



2025 B2B MARKETING BUDGETS & PRIORITIES

*A Compilation of Survey
Results & Expert Predictions*

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Introduction

Overview

Establishing your marketing budget is a strategic decision that defines your ability to capture market share, generate pipeline, and drive revenue. CMOs must align their investments with shifting buyer behaviors, emerging digital trends, and measurable business outcomes. This guide compiles the latest industry research and B2B surveys results, revealing how marketing leaders are approaching 2025; How they plan to invest; Their top priorities; Marketing initiatives they believe will provide the most growth. Sources include Forrester, Gartner Research, Marketing Profs, The CMO Club, and more.

Summary of Findings



- **Marketing budgets** are expected to grow in 2025, but with only a small increase over 2024.
- **Strategic initiatives** involve AI-driven content marketing, privacy compliance, lifecycle marketing, and customer engagement/retention.
- **Top marketing channels** include SEO/SEM, social media, live and virtual events, and email.
- More than *growth* in marketing investment, the focus for 2025 will be **marketing efficiency**.

Additional details follow regarding budgets, strategic initiatives, digital channel effectiveness, and top lead gen programs...

B2B Marketing Budgets in 2025

Budgets as a Percentage of Revenue

Gartner Research reports that marketing budgets relative to company revenue remain fairly stable.

- **Average B2B marketing spend is projected at 8.4% of revenue** (compared to 5.7% for B2C).
- However, marketing investment for certain sectors (like SaaS) is much greater.

YoY Growth in Marketing Budgets

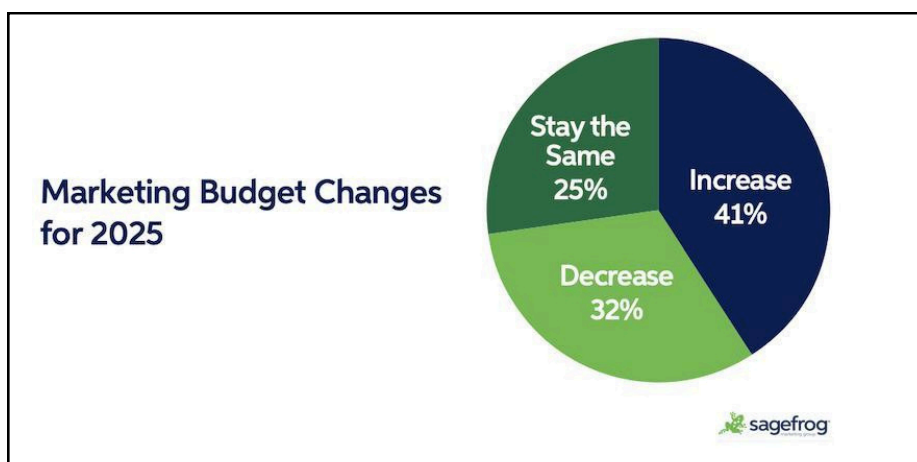
Forrester's [2025 B2B Budget Planning Guide](#) indicates that 2025 will see a minimal increase in marketing investments. A few key data points:

- **87% of global marketing decision-makers are planning a budget increase** in 2025.
- **Only 35% of these decision-makers expect a budget increase of more than 5%** this year; the majority (47%) expect an increase of just 1-4%.

This Forrester statement really sums it up:

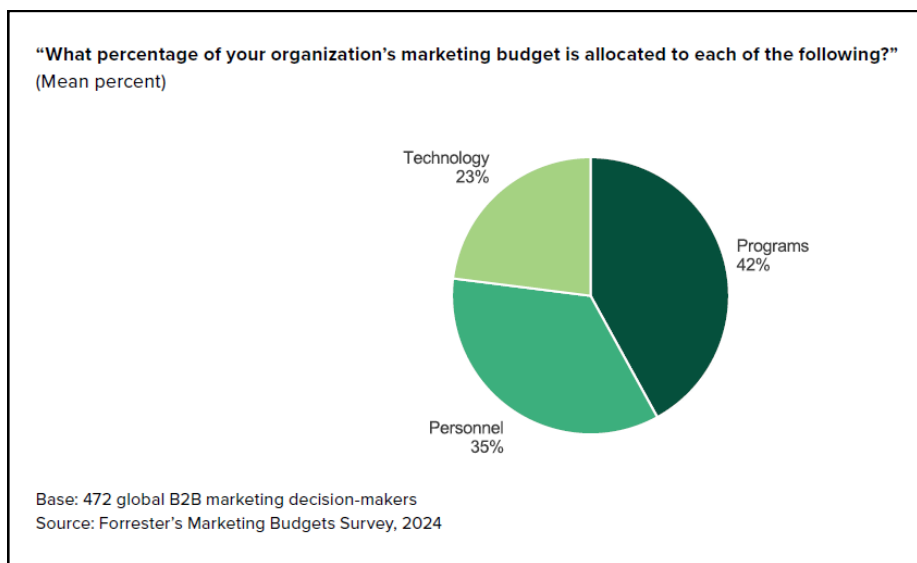
“Roughly four out of five global B2B marketing decision-makers are feeling bullish and expect to see increased marketing investment in the next 12 months. However, these anticipated budget increases will likely feel like stagnation when accounting for current global inflation rates. Piling on to the predicament is the significant risk associated with current global geopolitical and economic uncertainty. Savvy marketing leaders should plan for potential budget cuts while remaining hopeful for modest increases” – Forrester 2025 B2B Budget Planning Guide

For another data point on budget growth.... Recent [research from Sagefrog](#) isn't quite as optimistic, with **66% of B2B marketers indicating budgets will increase or stay the same in 2025**.



B2B Marketing Budget Allocation

In terms of how 2025 B2B budgets will be allocated, Forrester's survey indicates that **Marketing Programs** will get the largest share (42%), followed by **Personnel** (35%), and **Technology** (23%).



B2B Marketing Priorities in 2025

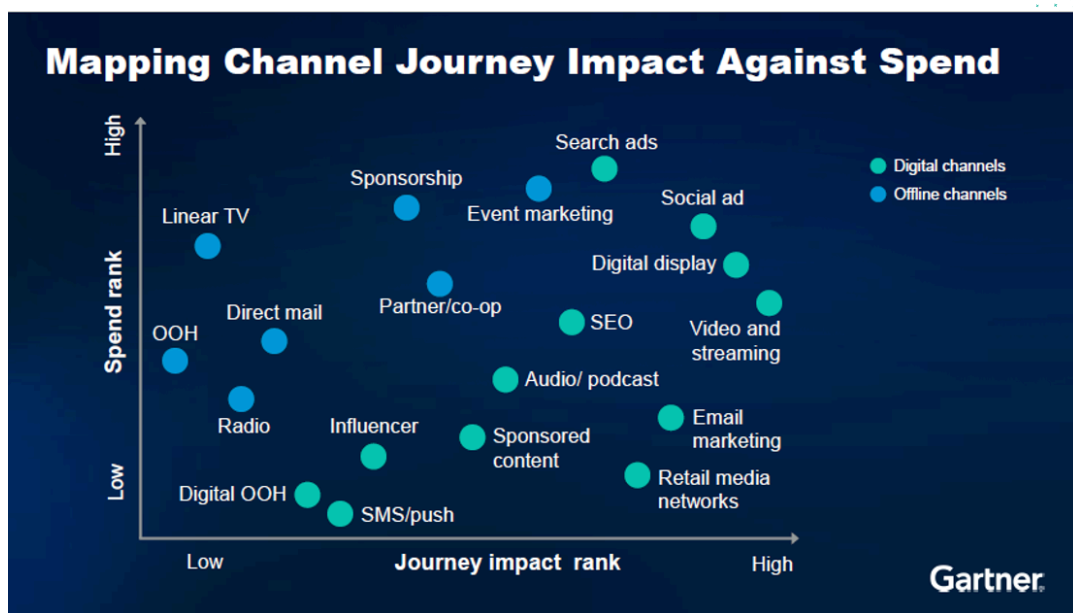
Strategic Initiatives for B2B Marketers

There is consistency across nearly all sources in terms of the top marketing themes for 2025. B2B strategic initiatives include:

- **Expand focus on Artificial Intelligence (AI)**
- **Devise strategies to comply with privacy changes**
- **Extend marketing across *the entire customer* lifecycle**
- **Drive customer engagement and increase retention**

Top Digital Marketing Channels

This Gartner chart shows the relationship between spend and impact on the customers' journey:



The upper right corner of the chart indicates that the following digital marketing channels rank as most effective *and* worthy of investment:

- **Social advertising**
- **Display ads**
- **Video**
- **Search ads**
- **SEO**

This analysis mostly aligns with a recent [Neil Patel survey](#) indicating that 2025 investments are most likely to increase in the following areas: **SEO, search & social ads, content development (especially AI-assisted), and CRO/UX.**

Focus on Marketing Efficiency

Overview

Based on the small, expected increase in marketing investment this year, it's crucial for B2B marketers to make strategic (and creative) decisions that will drive growth and maximize results. [The CMO Club](#) reports that leaders are working to transform their approach to B2B marketing without substantially increasing spending.


In 2025 marketers must evaluate all programs and platforms and determine if they are delivering expected capabilities and results. One pertinent example: Gartner reported last year that marketers were using just 33% of their organization's potential martech capability.

Top B2B Lead Sources

Given all the focus on *digital* marketing, it's important to note that 45% of B2B marketers surveyed by Sagefrog indicate that their top lead source in 2025 remains **In-Person Tradeshows and Events**, followed by virtual events and webinars, and direct/email marketing.

Here is the summary of % respondents indicating that a marketing tactic is a TOP lead gen source in 2025 (as compared to 2023 and 2024):

Top Sales & Marketing Lead Sources			
	2025	2024	2023
In-Person Tradeshows & Events	45%	33%	27%
Virtual Events & Webinars	35%	21%	14%
Direct Marketing	29%	26%	16%
Email Marketing	29%	32%	22%
Directories & Sponsorships	25%	32%	22%
Paid Social Media	20%	24%	29%
Print Advertisements	20%	27%	8%
Referrals	20%	17%	21%
Search Engine Marketing	20%	12%	30%
Organic Search	19%	15%	34%
Networking	12%	12%	19%
Public Relations	12%	24%	—
Account-Based Marketing	9%	17%	4%
Telemarketing	3%	9%	14%



Summary

In-person and virtual events, direct and email marketing, sponsorships, and search marketing remain relatively strong lead sources.

Efforts like telemarketing, print ads, and public relations are not considered as effective as in previous years.

5 Key Take-Aways for B2B Digital Marketers in 2025

The consistency found across these surveys lends credibility to the insights summarized here. From my perspective, the five key takeaways for B2B digital marketers in 2025 are:

1. While budgets are increasing slightly, **don't expect significant additional funds this year.**
2. **Focus on driving more with less;** especially from proven B2B digital channels such as paid and organic search, social ads, content marketing, and webinars.
3. **Don't ignore emerging trends,** especially if they can provide efficiencies. For example: [AI-assisted content development](#) and [ABM-driven lifecycle marketing](#).
4. Build a marketing program that reaches prospects across the entire customer journey; **Fully embrace Lifecycle Marketing.**
5. Make sure you are **realizing measurable benefits from big-ticket items like CRM** and your entire mar-tech stack.

With a bit of creativity, persistence, and efficiency -- 2025 will be a great year for B2B marketers!

Sources

[Forrester B2B Budget Planning Guide](#)
[Gartner Customer Journey Maps Guide](#)
[The CMO Club: Scope of B2B Marketing](#)
[Marketing Profs 2025 Budget Trends](#)
[IoT: Planning Your Digital Marketing Budget for 2025](#)
[Sagefrog B2B Marketing Mix Report](#)
[Neil Patel 2025 Budgets Revealed](#)

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