands have the in-house experience and expertise to implement and manage all the solutions they need to meet their business objectives. Many choose to on-board an external martech service partner to act as a strategic advisor and to help with the deployment, integration, and optimization of more complex martech solutions.

Partners are typically brought on for one or a combination of the following tasks:

Implementation: the process of configuring and integrating the technology into the business

Optimization: improving the deployment and use cases of the technology to drive business outcomes

Ongoing management: the daily operation of the technology by an external team or consultant

This whitepaper explores how brands are approaching martech service partnerships, from selecting a partner to acquiring services. It also highlights the challenges and opportunities that partnerships present, and how brands and partners can work together to future-proof relationships.

Acxiom partnered with research and strategy agency MTM to survey 200 business decision-makers from brands across the UK and the US to gain insight into the state of the martech service partner landscape. Survey participants are senior leaders in marketing, technology, data, or other departments, and are from businesses with $100m+ annual revenue across a variety of sectors.

Martech Service Partner

Implementation

The process of **configuring** and **integrating** the technology into the business

Partners help with:

Embedding the solution into the business

Integrating the solution with the existing software

Optimization

Improving the **configurations and use cases** of the technology to drive business outcomes

Partners help with:

Evaluating the performance of existing stacks

Identifying missing connectors to increase utilization

Ongoing services and management

The **daily operation** of the martech solution by a partner (i.e. external team/consultant

Partners help with:

Ensuring seamless integration of solutions across workflows

Scaling solutions across a business

Part 02

The martech landscape and the purpose of partnerships

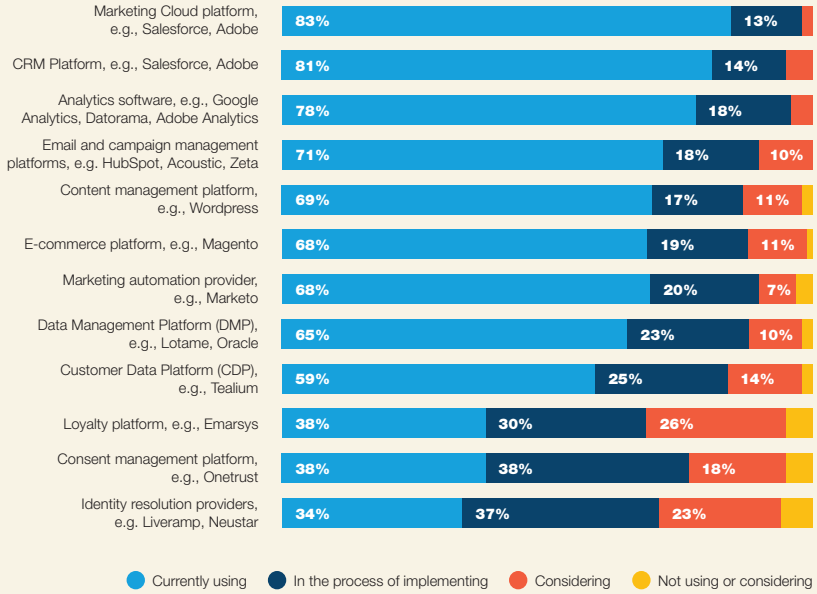
A sophisticated martech stack is critical to optimize marketing efforts and drive business results. Brands are increasingly reliant on martech solutions that can harness data from a growing variety of touchpoints to power personalized customer experiences that are consistent across channels.

Before delving into the world of martech service partnerships, we first wanted to find out which martech solutions are most commonly used, as well as which technology providers brands are choosing to work with.

The survey responses reveal that marketing clouds, CRM platforms, and analytics software are among the most established martech solutions, with 83% of respondents currently using a marketing cloud, 81% using a CRM platform, and 78% using analytics software.

Newer technologies that are emerging in response to the need for personalization in a privacy-first world (such as customer data platforms (CDPs), consent management platforms (CMPs), and identity resolution solutions) are less well established, but are being implemented or considered by the majority of organizations.

Which of the following best describes your organization's use of the marketing technology?



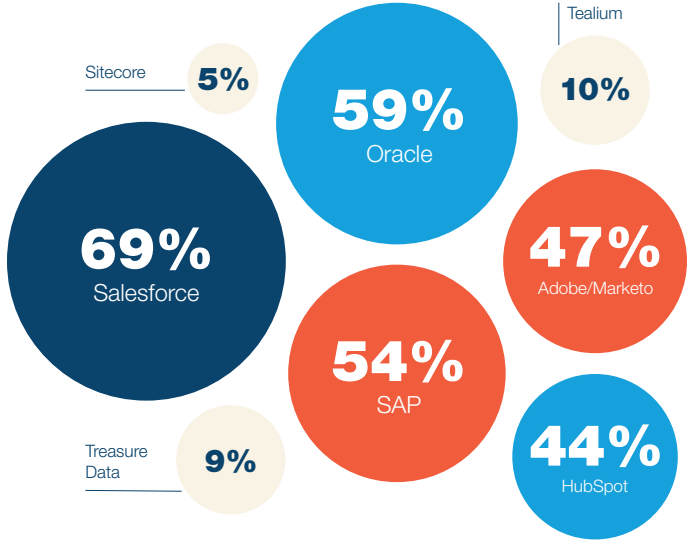
There are thousands of martech providers offering solutions that range from turn-key to highly bespoke, but our survey shows that the space is dominated by Salesforce, Oracle, and SAP. Over half of respondents have purchased a martech solution from each of these key players.

While the solutions offered by these technology vendors are incredibly advanced, the support they offer around implementation and optimization of the technology is fairly limited.

To realize the full value of their martech investment, brands need the right data, people, and processes to integrate, operate, and scale their tech stack in line with their business needs. Many don't have the internal resource or technical know-how to manage this themselves, which is where external martech service partners come in.

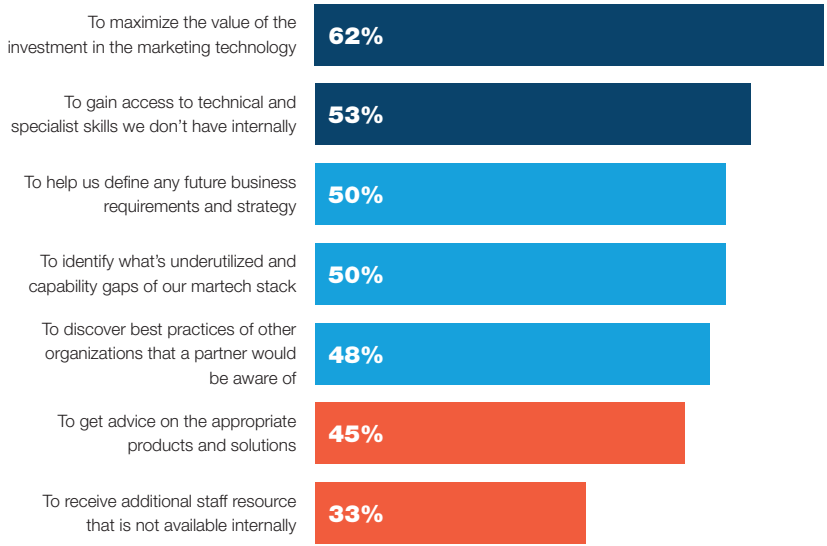
External partners often have a better understanding of the evolving martech landscape than brands, and can help to identify solutions that will best serve current and future business needs. This helps brands to make sustainable investments that deliver long-term returns. Service partners can also help businesses identify gaps within their existing martech stack, and can help them seize opportunities to generate further value through the adoption of new tools.

Which, if any, of the following providers has your company purchased martech from?



As such, by far the most common reason for brands to hire service partners is to maximize the value of their investment in martech (62%). The second most cited reason is to gain access to technical and specialist skills that they don't have internally (53%). This is indicative of the difficulties many brands have attracting and retaining talent with expertise in the martech sector.

Of the following choices, which, if any, address why your company decided to bring in an external marketing technology service partner(s) to help with your marketing technology?



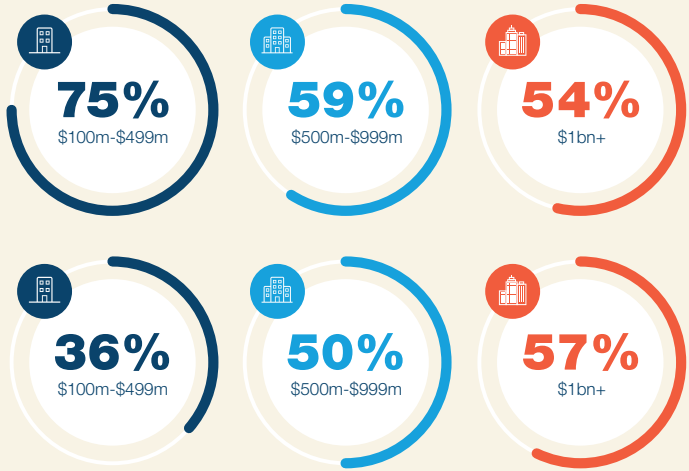
Smaller companies in particular may lack the specialized skills required to manage and operate solutions. As the chart shows, they are more likely to bring on a service partner to ensure the value of their investment in martech is maximized than medium and large organizations.

Conversely, large companies are usually more advanced in their solution infrastructure, and are therefore less likely to prioritize foundational considerations such as maximizing value when bringing on a partner. They may have other priorities; for example, large businesses look to martech service partners to discover the best practices of other organizations significantly more than medium and smaller sized companies.

Brands might see service partners as a relatively minor part of their martech strategy, when compared with their investment in the technology itself. But our survey reveals this is far from the case. In fact, 41% of martech budgets (on average) are dedicated to service partnerships. And the bigger the organization the greater the spend, with 45% of budgets spent on partners by the largest organizations versus 40% for smaller businesses.

Of the following choices, which, if any, address why your company decided to bring in an external marketing technology service partner(s) to help with your marketing technology?

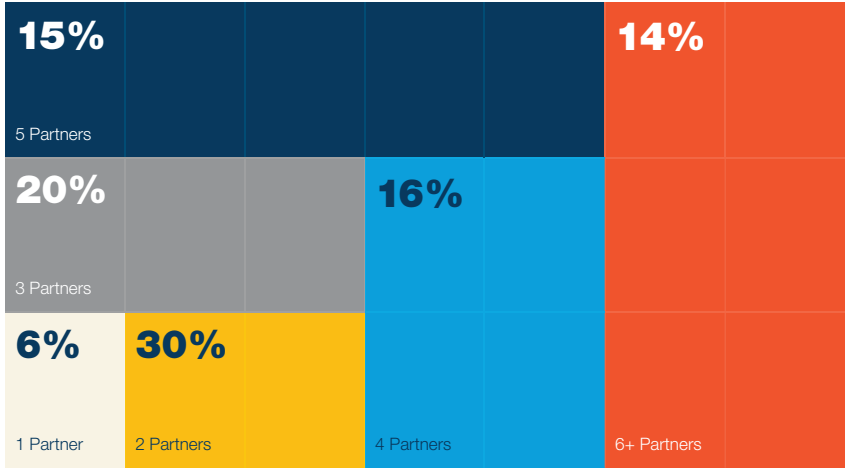
By organizational revenue



This spend won't necessarily all go to a single service partner. Most brands will engage multiple partners, with each specializing in a specific technology platform, a particular area of martech, or a certain stage of the process such as implementation or optimization. Our survey shows that on average, brands are working with three-to-four service partners at any one time.

There are a variety of companies that can act as martech service partners, from leading management consultancies that work across a wide range of sectors and technologies, to smaller consultancies that focus on the martech sector or specialize in a particular platform.

How many different martech service partners does your organization currently have? (whether for implementation, optimization, and/or managed ongoing services)



Median number of partners: 3

When choosing a martech service partner, brands are most likely to consider large leading management consultancies, followed by companies that specialize in the required technology, and then multi-agency marketing or data groups. Only a third have considered smaller consultancies that are focused on martech, which is surprising as these agencies can provide a unique combination of expertise and agility.

In addition to deciding what type of service partner to engage, brands also need to consider the point at which to engage them. The organizations that took part in our survey were most likely to decide to bring on a service partner at the implementation stage (36%), or after implementing the solution, upon realizing they needed help (27%).

These figures reflect the complex nature of martech implementations, which often require coordination across multiple departments and seamless integrations with a variety of existing systems to get the desired outcomes. Businesses often select and purchase a technology platform and only then realize they don't have the skills necessary to implement it. Or they implement the technology to a certain point but can't deliver the value they were hoping for.

What types of organizations has your company considered for martech partners? (whether for implementation, optimization, and/or managed ongoing services)

66%

Large leading management consultancies

63%

Companies who only specialize in our technology

60%

Multi-agency marketing /data groups (including specific providers within a group)

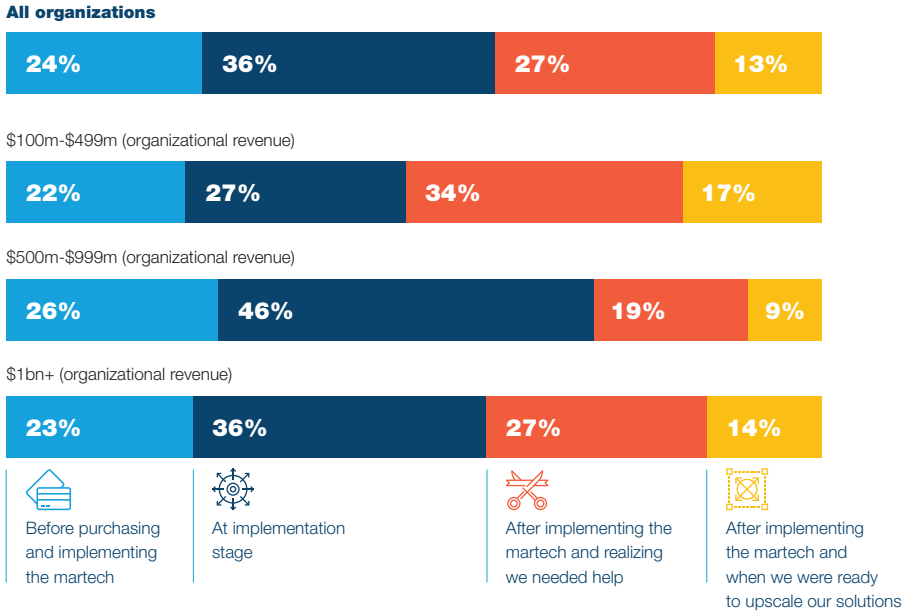
34%

Smaller consultancies focused only on martech

Of course there are other stages either side of implementation during which a martech service partner might be useful. Almost a quarter (24%) of organizations decided to bring on a service partner before purchasing and implementing a solution, presumably to help them select the best solution or to validate a choice they had already made. And a further 13% looked for a partner once the technology was fully implemented to help them scale up its use.

Smaller companies that took part in the survey displayed a more cautious approach to bringing on service partners at the implementation stage or earlier, compared to medium and large companies. This may be because they have tighter budgets than larger companies, and are therefore more likely to attempt an in-house implementation before turning to a partner for help.

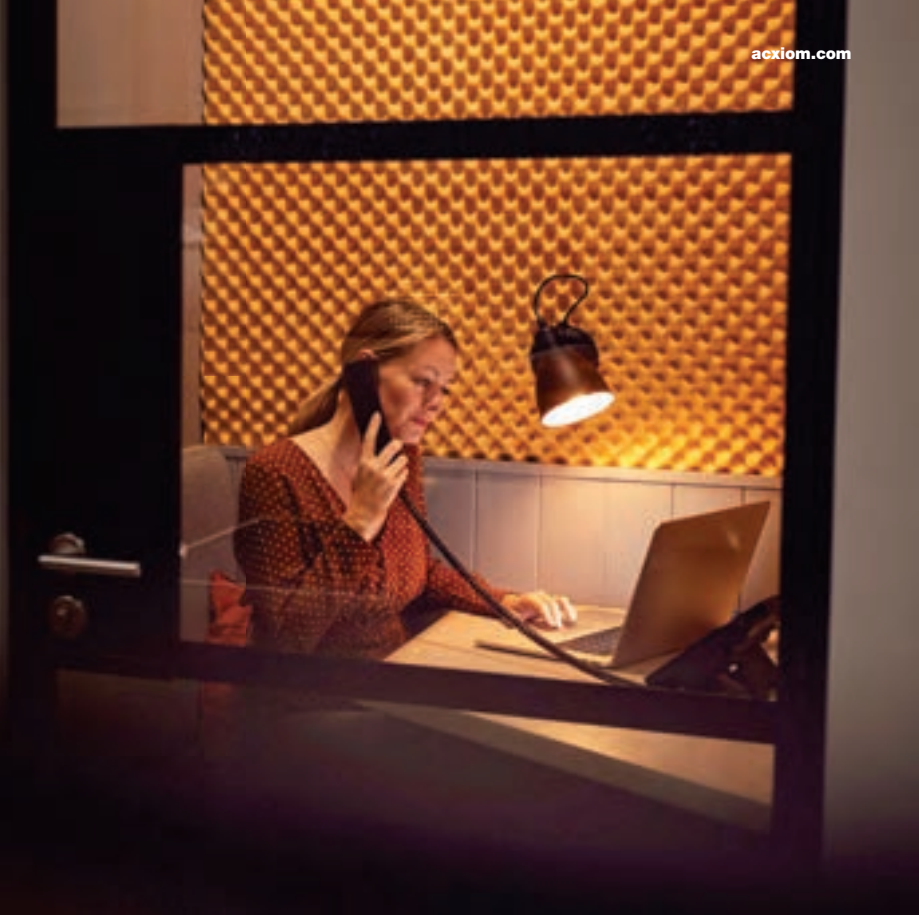
Which of the following best describes the stage at which your organization decided to bring on a service partner(s) for your martech?



Part 03

The decision-making process: finding the right partner

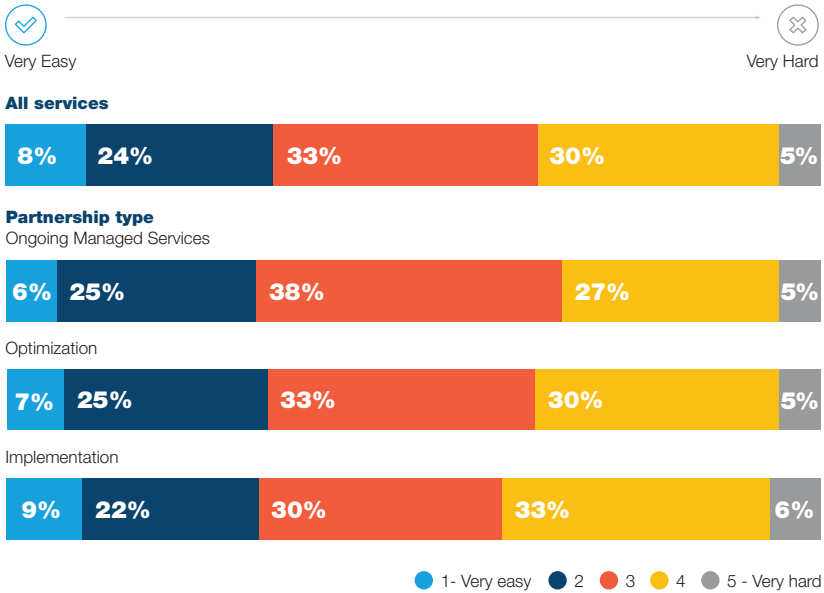
Selecting a service partner is the first major decision that a brand must make on their service partner journey. While the decision can often prove to be challenging, it is crucial to get right. Businesses want to ensure that the value extracted from their martech investment is maximized, and choosing the right partner can be the defining factor between a solution that delivers results and one that produces incomplete insight.



Choosing the right martech service partner can be a difficult process, according to the results of our survey. On a scale of one to five, with one being very easy and five being very hard, over a third of survey respondents rated selecting the right martech partner as level four or above.

Given many brands will engage a service partner for the first time when they are looking for assistance with implementing a solution, it is perhaps not surprising that they find choosing an implementation partner particularly difficult. A significant 39% rated the difficulty of selecting an implementation partner as level four or above, compared with 35% for optimization partners and 32% for ongoing service partners.

How easy or hard was it to select the right martech partner(s)?

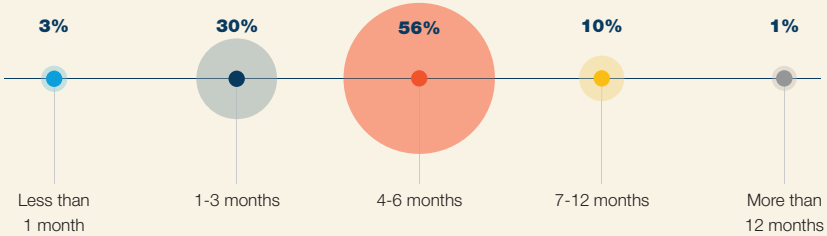


And choosing the right service partner can also be a lengthy process, with many respondents reporting it took as long to select a martech implementation partner as it did to implement the technology. Over half (56%) of organizations spent between four and six months selecting an implementation partner, while one-in-ten took over seven months.

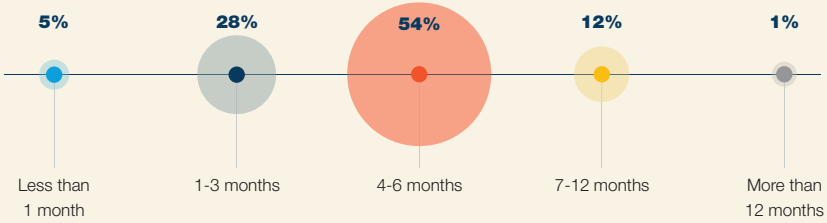
With different partners offering varying levels of expertise in specific martech tools, as well as potentially diverse sets of complementary services and solutions, it makes sense for organizations to thoroughly compare potential partners. However, this lengthy selection process does extend the time it takes for brands to derive value from their tech investments, especially if they are already paying platform fees and are waiting for a partner to implement the technology.

One of the key reasons it takes so long to choose a service partner is the sheer number of internal teams involved in the process, either as decision-makers or influencers. In fact, the decision to employ an external service partner is often an internal negotiation as much as an external one.

From start to finish, how long was the process of selecting a martech implementation partner?



From selecting the partner to having the final tool ready for use by all key stakeholders, how long did the implementation process take?

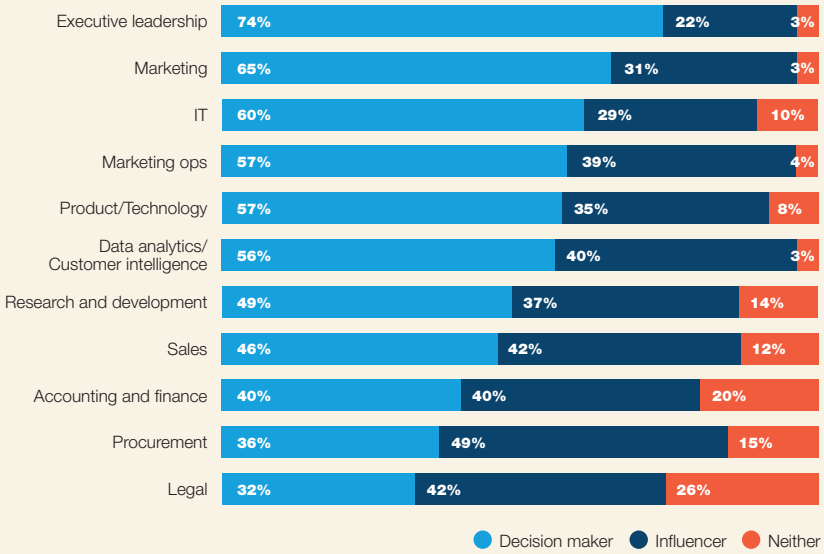


Decisions around marketing investments would traditionally have sat with the marketing department. However, as marketing becomes increasingly automated and moves further into the technology space, IT teams have become an important stakeholder in these selection processes. Over half of the survey's respondents reported that both the marketing and IT teams were key decision-makers in their selection of martech partners.

Decision-making power usually sits with senior leaders in marketing and IT teams, with final sign-off given by executive leadership, but many other teams will influence the selection of a martech partner. Decision-makers are likely to consult teams that will interface with the technology such as marketing ops, product, and data analytics or customer intelligence. In addition, stakeholders may turn to procurement, sales, and legal teams for support and guidance during the procurement and onboarding process.

Having looked at the practicalities of the decision-making process, such as how long it takes and who is involved, it's time to explore what brands are actually looking for in a martech service partner. What criteria do they use and what factors will influence their ultimate decision?

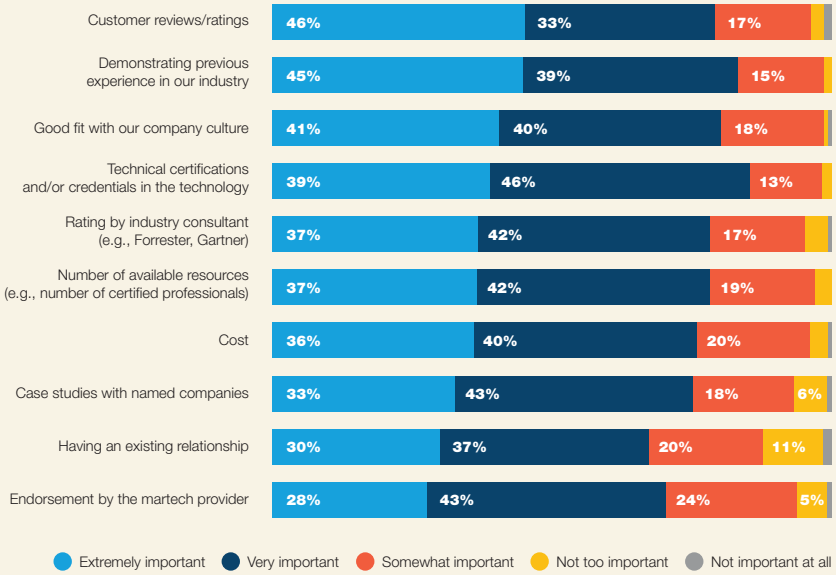
When selecting the partner to implement or manage your marketing technology, which of these teams were involved as an influencer or decision maker?



When survey participants were asked how important different criteria were to the selection process, two clear non-negotiables emerged. A convincing 85% of respondents said that technical certifications or credentials in the specific technology were very or extremely important, while 84% said the same about the ability to demonstrate previous experience in their industry.

Interestingly, endorsement by the martech provider and having an existing relationship were ranked as the two least important criteria, although around 70% of respondents still felt they were very or extremely important.

When selecting a martech partner, how important were each of the following criteria?



As martech service partners will work closely with multiple teams across the business, including marketing, analytics, and IT, it is also important to select a partner that aligns with a brand's company culture. In fact, nearly half (44%) of professionals surveyed placed 'fit with their company culture' in their top three most important criteria for selecting a service partner.

The evaluation criteria for choosing a service partner varies considerably depending on the role of the decision maker and the size of the company they work for. Non-marketing professionals, perhaps from technology and data teams, place greatest importance on a partner's technical certifications and credentials, while marketing teams focus on the cultural fit first.

And cost is most important to smaller organizations, that are likely to have greater budget constraints, while it does not appear amongst the top evaluation criteria of the largest organizations. With larger organizations likely to have bigger budgets for martech and an increased capacity to absorb costs, they place greatest emphasis on technical certifications and industry ratings or customer reviews.

Which were the three most important criteria when selecting a partner?

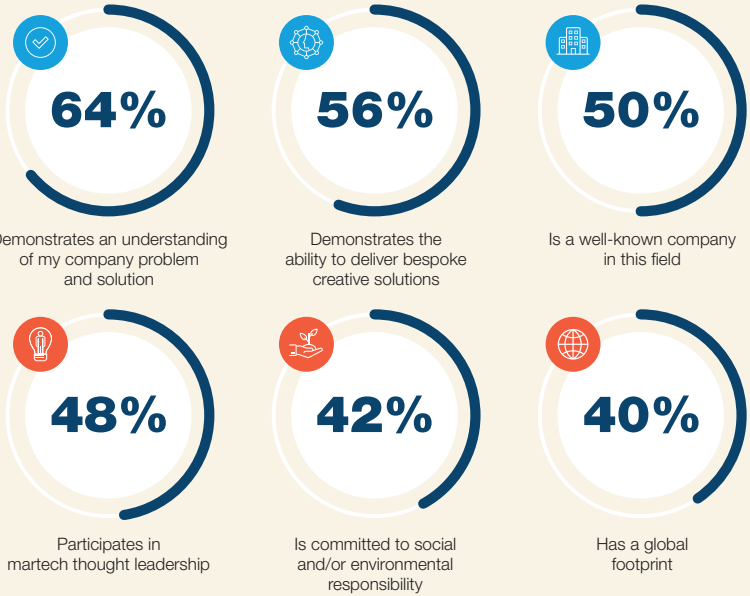
	Organizational size			Respondent's role	
Total	$100-499m	$500m - $1b	$1b+	Marketing	Non-marketing
44% Good fit with our company culture	**52%** Good fit with our company culture	**38%** Technical certifications and/ or credentials in the technology	**44%** Technical certifications and/ or credentials in the technology	**45%** Good fit with our company culture	**50%** Technical certifications and/ or credentials in the technology
41% Technical certifications and/ or credentials in the technology	**41%** Technical certifications and/ or credentials in the technology	**38%** Good fit with our company culture	**41%** Good fit with our company culture	**33%** Technical certifications and/ or credentials in the technology	**43%** Good fit with our company culture
32% Cost	**39%** Cost	**37%** Cost	**30%** Rating by industry consultant	**32%** Rating by industry consultant	**39%** Cost

Depending on their specific needs and use-cases, brands may look for certain specialisms in a martech service partner. For example, a strong background in Salesforce Pardot might be a top selection criteria for e-commerce brands.

But there are also general qualities that most brands look for in their service partners. These include:

1. **An understanding of a company's problem and the solution** (64%)
2. **The ability to deliver bespoke solutions** (56%)
3. **Being a well-known company in the field** (50%)

Which of the following company qualities, were you looking for in a martech partner?



When brands are researching potential martech service partners, there are a number of information sources they can turn to. Their first port of call may well be the martech provider's own website or resources, which 57% of survey respondents said they used to inform their partner selection decision. Martech providers and service partners often have close relationships, and many providers have dedicated resources to help brands navigate the sea of partners.

The second most popular source of information is the martech partner's website, which was consulted by 46% of respondents. Partners can help brands in their decision-making process by creating materials that address potential questions and concerns. These materials should be easily accessible, and partners should avoid using highly technical language so resources can be shared with all teams across a business.

While researching potential martech partners, which of the following information sources did you use to inform your partner selection decision?

57%
The martech provider's website, resources, etc.

46%
The martech partner's website

45%
Third-party reports, e.g., Forrester, Gartner

42%
Online search, e.g., Googling

40%
The martech provider's team

40%
Recommendations from peers

37%
Industry news/ press releases

33%
Industry conferences

26%
LinkedIn

The information sources used to research martech partners vary according to the size of the business. Smaller companies use a wider range of resources, including peer recommendations, industry news, and online search, while larger companies are more likely to skip the Googling and go straight to trusted third-party reports or leverage an existing relationship with the martech provider's teams.

While researching potential martech partners, which of the following information sources did you use to inform your partner selection decision?

By organizational revenue

56% 56% 59%
The martech provider's website, resources, etc.

41% 53% 44%
The martech partner's website

39% 44% 50%
Third-party reports, e.g., Forrester, Gartner

53% 43% 31%
Online search, e.g., Googling

33% 43% 44%
The martech provider's team

48% 40% 31%
Recommendations from peers

44% 34% 33%
Industry news/press releases

36% 32% 30%
Industry conferences

26% 31% 19%
LinkedIn

$100-499m $500-999m $1bn+

Part 04

When good partners go bad: common challenges

Implementing, optimizing, and managing martech is no easy feat. Service partners must combine an in-depth understanding of a brand's specific needs, use-cases, and internal workflows, with comprehensive knowledge of the platform (or platforms) to deliver the desired results. Even if brands feel they have taken part in a rigorous selection process, they can still face challenges in their service partnerships.

Almost a third (29%) of survey respondents report experiencing challenges with their service partner related to early mistakes made during the configuration process that have led to further issues down the line. While small errors made in the initial stages of configuration may seem insignificant, they can create major inefficiencies in the future.

Over a quarter (28%) of respondents have had to repeat steps or processes over the course of working with a service partner. Some of these issues may be related to the previous challenge, with steps repeated to remedy an oversight that occurred in the early phases of configuration and implementation.

The third most common issue brands have with martech partners is the time taken to implement a solution, which was cited as a challenge by 27% of respondents. This can have a negative effect on ROMI and a brand's ability to meet financial targets.

Top 5 challenges faced with martech partners

29%

Early mistake in configuration create issues later

28%

Repeating steps or processes

27%

Too much time taken to implement

23%

Poor communication across internal teams

22%

Partner lacked experience with the tool, in our industry, etc. causing issues

Successful martech partnerships rest on the actions of both partners and the brands that engage them. Many of the challenges listed above can be prevented with effective communication and attentive planning in the early stages of partner engagement.

Acxiom has identified seven key pillars to help brands ensure the effective implementation and ongoing success of any martech investment.

#1

Technology evaluation

Decide the most suitable martech solution for your ecosystem taking into account platform fit, scalability, and customization needs

#2

Use case review

Determine how the solution will be used to meet your objectives

#3

Data evaluation

Define what data is needed to underpin the solution and consider availability, permissions, and destinations

#4

Operational readiness assessment

Prepare the business to onboard the martech tool factoring in skills, ownership, availability, and stakeholder buy-in

#5

Internal operational planning

Plan for the project and working with a partner, including assigning SMEs, completing impact assessments, and setting timelines

#6

Project governance agreement

Create a model for execution that encompasses KPIs, forums, compliance, and project tracking

#7

Daily management plan

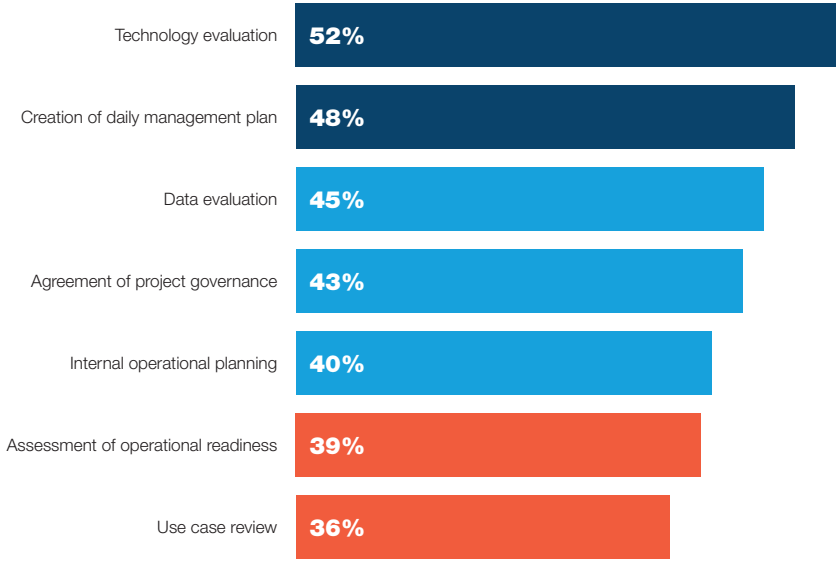
Define day-to-day operations and tools required to meet objectives

Less than half of survey respondents claim their company have completed each of the above steps to a high standard, apart from technology evaluation which 52% felt they had completed extremely well.

Service partners can play a vital role in supporting brands to ready themselves for martech projects. For instance, they can be instrumental at the use case review stage, where brands are exploring how a specific solution can be used to meet their marketing and business objectives.

Martech solutions are a significant investment, and brands need to ensure that their new capabilities aren't left to sit on the shelf. Implementing and optimizing martech is never entirely straightforward, and there will always be unexpected issues and complexities that arise. Brands can set themselves up for success by selecting partners that proactively mitigate challenges from the early stages of engagement.

Performed task 'Extremely well'



Part 05

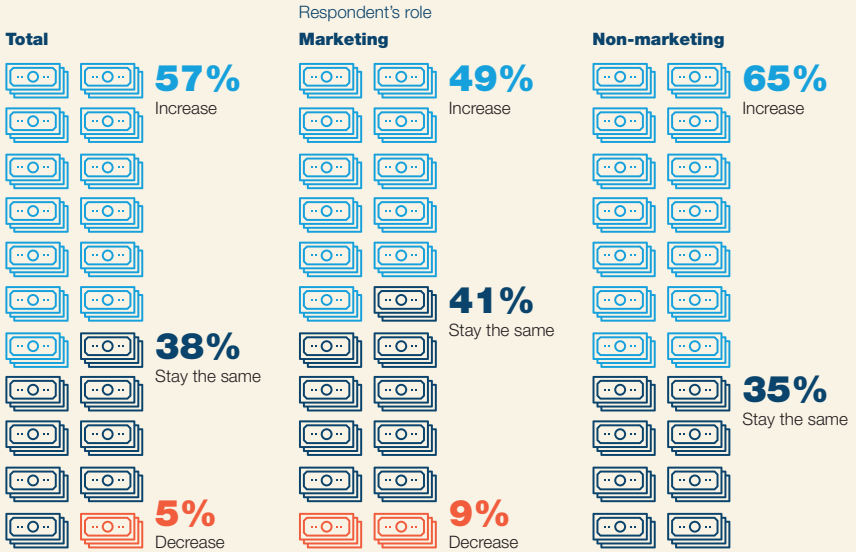
Scaling martech and future-proofing the relationship

As martech solutions become progressively more complex and technical, the need for experienced partners is greater than ever. Yet, while use of service partners and the budget dedicated to them is predicted to grow, not all partnerships are built to last. To ensure service partnerships withstand the test of time, partners must have capabilities that can evolve to meet the changing needs of a business over time. Partners must be versatile in their approach, and tailor their support to serve the needs of a range of stakeholders with varying objectives.

The budget dedicated to service partners is set to grow as martech becomes increasingly complicated and brands struggle to keep up. Over half (57%) of survey respondents report that their budget for martech service partners is likely to increase over the next 12 months.

Expected increases in investment are particularly pronounced amongst non-marketing decision makers, many of whom are in technology and data roles. This highlights a general shift in martech ownership from the marketing department to the wider business as solutions become more sophisticated and multi-purpose in their capabilities.

How do you expect the budget your organization dedicated to martech service partner(s) to change over the next 12 months?

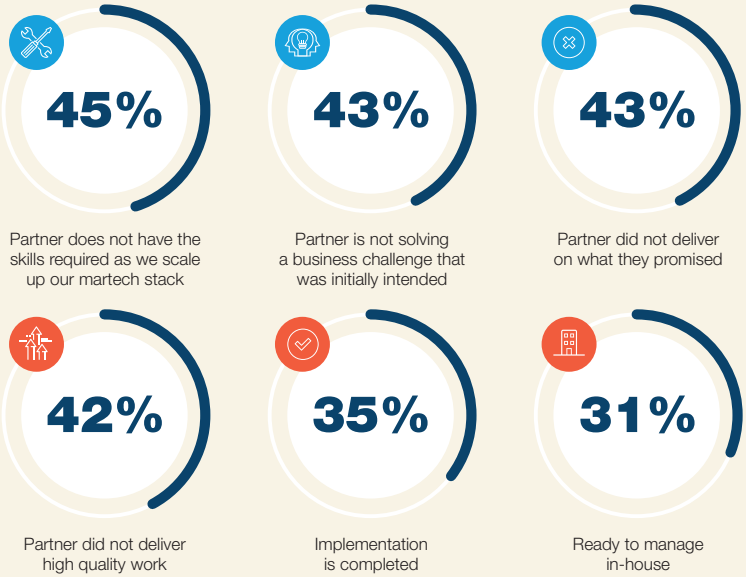


Budgets may be on the rise, but this doesn't necessarily mean existing partnerships are built to last. A brand's needs will change depending on the maturity of their martech stack, and not all partners will have the capabilities to evolve the relationship from implementation through optimization and beyond.

Almost half (45%) of professionals surveyed said they would consider switching martech service partners if their existing partner did not have the skills required as they scale up their stack. In addition, over 40% would consider ending relationships if their partner was not solving the initially intended business challenge, not delivering what they promised, or not delivering high quality work.

Brand stakeholders often have differing views of what success looks like in martech partnerships depending on whether they are in a marketing role or a non-marketing role such as technical or data.

At what point have you or would you consider ending a partnership or switching partners?

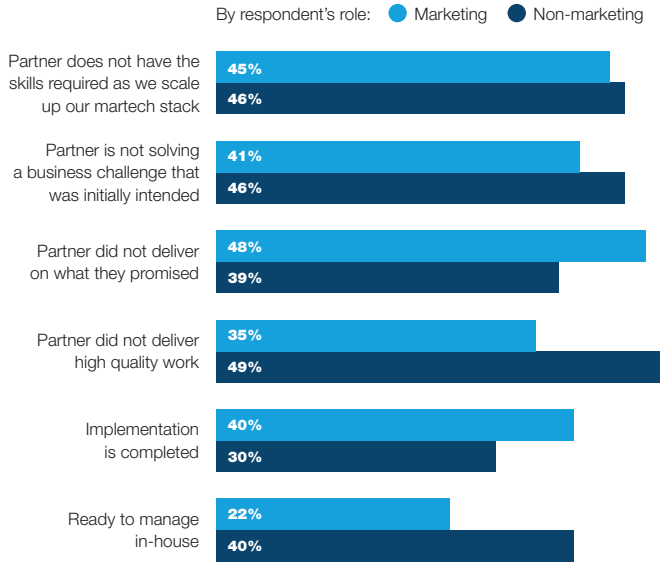


As the chart shows, non-marketing decision makers are much more likely to end a partnership if a partner does not deliver high-quality work than their marketing counterparts. Conversely, marketing stakeholders are looking for partners to deliver on their promises and are more likely to consider ending a partnership or switching partners if a partner fails to uphold their end of a contract than non-marketing stakeholders.

What's more, marketing and non-marketing teams may require different forms of guidance due to varying levels of technical knowledge. Non-marketing decision makers in technical and data roles may have the skills within their team to operate solutions in-house and are more inclined to end a partnership when they feel they are ready to manage a solution themselves. On the other hand, marketing stakeholders are likely to be less technically experienced, and may rely more heavily on partners to guide them through each stage of the process.

Whether brand stakeholders come from marketing or non-marketing teams, there are certain outcomes that are considered essential for a successful martech service partnership. First, there is a strong need for partners that can help brands understand their current martech needs and identify the solutions that will enable them to achieve their business goals. And second, brands want a partner that will prioritize empowering teams with the skills necessary to manage solutions internally once a partnership has concluded.

At what point have you or would you consider ending a partnership or switching partners?



Our survey respondents defined the following as essential outcomes for a successful martech partnership that delivers real value, ranked in order of importance:

1. The partner helps the brand to **determine their current sophistication with marketing and data**, as well as their needs and future ambitions

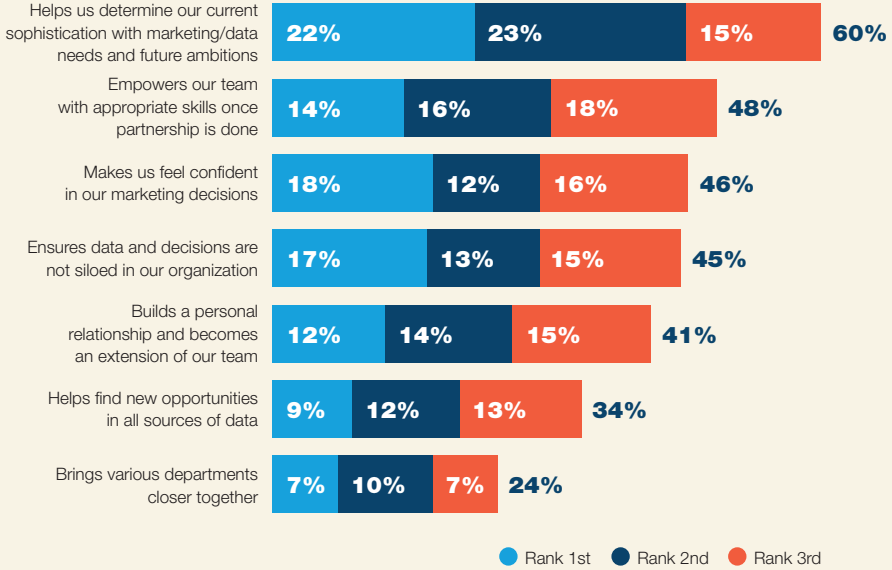
2. The **brand is empowered with the appropriate skills** to use once a partnership is over

3. The brand **feels more confident in their marketing decisions** as a result of the partnership

4. The partner helps the brand to ensure **data and decisions are not siloed** within the organization

Of course there are countless other ways in which partners can provide additional value. This could be by helping brands stay abreast of technological and regulatory changes, or by recommending data solutions or tools to improve marketing performance. Overall they must be a trusted source of advice and continual support across the lifecycle of a partnership.

Which of the following are the three most essential outcomes for a successful martech partnership?



Part 06

Positive partnerships drive exceptional experiences

Martech is central to a brand's ability to keep up with the continually evolving marketing landscape and to deliver personalized experiences that will resonate with individual customers.

Choosing the right martech provider and solution is a difficult decision, but choosing the right partner to manage the martech can be just as critical to its success.

External service partners offer the technical and marketing experience to help brands implement, manage, optimize, and scale their martech stacks. They offer an unparalleled understanding of the broader martech landscape and can help brands to identify solutions that will deliver against their long-term goals.

The process of choosing a service partner can be long and laborious for brands as they endeavour to choose a partner that is experienced in both the technology and their industry, and that fits with their company culture. Speeding up the selection process means brands can get value from their martech investment more quickly, and partners can help the decision-making process by proactively addressing brands' potential concerns and explaining how they mitigate these challenges.

As martech solutions become increasingly complicated and multi-purpose, the budget for service partners is predicted to grow, but this does not guarantee the success of existing and future partnerships.

To ensure success, brands must select partners that are transparent in communicating potential challenges and that put measures in place to prevent issues from occurring. Partners must be a trusted source of continual support across the lifecycle of a partnership and should tailor their support to each brand's individual needs and use cases.

A successful martech service partnership can be just as valuable to a brand as the solution itself. Brands incur significant upfront costs acquiring martech platforms with advanced capabilities that promise to solve their marketing problems, but their investments will only prove fruitful in the long term if solutions can be effectively implemented, operated, and scaled. Partners offer a wealth of experience and detailed expertise that brands can leverage to ensure their shiny new tech platforms deliver on their promises, and most importantly, enable the exceptional experiences that their customers expect.

Survey Demographics

Which country do you work in?

50%

50%

Approximately, what was the annual revenue of your organization during the most recent financial year?

32%

$100m-$499m

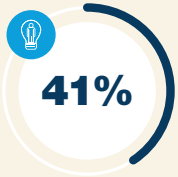
34%

$500m-$999m

35%

$1bn or more

Which of the following is closest to your job level within the business?



Senior Manager, Director, Vice President, Senior Vice President

C-suite

Please rank the top functions you perform in your job in order of what you spend the most time on. Ranked first or second.

50% Marketing

31% Executive Leadership

30% Technology

20% Marketing Operations

14% Analytics/Data

13% Finance/Accounting

11% Advertising

6% Sales/Business Development

6% Human Resources

5% Administration

5% Customer/Client Service

2% Product

Total sample, n=202

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