

RESEARCH REPORT

# The State of Marketing Collaboration

 asana  
Work Innovation  
Lab

  
Meltwater



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# Unleashing the power of strategic collaboration in marketing

In the fast-paced, brutally-competitive world of modern marketing, marketers face a relentless fight to stay ahead. With customer preferences shifting at breakneck speeds, technological disruptions upending tried-and-true strategies, and the unrelenting pressure to deliver more with less, marketers find themselves in the eye of a perfect storm of challenges.

Yet, amid this chaos, one powerful tool can mean the difference between dominating the market and being left behind: strategic collaboration—collaboration that is intentional and goal-oriented.

To unlock the full potential of strategic collaboration within marketing, Asana's **Work Innovation Lab** partnered with **Meltwater**, a global leader in media, social, and consumer intelligence. Through an extensive survey of 830 marketing professionals worldwide and expert insights, our **State of Marketing Collaboration** report provides proven strategies for marketing leaders to harness the power of strategic collaboration to drive business growth and leave rivals in the rearview.

## The collaboration imperative: Why marketing leaders can't afford to ignore it

In today's dynamic and complex business environment, marketing leaders recognize that silos are deadly and collaboration is essential. Meltwater's research reveals that online conversations about marketing and collaboration have surged by a staggering 41% year-over-year. Collaboration has become a top priority for marketing professionals everywhere. The mandate is clear: collaborate or collapse.

Marketing teams have become essential strategic partners in their organizations—within and beyond marketing. An impressive 74% of marketing professionals say their teams are viewed as strategic partners to other marketing teams, while 73% report being strategic partners to other functions within the organization.

# 73%

of marketing professionals say their teams are seen as strategic partners to other functions



## The collaboration gap: Why good intentions aren't enough

Despite the consensus that collaboration is non-negotiable for marketers, the harsh truth is that marketers are still struggling to master strategic collaboration. A jaw-dropping 22% of marketing professionals admit that they rarely or never see a marketing leader stepping up to actively improve collaboration between teams.

This lack of initiative can smother productivity and innovation across marketing functions. For instance, if content marketing and product marketing teams aren't collaborating effectively, they'll miss opportunities to create content that resonates with customers at different stages of the buyer's journey.

## The visibility void: The root cause of collaboration woes

A major roadblock in improving collaboration is the lack of visibility—both into how teams collaborate and into the work, strategies, and goals that form the foundation for effective collaboration. When teams are left in the dark about what their colleagues are working on or how their efforts contribute to shared objectives, collaboration tanks, and so do productivity and performance.



# Connecting strategy and goals

At the highest levels, marketers need to make sure that their strategy and goals are in sync. When everyone is working toward the same objectives, it creates a powerful force multiplier that catapults your organization to new heights. On the flip side, when strategies and goals are misaligned, it leads to a domino effect of disasters: resources are wasted, opportunities are left on the table, and results don't even come close to expectations.

This lack of transparency can seriously torpedo marketing effectiveness. When teams are in the dark about the overall strategy, they may chase after tactics or initiatives that fail to deliver meaningful results. The fallout? Fragmented efforts, inconsistent messaging, and lackluster results that leave everyone scratching their heads.

Effective strategy alignment starts from within, but almost half (47%) of marketing professionals admit they have only limited familiarity with their department's annual objectives. The problem is even more dire for individual contributors, with 54% admitting they aren't fully familiar with their department's annual objectives.

These findings suggest that marketing executives are overestimating their own transparency in communicating strategies with their teams. This disconnect puts collaboration within marketing and with other teams on shaky ground. When individual contributors and even managers are out of the loop about annual objectives, aligning efforts and working towards common goals becomes an uphill battle.

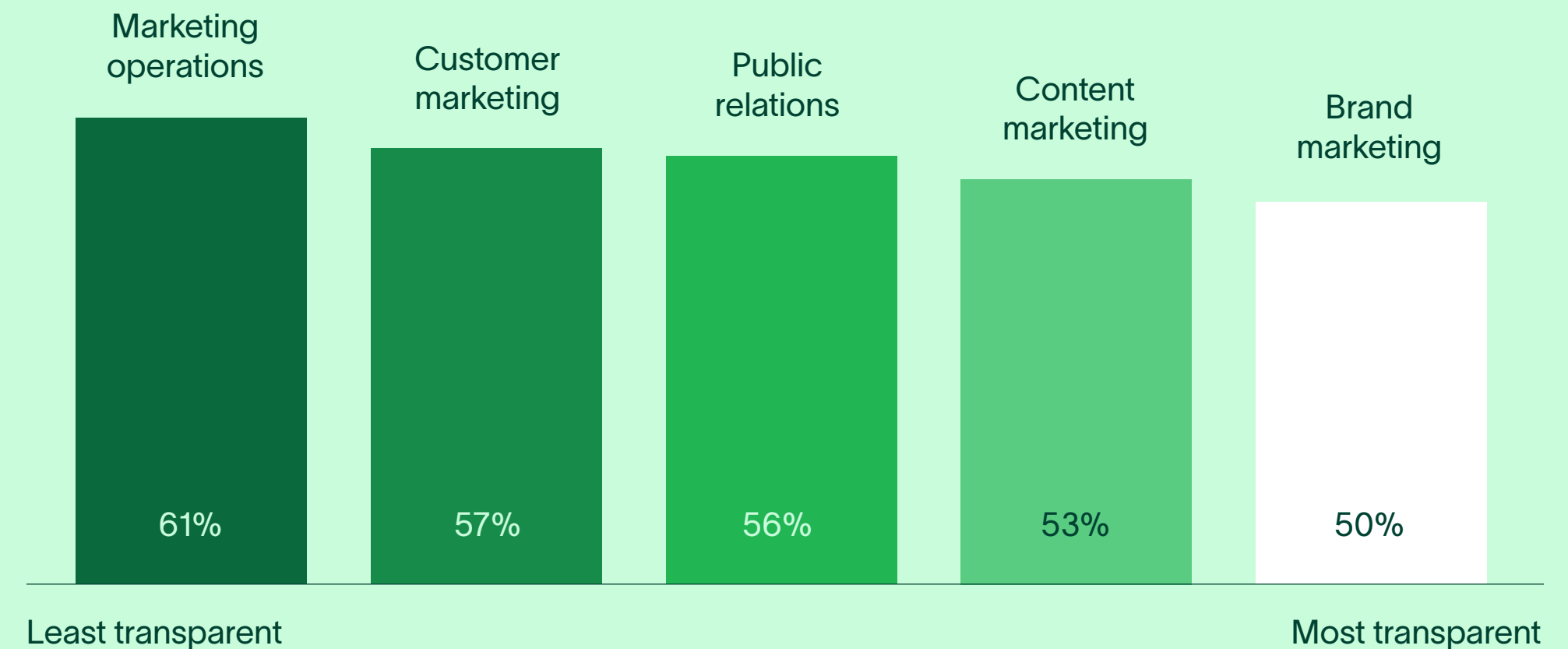
## The strategy transparency crisis: Are marketing execs letting their teams down?

Marketing leaders need to effectively communicate their strategies to others. Yet our research shows that there's a glaring lack of transparency that's hard to ignore. Nearly half (49%) of marketing professionals want their department to provide more transparency into strategy development and almost one-third (31%) say their department lacks a clear decision-making process.

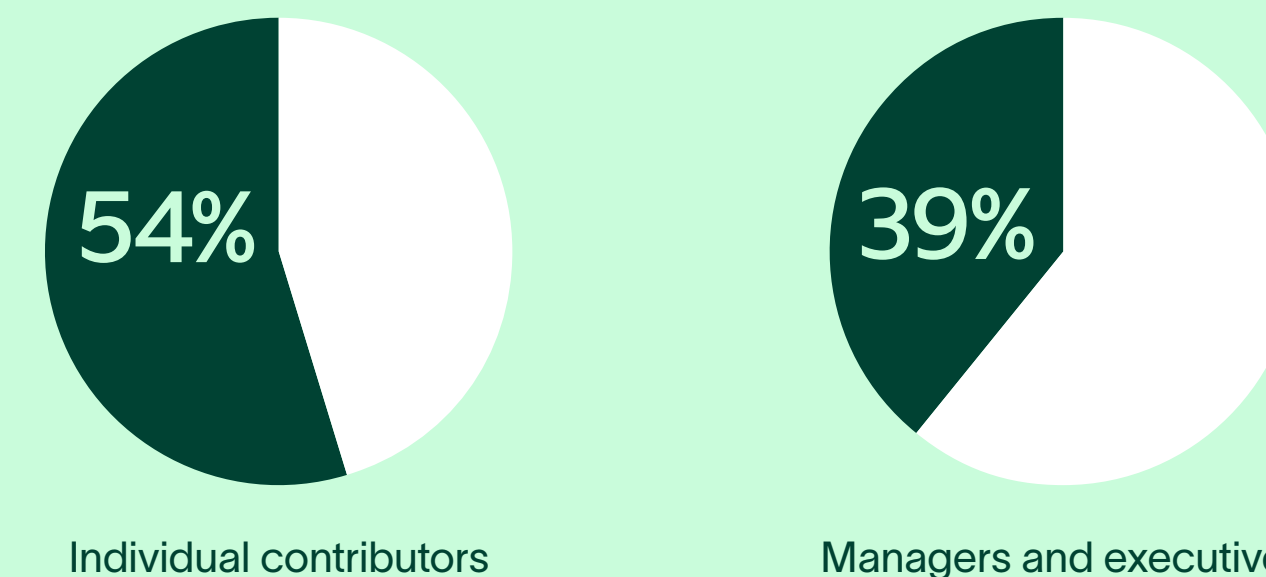


Over half of individual contributors have limited familiarity with their department's annual objectives

### Percentage of marketers who say their department should provide more transparency into their strategy



### Percentage of marketing professionals with limited familiarity of their department's annual objectives



## Goal-setting mayhem: The disconnect that's derailing marketing success

Setting clear, measurable, and achievable goals is the backbone of any winning marketing strategy. Goals provide the north star, the laser focus, and the yardstick for gauging success. They also ensure that marketing efforts are in lockstep with the broader company objectives, driving the organization forward as a cohesive unit.

It's no surprise that goal-setting is top-of-mind among marketers. Meltwater data reveals that online discussions about goals and goal-setting have skyrocketed by an eye-popping 318% year-over-year among self-identified marketers across Reddit, X (formerly Twitter), and Pinterest. This massive surge in goal-setting conversations highlights just how make-or-break this process has become in the dynamic world of marketing.

Only

# 39%

of marketers are confident that their department's goals are truly aligned with the overall business objectives

## The goal-setting paradox: Why good intentions aren't enough

Despite the widespread recognition of goal-setting's importance, our research uncovers a troubling disconnect between marketing goals and broader business objectives. Just 39% of marketers are confident that their department's goals are actually aligned with the overall business objectives. This misalignment can lead to marketing efforts that fail to contribute to the company's bottom line, resulting in resources down the drain and opportunities slipping through the cracks.

One of the biggest hurdles in aligning marketing goals with business objectives is poor documentation of goals. Nearly one in four (23%) marketing professionals say their organization's goals and objectives are strewn across too many disparate places and 13% don't know where they are at all, leading to wasted efforts and confusion.

# 23%

say their organization's goals and objectives are scattered across too many disparate locations



## The email trap: How informal goal documentation sabotages strategic alignment

To make matters worse, a whopping 48% of marketing professionals say their team’s goals are buried in email communications. Goals can vanish without a trace in overflowing inboxes, leading to a version control nightmare and making it a herculean feat for team members to even find the goals, much less keep tabs on how they’re measuring up. Marketing teams need to ditch the email trap and rally around a single, purpose-built goal-tracking tool that’s embraced organization-wide.

 **Nearly half (48%) of marketers say their team’s goals are documented in email communications**

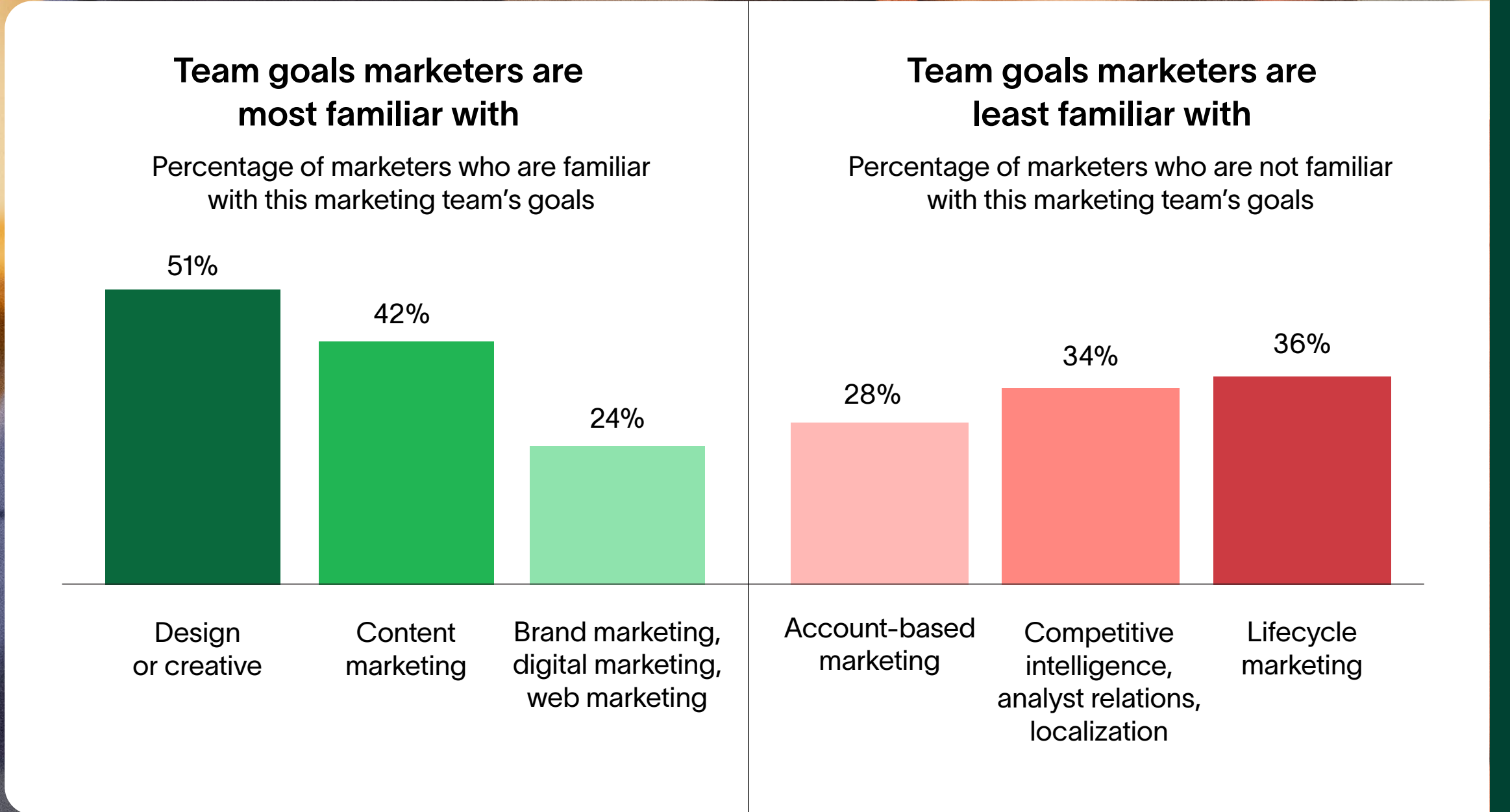
In the blink-and-you-miss-it world of marketing, it’s crucial for teams to regularly review and course-correct their goals to stay nimble. However, our research shows that many marketers aren’t revisiting their goals nearly as often as they should. Although 66% of marketing teams check their goals every quarter or more often, a troubling 30% do so less frequently, letting their goals gather dust. This infrequent evaluation can cause misalignment and hamstring the team’s ability to react swiftly when market conditions change or when hurdles crop up internally.

## The communication breakdown: Lack of transparency derails collaboration

Our research also finds that many marketing teams don’t communicate their objectives clearly to other departments within their organizations. When other teams aren’t informed about marketing goals, it sabotages collaboration and makes it difficult to align everyone’s efforts toward common objectives. This lack of transparency often results in organizational silos, redundant work, and missed opportunities to work together effectively.

Certain marketing teams, like design and creative teams, have more effectively communicated their goals. Other marketing teams say they are most familiar with the goals of these teams. The tangible, visible nature of their outputs, coupled with the increased pressure to clearly spell out their goals, likely contributes to their success in this area.

By embracing transparency and making goal communication a top priority, marketing leaders can bulldoze silos, supercharge collaboration, and unlock the full potential of their teams.



# Embracing data-driven marketing

Marketing professionals are undisputed masters of the creative process: most (72%) say they are highly familiar with the creative process. But when it comes to knowing how to gauge the impact of all that creative magic, there's a glaring gap. Less than one-third (30%) of professionals say they are highly familiar with their marketing organization's measurement plans.

This discrepancy makes it difficult to collaborate effectively with stakeholders. Without clear, measurable outcomes, decisions and strategies can't be properly assessed and justified.

72%



of marketing professionals are highly familiar with the marketing department's creative process

But only

30%



of marketing professionals are highly familiar with the marketing department's measurement plan



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Too many marketing teams lack insight into the ROI of their work and the capability to measure and track data. In today's martech landscape, we know that guesswork doesn't work. This is why data-driven organizations are empowering their teams with the technology needed to make informed marketing decisions to better align with business objectives and company strategy.

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Alexandra Bjertnæs  
Chief Strategy Officer at Meltwater

# The data literacy divide: How knowledge gaps are limiting your marketing efforts

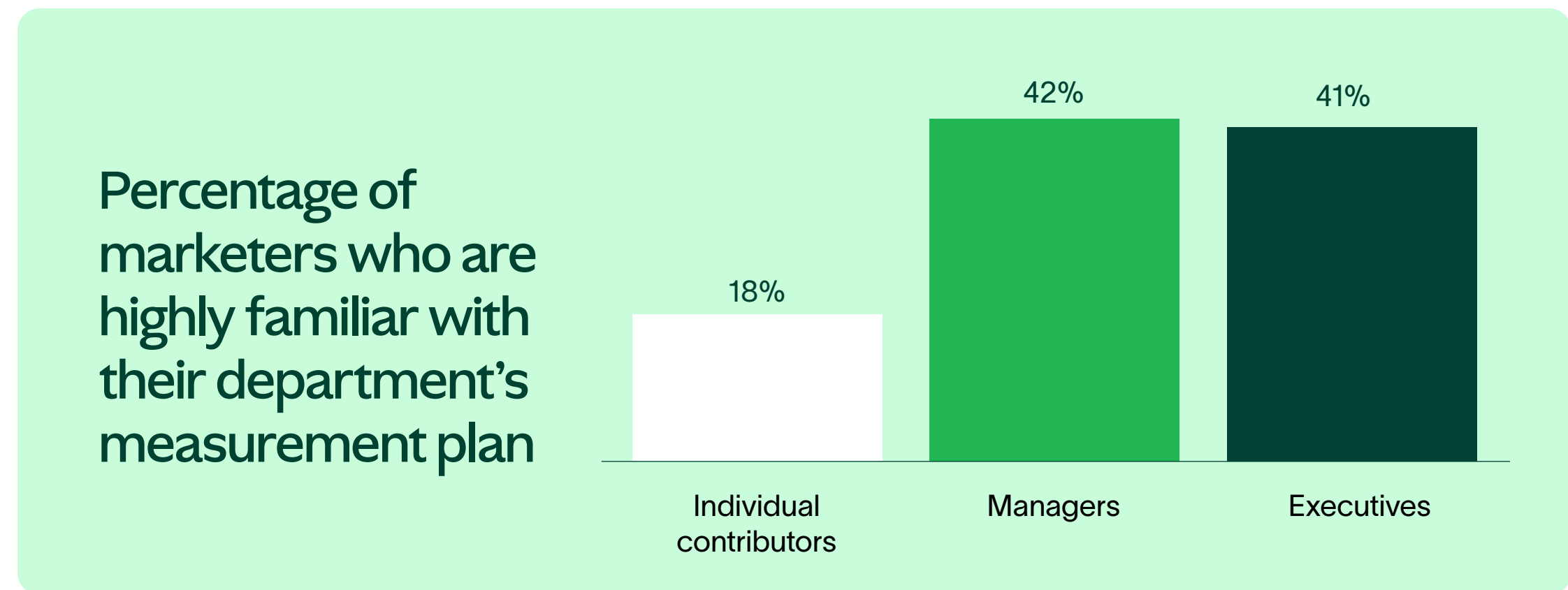
There's also a data literacy crisis plaguing marketing teams—too many marketers don't know how their department measures success. Shockingly, only 18% of individual contributors say they know how their department measures the impact of their marketing initiatives. Familiarity is notably higher among executives (41%) and managers (42%), but still concerningly low.

This chasm underscores a significant gap in data literacy and knowledge across marketing departments, leaving marketers woefully underprepared to make data-driven decisions.

Despite the undeniable importance of data-driven decision-making, almost one-quarter of marketing

**Only 18% of individual contributors say they know how their department measures the impact of their marketing initiatives**

professionals (23%) admit that their department hasn't fully embraced a data-driven approach. This poses a formidable obstacle to achieving strategic alignment and effectively harnessing the power of marketing efforts.



## Strategies for cultivating a data-driven environment

- 
**Implement a consolidated tech stack**  
 Invest in a single source of truth. By centralizing data and making it easily accessible to all team members, marketing leaders can empower their teams to make informed decisions based on real-time insights and analysis and more easily benchmark results.
- 
**Promote data-driven leadership**  
 To cultivate a truly data-centric culture, marketing executives and managers must lead by example. By consistently demonstrating the value of data-driven practices in their own decision-making and communication, leaders can set the standard for the entire department.
- 
**Invest in training programs**  
 These programs should empower marketers—especially individual contributors—with the skills and knowledge needed to fully participate in data-driven decision-making. By equipping every team member with the tools to leverage data effectively, marketing leaders can foster a culture of data literacy.





# Bridging collaboration gaps

## Collaboration gaps within the marketing function: The key to unlocking your team's full potential

Once you have your goals locked in and a solid measurement strategy in place, it's time to focus on the specific collaborative relationships that matter most for marketers.

Our research reveals a harsh reality: marketers have their work cut out for them when it comes to strengthening

collaboration across their organizations. More than one-quarter (27%) of marketing professionals lament that the marketing department is disconnected from the rest of the organization. This feeling of isolation is a major obstacle to collaborative efforts and can seriously impact the overall strategic alignment of the department with the broader organizational goals.



## PR and social media teams

Joining forces to supercharge brand reputation and engagement

PR and social media marketing teams are the linchpins in shaping public perception and captivating audiences, yet they often work in isolated silos. Both teams aim to build and maintain brand reputation and audience engagement, making them ideal partners for collaboration. However, nearly one-third (29%) of social media marketers dread collaborating with their PR partners, and 24% claim they are difficult to work with.

This is a significant gap in communication and coordination that needs to be addressed in order for the two teams to effectively work together.



Nearly one-third (29%) of social media marketers dread collaborating with their PR partners and 24% claim they are difficult to work with

## Customer marketing and product marketing teams

Aligning efforts to craft irresistible product narratives

Customer marketing and product marketing teams are mission-critical in clearly communicating product capabilities to target customers and ensuring customer feedback is effectively funneled into the product. However, a glaring misalignment exists as only 9% of customer marketing professionals say they are highly familiar with product marketing's goals and objectives, and only 11% of product marketers say the same.

This lack of awareness spawns inconsistent messaging and lackluster results. Tackling this misalignment is critical for ensuring that both teams are aligned in serving up powerful and consistent product narratives that resonate with customers and drive business growth.



Only 9% of customer marketing professionals indicate high familiarity with product marketing's goals and objectives, and only 11% of product marketers say the same about customer marketing

## Marketing operations and analytics teams

Transforming complexity into clarity to drive unity across marketing

Marketing operations and analytics teams are essential in facilitating collaboration by implementing the necessary tools, processes, and data for effective marketing teamwork. Ironically, they often struggle with collaboration themselves, and many marketers express reluctance to work with them. One in five marketers say they dread collaborating with marketing operations teams, while one in four dread collaborating with marketing analytics teams. This aversion highlights significant challenges that scream out for a solution.

To overcome these challenges, these teams should double down on transparent communication and actively involve other teams in their processes. By doing so, they can transform complexity into clarity, fostering unity and more effective collaboration across all marketing functions.



**1 in 5 marketers say they dread having to collaborate with marketing operations teams, while 1 in 4 dread collaborating with marketing analytics teams**

### The path to collaborative intelligence: No-nonsense strategies for marketing leaders

#### Measure collaboration to manage it effectively

To cultivate a culture of collaboration, marketing leaders must first understand how their teams are currently working together. Investing in tools like the **Work Innovation Score** can provide valuable insights into the efficiency and effectiveness of team collaboration, helping marketing leaders identify areas for improvement and track progress over time.

#### Streamline information flows to improve cross-functional collaboration

To enhance cross-functional collaboration, it's crucial to streamline information flows and tackle the issue of information overload. With an abundance of data available, pinpointing and disseminating the most relevant insights can be overwhelming. Marketing leaders should focus on creating clear processes and utilizing platforms that simplify the flow of information. This approach ensures that essential insights are efficiently shared across different teams, facilitating better collaboration and decision-making.



## Collaboration gaps between marketing and other functions: Smashing the silos that hinder success

Marketing teams need to do more than just strengthen collaboration within their own department. They need to build stronger bonds with teams outside of marketing too. Four in five (79%) marketing professionals believe that collaborating with other departments improves the quality of their work.



**4 out of 5 marketers say collaborating with other departments improves the quality of their work**

While this sounds promising, there are some serious issues bubbling under the surface. One of the most insidious ones is that 27% of marketing professionals feel that collaborating with other departments means the marketing department doesn't get as much credit for the organization's success. Ouch.

Goal-setting, transparency in goals and strategies, and embracing a data-driven mindset are crucial because they help prevent misunderstandings that

can lead to unnecessary competition and disputes within an organization. When marketing goals are clear and backed by data, marketers are more effective in demonstrating the impact of their work and proving their value to the organization.

Our research finds that there are three critical collaborations that are do-or-die for marketing teams aiming to dismantle silos and achieve success:

**1 Collaboration between marketing and sales**

**2 Collaboration between marketing and IT**

**3 Collaboration between marketing and R&D**

These are the most important, highest-stakes relationships that marketing teams need to nurture if they want to break down the silos and catalyze real success.



### Boosting collaboration between marketing and sales

The partnership between marketing and sales is crucial. Marketing is responsible for generating leads and building brand awareness, while sales is responsible for closing deals and raking in revenue. But too often, these teams operate in silos, with marketing tossing leads over the fence and sales grumbling about the quality of those leads. This body-slams the bottom line and is a recipe for disaster.

According to an analysis by Meltwater of discussions among self-identified marketers online, sales teams were mentioned more frequently than any other team. This highlights the significant role that sales teams play in collaborative efforts within marketing functions.

Marketers know that collaborating with sales is important. But here's the real gut punch: 38% of marketing professionals say their marketing department isn't closely connected to the sales department. That's a significant problem.

Why is this collaboration so crucial? By enhancing collaboration and using shared data analysis and measurement tools, marketing and sales teams can establish a common foundation for strategizing and gain a shared understanding of the return on investment

(ROI) of marketing efforts. This can eliminate common frustrations like "leads suck" or "sales can't close" arguments, replacing them with objective, data-driven insights and a unified approach to driving revenue.

Breaking down silos and building a culture that encourages joint efforts between marketing and sales requires a multi-pronged approach. It should involve holding regular cross-functional meetings, aligning on shared key performance indicators (KPIs), and maintaining open lines of communication.

Celebrating joint successes and learning from losses as a team is also important. Only 57% of marketing professionals say that the marketing and sales departments celebrate successes as one team. When marketing and sales align effectively, the results can be magical: higher-quality leads, improved close rates, and significant revenue growth.

**38%**



**of marketing professionals say their marketing department isn't closely connected to the sales department**



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### Increasing collaboration between marketing and IT

Collaboration between IT and marketing departments is also crucial, especially given the digital demands of modern marketing strategies. Unfortunately, nearly two-thirds (62%) of marketing professionals feel their department isn't closely connected to the IT department.

Top marketers are doubling down on investing in technology for data analytics, customer relationship management, digital advertising, and other capabilities that are critical to success. A rock-solid partnership between marketing and IT is essential to integrate these technologies into marketing strategies without headaches and hassles. It means marketing can focus on flexing their creative muscles and driving results, while IT can obsess over making sure everything runs smoothly, efficiently, and securely. It's a critical collaboration, but too many organizations are letting it fall by the wayside.

# 62%



of marketing professionals feel that their department isn't closely connected to the IT department

3

### Fueling collaboration between marketing and R&D

In the Work Innovation Lab's research, we've found that the biggest driver of innovation is the collaboration between marketing and engineering. It's not an intuitive pairing, but it makes sense. Marketing lives and breathes understanding the customer and telling stories that strike a chord. Engineering obsesses over building the products and features that bring those stories to life. When you bring those two together, magic happens. Consider Apple— they've cracked the code on collaboration between marketing and engineering, and it oozes out in every product they release.

The benefits of this collaboration are significant. According to a Meltwater analysis among cross-functional teams mentioned in online conversations by self-identified marketers, research & development (R&D) scored the most love, receiving the highest positive sentiment. This highlights the enthusiasm marketers have for joining forces with R&D. But this collaboration doesn't come naturally in most organizations—you need to make it a priority.

In the end, the payoffs are enormous. Collaboration between marketing and R&D can lead to breakthrough innovations, faster time-to-market, and a competitive edge that's tough to top.

# AI as a marketer's newest collaborator

AI is hands down marketers' most exciting new strategic collaborator. But despite all the buzz around AI, marketers are still in the early stages of adoption.

According to Meltwater, mentions of AI and collaboration among self-identified marketers have skyrocketed by a whopping 606% year-over-year, with a 57% positive sentiment.

## The AI adoption gap

Despite the buzz around AI, there is a gap when it comes to actual usage. Only 46% of marketing professionals use generative AI weekly, and just 15% use it daily. Right now, marketers are predominantly using AI for content creation (49%), with only a few dabbling in image generation (26%), and project planning (20%).

According to Meltwater's [State of Social Media](#) report, three in five (59%) marketers anticipate increasing their use of AI in 2024, with 44% considering it essential for their social media strategies. However, realizing these plans requires investing in the right technologies, underpinned by accurate and connected data.

It also requires dedicated training. You can't just throw AI at your marketing team and expect results. You need to train your people and put some guardrails in place. Right now, marketers are falling short. Only 28% of

marketing professionals have received training on how to use AI tools effectively, and a measly 29% report that their organization has provided training on AI ethics and governance.



**Only 28% of marketing professionals have received training on how to use AI tools effectively**

If we want to unlock the full potential of AI in marketing, marketers need to step up their games. Marketers at organizations that have provided training on how to use AI effectively are 57% more likely to be enthusiastic about using AI at work. This highlights the critical role that education and skill development play in fostering a positive attitude towards AI adoption. We need more comprehensive training programs and cross-functional AI governance committees to ensure marketers have the chops and know-how to use AI effectively and ethically. And we need to lead by example from the top down, demonstrating a commitment to responsible AI use and actively participating in AI initiatives.

## Percentage of marketers who use AI for each use case

Content creation

49%



Image generation

26%



Project planning

20%



Data analysis

16%



Meeting summarization

13%



## Impact of AI on collaboration and creativity: The jury's still out

Some marketers inevitably wonder whether AI will hurt human creativity. But most (59%) marketers aren't worried about AI diminishing human creativity. In fact, **evidence suggests** that AI can actually enhance creativity when adopted with a human-centered approach.

AI excels in areas where marketers might get stuck—like overcoming writer's block through generating initial ideas and drafts, thus kickstarting the creative process. On top of that, AI's superpower to analyze vast amounts of data rapidly allows marketers to uncover unique insights and trends that can inspire new and innovative marketing strategies.

Not only can AI boost productivity, but it can also breed a more agile and creative marketing environment. By leveraging AI's strengths in data analysis and idea generation, marketers can free up time and headspace to focus on higher-level strategic thinking and creative problem-solving. As AI continues to evolve and integrate into marketing workflows, it has the potential to become a powerful teammate in driving innovation and collaboration within marketing teams.

To ensure that AI enhances rather than hinders creativity and collaboration, marketing leaders should:



### Embrace a human-centered approach

Marketers need to prepare their teams for the long-term impact of AI by emphasizing the importance of uniquely human skills and framing AI as a tool to augment human capabilities. This will help marketers understand that AI is not a replacement for their skills but rather a teammate that can amplify their human capabilities.



### Promote ethical AI usage

Invest in comprehensive training and clear governance policies that promote ethical AI. Establishing a cross-functional AI governance committee to oversee the responsible implementation of AI tools will ensure that AI is used in a way that aligns with the organization's values and goals.



“

Strategic collaboration is the key to driving marketing success in today's complex, fast-paced environment. By breaking down silos, aligning goals, and embracing AI adoption within marketing, marketing teams can unlock their full potential and deliver exceptional results.

”

**Kipp Bodnar**  
Chief Marketing Officer at HubSpot

# Strategic collaboration: The superpower behind next-level marketing success

As we gear up for a new age in marketing, it's clear that strategic collaboration isn't just nice to have; it's a must-have. Our research paints a clear picture: the future belongs to marketers who master the science of strategic collaboration, not just within their own teams but across the entire organization, with AI as a new member of the team. By championing transparent goals and strategies and investing in technologies that centralize data and support cross-functional collaboration, marketers can crank this collaboration into high gear, ensuring strategies are not only understood but are vigorously pursued by everyone.

Is your approach to collaboration ready to meet the challenges in front of you, or will you be left behind?

## Research methodology

This research from Asana's Work Innovation Lab surveyed 830 marketing professionals in the US and UK in April 2024. The survey was administered via Qualtrics and data collection was conducted by Prolific and did not target Asana customers or employees. Respondents were all employed business professionals in the marketing function. Marketing leaders included in this research are defined as Director role levels and above.

## Meltwater sources

Meltwater data in this report was sourced from Meltwater's social listening solution using queries focused on relevant keywords, phrases, and hashtags from English-language posts across Pinterest, Reddit, and X published between April 1, 2023 - March 31, 2024.



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