# Wellspring Digital Integrity • Transparency • Results

The Wellspring Digital

MARKETING STRATEGY

# 2022 STATE OF DIGITAL MARKETING SURVEY

Analysis provided by Karl Hindle, Jon-Mikel Bailey, Cory Runk, and Elizabeth Downing.



### **2022 State of Digital Marketing Survey Report**

Recently, we surveyed CMOs and Marketing Professionals, asking them targeted questions about their digital marketing strategies, budgets, and more. In this report, we've summarized the data provided by over 100 survey respondents. Their responses are very telling as to the future of digital marketing.

Overall, the responses confirm our suspicions that businesses suffer from a lack of clarity when assessing the effectiveness of their digital marketing efforts. In other words, they don't know or don't have a clear understanding of what works and what doesn't.

The good news is that this can be fixed. Effective digital marketing relies on access to and a clear understanding of the data it produces and what that data means. Now, more than ever, it is paramount that businesses and organizations gain a clear understanding of their digital marketing past, present, and future.

If you are feeling lost or feel that you don't have a clear understanding of what work works and what doesn't with your digital marketing efforts, take comfort in two facts...



### What is the solution?

- Assemble a team of marketers with experience, whether internal or external or both
- Implement, configure and optimize the right marketing technology stack based on your efforts and needs.
- Use that team of experts to assess and explain the data and then map it to your business goals.
- Adjust your efforts accordingly.

We hope you find the following survey data and analysis as enlightening and informative as we did. Please contact us if you have any questions or would like to share additional anecdotal information with us.

#### Happy Marketing! Wellspring Digital



## **Table of Contents**

2022 Digital Marketing Survey Report	1
What is the solution?	1
Table of Contents	2
Respondent Data	3
Marketing Budgets	4
Dedicated Digital Marketing Teams	5
Outsourcing Digital Marketing, and What Companies Do In-House	6
Outsourced Digital Marketing Functions	7
Overall Marketing Strategy	8
Digital Marketing Strategy	9
Digital Marketing Goals	10
Digital Marketing and Discretionary Budgets	11
Targeting Market By Digital Channel	12
Digital Marketing Disciplines	13
Digital Marketing Successes and Room For Improvement	14
Digital Marketing Budgeting in 2022	16
The Pandemic and Digital Marketing Budgeting	17
Digital Marketing Spending in 2022	18
Digital Marketing Challenges	20
Diversifying Digital Marketing Strategies	21
Digital Marketing Services - In-House and Outsourced	23
Final Thoughts	25
About Wellspring Digital	26
Meet Our Team	27
Locations	28





### **Respondent Data**

Question one asked for the respondee's current position:



Q1 What is your current position?

The highest number of respondents at 36.7% were Marketing Directors for their existing companies. Following them were Marketing Managers at 25.49%, while 23.53% were CMOs or VPs of Marketing. 8.8% were CEOs or Business Owners, and 5.88 did not specify their job title or profession.

From this data, we were able to see that our respondents were in positions to make most, if not all, decisions about digital marketing planning and execution for their companies.





## **Marketing Budgets**

Next, we asked about the respondent's annual marketing budget.



While 5.94% of respondents said they were unsure of their annual marketing budget, over 57% reported that their budget was between \$100,000 to over \$1M. 34.65% said that their annual marketing budgets were under \$100K.

Then we asked if the sales and marketing teams had separate budgets.

The vast majority responded to the affirmative - their sales and marketing teams had separate budgets, while 32.35% said that they did not. There are many different approaches to a digital marketing plan, especially when there isn't a dedicated budget allotted to marketing spending.

#### Q3 Do your sales and marketing teams have separate budgets?

Answered: 102 Skipped: 0

That said, more organizations are moving toward aligning their marketing and sales budgets with common KPIs and other achievable and measurable outcomes.





## **Dedicated Digital Marketing Teams**

Next, we wanted to dive into the internal structures of the companies that responded to our survey.

## Q4 Do you have a dedicated internal digital marketing team and if so, how many people are in it?



Of the 102 respondents, 32.35% responded that they did not have a dedicated digital marketing team. 35.29% said that they did, and their team had 2-5 people on it, while 19.61% have a one-person team. Fewer companies had larger teams, with 8.82% reporting 6-9 employees on their team, and 3.92% reporting 10 or more.

What this tells us is that the majority of these companies are managing their digital marketing efforts with less help than is needed. In other words, look for more organizations to outsource a portion, if not all, of their digital marketing efforts.





## **Outsourcing Digital Marketing, and What Companies Do In-House**

We asked if the responding companies engaged digital agencies, or if they handled all their marketing in-house.

### Q5 Does your company engage digital agencies or handle all marketing inhouse?



The largest group of respondents (35.29%) said that they used freelancers and contractors as needed further supporting our assessment above. 19.61% responded with ad hoc use of an agency.

Most of the "other" category responders noted that a portion of their digital marketing, like building assets or social media, was in-house, but they used an agency for other things like SEO or media buying. 8.82% responded that an agency handles all their digital marketing efforts, and 27.45% said that all their digital marketing was handled in-house.





## **Outsourced Digital Marketing Functions**

We were curious as to what functions companies chose to outsource, so we asked them.

## Q6 Does your company outsource to agencies or contractors any of the following (select all that apply)?



As you can see, a greater percentage of responding companies said they outsourced SEO and PPC (42.70% for both). 25.84% outsource social media, and 23.60% responded with "other." Those people cited video production and editing, creative design support, web development, public relations, podcast consultancy, influencer marketing, event management, and email list building as the marketing tasks they outsource.

This is interesting because it tells us what is currently most important to companies is getting qualified traffic to their website via SEO and PPC. More companies seem to be doing more content marketing with a mix of inside and outside help.





### **Overall Marketing Strategy**

Next, we wanted to know if respondents had a defined overall marketing strategy, rather than solely a digital marketing strategy.

## Q7 Do you have a defined overall marketing strategy (not just a digital marketing strategy)?



More than 93% of respondents were sure of their answer. 18.63% of respondents said no, they did not have an overall marketing strategy. The biggest portion of respondents (78.43%) said they did. This is encouraging and shows us that more organizations are taking marketing seriously.





### **Digital Marketing Strategy**

Of course, we wanted to know if companies had a defined DIGITAL marketing strategy.



### Q8 Do you have a defined digital marketing strategy?

The smallest group of respondents (4.90%) said that they did not have a definitive marketing strategy and they did not use digital channels. 33.33% said they didn't have a digital marketing strategy but they did use digital marketing channels and tactics. The majority of respondents said they did have a defined digital marketing strategy, at 64.76%.

If they indicated that they did have a defined digital marketing strategy, was that strategy integrated into the overall marketing strategy.



## Q9 If you answered Yes to Q8, is your digital marketing integrated into your overall marketing strategy?

76.09% of respondents said yes, their digital strategy rolled up into their overall marketing strategy. 15.22% said no, while 8.70% were unsure. As we move ahead into the future of digital marketing, it is clear that the majority of companies out there see digital marketing as an important part of doing business.





## **Digital Marketing Goals**

We then asked if the company's digital marketing team was achieving its targeted goals.



### Q10 Is your digital marketing team achieving targeted goals?

58% of respondents reported their digital marketing team was meeting targeted goals, while 17% said their team was exceeding said goals. 10% reported under-performance, and 15%, even more, said they were unsure, which is a good indication of standard or substandard performance.

In our experience, marketing goals must be clearly defined and tracked. Over 10% stating that they are unsure if they are meeting their goals is a concerning statistic. Not knowing, either way, is a dangerous place to be and means that, most likely, money and efforts are being wasted. This should also serve as a red flag that it is time to get better visibility into your marketing efforts and determine, once and for all, whether or not goals are being met.





## **Digital Marketing and Discretionary Budgets**

We were curious about areas earmarked for discretionary budgets. We were surprised at the responses to this question.

## Q11 Do you have defined or discretionary budgets for the following (select all that apply)?



Well over half the respondents said that they didn't have a defined digital marketing budget. 38.24% said that they had a defined or discretionary budget for customer acquisition. Conversion was the next most popular answer at 24.51%. Retention and service & support came in at a little under 20% each.

This is rather shocking considering the answers preceding this question. It tells us that more budgetary focus is placed on tactics as opposed to desired outcomes. This thinking is backward and does not address the needs of the organization. All marketing efforts should be tied to specific desired outcomes that can be measured.





## **Targeting Market By Digital Channel**

We asked generally if the company had targeted their market by digital channel.

## Q12 Have you targeted your market by digital channel? (Paid, SEO, Social, etc.)



The majority of respondents (70.30%) said yes, while 26.73% said no. Again, this shows a lack of clarity for those who answered "no" in terms of what digital marketing spend is working. An organization should be certain about where its market is and target them accordingly.

Not doing this means a more ad hoc approach is happening where the organization is "dabbling" in various channels instead of targeting channels for specific reasons to seek specific outcomes.





## **Digital Marketing Disciplines**

We asked what digital marketing disciplines the professionals surveyed had used in the last 12 months.

The two most popular responses were email marketing (outside of marketing automation) at 86.14%, and social media marketing (organic and community building) at 88.12%. Next up were SEO (73.27%) and PPC (66.34%).

Marketing automation came in at 52.48%, while influencer marketing was a yes from 33.66% of respondents. A smaller percentage answered with reputation management (21.78), sentiment analysis (9.90%), eCommerce optimization (7.92%), and an "Other" respondent cited oldfashioned networking.

It isn't surprising that email marketing and social media lead the pack. They offer the lowest barrier to entry in that anyone can use channels like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc., and/ or open and operate a MailChimp or ConstantContact account.





Running these operations outside of a marketing automation platform, however, means a lack of clarity in the data. It is much easier to track these efforts in one **marketing automation platform** (think HubSpot or Marketo) than trying to piece together analytics from multiple sources to make sense of it all.

We would love to see the numbers for Email/Social Marketing and Marketing Automation flip in the future, meaning fewer companies are running their marketing efforts outside of a marketing automation platform.





## **Digital Marketing Successes and Room** For Improvement

We asked these individuals where they had the most success in 2021, asking them to choose only one of the options.



Q14 Where have you had the most success in 2021? (select one only)

A fair amount of respondents said they saw the most success in email marketing, PPC, **content marketing**, and SEO, very few said that marketing automation, social media marketing, content marketing, and reputation management were their 2021 areas of success.

One write-in response read, "unable to answer adequately MOST vs LEAST success as everything works together." Another said networking was their greatest area of success in 2021. Someone else said they saw the greatest success in direct mail marketing. Again, no surprise that email marketing leads the pack. Email marketing continues to be the most effective digital marketing tactic for all sorts of businesses.





If we asked about the greatest area of success, we have to ask about the area of least success.





A large group of respondents said they saw the least success in social media marketing (26%) while 20% said they didn't see success in email marketing. A lot of write-in responses cited influencer marketing as their least successful channel.

This is very interesting in that the majority of respondents are using social media and email marketing but not seeing much success with either. One reason for this is a lack of one cohesive strategy that ties these efforts together to a very specific and achievable set of goals.





## **Digital Marketing Budgeting in 2022**

We asked if respondents planned to increase or decrease their digital marketing budget in 2022.

## Q16 Do you plan to increase or decrease your digital marketing budget in 2022?



Almost half of the respondents said that they planned to increase their overall digital marketing spend (48.51%), while on the other end of the spectrum, 10.89% said that they didn't have a dedicated budget for digital marketing. Only 2.97% intended to decrease their budgets, while 37.62% said they were keeping their digital marketing budget the same.

As the importance of digital continues to grow, we expect to see that top number grow as well. But only if businesses see success in these channels. Failure should lead to an adjustment of spending and strategy rather than simply decreasing spending altogether.





## **The Pandemic and Digital Marketing Budgeting**

Next, we asked how the pandemic had impacted the digital marketing budget in 2021.

## Q17 How has the pandemic affected your digital marketing budget in 2021?



The largest group said they'd spent a similar amount as in previous years (38.24%). 24.51% said they'd spent less because of the pandemic. 26.47% said they'd increased spending because of the pandemic, and 10.78 said they'd increased spending, but not because of COViD-19.

It is too soon to say definitively what the exact effects of the pandemic have been on marketing but we can say with certainty that as we move forward into more "normal" times, it will be more important than ever to increase marketing spending but only if it is tied to very specific outcomes that can be achieved and tracked effectively. Marketing automation will continue to factor heavily into this.





## **Digital Marketing Spending in 2022**

We wondered where companies were planning to increase spending in 2022.

## Q18 Where do you plan to increase spending in 2022 (select all that apply)?



Content marketing and PPC were neck and neck at 46.08% and 45.10%, respectively. SEO came in next at 35.29% and social media marketing was up there at 30.39%. Marketing automation and email marketing ranked at 26.47% and22.5%, respectively, with sentiment analysis and reputation management making a small appearance.

The respondents that chose "other" cited their websites, influencer marketing, and lead generation as key areas of focus and increased spending, while 18.63% said they were unsure of where they'd spend more money.





We then asked where people planned to decrease spending in 2022.

## Q19 Where do you plan to decrease spending in 2022 (select all that apply)?



The majority of respondents said they were unsure where they'd decrease spending. Other responses were peppered with decreases in PPC, marketing automation, SEO, social media marketing, and the other categories. Ten respondents chose "other." Some of their responses stated decreases in things like print marketing and banner ads, but most of them said they didn't plan to decrease spending at all.

This further supports our assertion that digital marketing will continue to be an important part of doing business today. The organizations that will see success are those that tie their efforts to achievable and measurable goals.





## **Digital Marketing Challenges**

We asked individuals where their major challenges were in 2022.

## Q20 What do you feel are your major challenges heading into 2022 (select all that apply)?



Half of the respondents said their greatest challenge was generating qualified website traffic. Many said they struggled with getting MQLs (marketing qualified leads) from their website, and that tracking conversion was problematic.

Tracking leads is also a problem (22.55%), and forecasting or clear visibility into the pipeline was difficult (41.18%). Others cited content creation, industry education, SQL (sales qualified lead) generation, recruiting, and audience reach as pain points.

This is where marketing automation will continue to play a major role in the effectiveness of digital marketing efforts. Full visibility into what works and what does not will only happen when platforms like HubSpot, Marketo, SharpSpring, etc., are configured appropriately and used effectively.





## **Diversifying Digital Marketing Strategies**

We asked individuals which digital marketing tactics and channels they felt their team needed more help, understanding, or improvement to use.

# Q21 Which digital marketing tactics and channels do you feel your team needs more help in understanding or improving your use of (select all that apply)?



SEO and PPC were two top areas for improvement, at 37.11% and 34.02% respectively. Others cited content marketing (20.32%), social media marketing (25.77%), sentiment analysis (28.87%), and reputation management (24.74%) as areas to improve.

Write-in responses included website content, form validation, attribution (think marketing automation here), and customer experience as areas in need of team education. Others said their team didn't need to understand anything any better.





There isn't anything surprising here as these are the types of responses we get from our clients, anecdotally. We asked what tactics these respondents planned to use in 2022, and gave a large list of possibilities.



Video marketing was the clear area of interest, with 71.13% of respondents replying that they planned to implement that strategy in 2022. The next most popular answer was marketing automation, at 43.30%.

Responses in all other areas (Al or machine learning, content automation, etc) were peppered through the responses, and people wrote in as well. Some of the writein responses included OTT (advertising on streaming TV), while others said they weren't implementing any new strategies.

Video is gaining in popularity these days as using video in channels like social media and email marketing is easier and often produces results. Be careful not to get lost in video marketing and put all of your efforts into that marketing basket.

Video marketing should be tied to other efforts as part of a larger digital marketing strategy. And all video efforts should be tied to clear and measurable goals.





## **Digital Marketing Services:** In-House and Outsourced

Q23 What services do you plan to bring in-house for 2022 (select all that apply)?



Most respondents replied that they weren't sure (42.92%). One respondent said they were bringing event marketing in-house. Others said they didn't plan to move any new responsibilities to their in-house team, while one respondent said that their agency and the in-house team truly worked in concert.

30.61% said they were bringing social media in-house, while 23.47% said email marketing was moving to the internal team. 25.51% said they were taking on content marketing. Fewer said they were bringing in SEO (17.35%) and PPC (16.33%), while even fewer said they were bringing in sentiment analysis and reputation management.

The pandemic and economic uncertainty it created have shrunk certain teams and we have seen more companies outsourcing certain efforts to reduce overhead. To that end, we asked what services companies planned to outsource in 2022.







## Q24 What services do you plan to outsource in 2022 (select all that apply)?

Again, most respondents were unsure (41.67%). Write-in responses included graphic design, web development, and many people said they didn't plan to outsource any services.

26.04% said they outsourced PPC, while, 25% of respondents planned to outsource SEO. Content marketing will be outsourced by 14.58%, and marketing automation, email marketing, social media marketing, sentiment analysis, and reputation management are also going out to agencies or freelancers.

We expect to see more of this in the future. Companies have been forced to run lean in recent times and they are outsourcing in areas where are they are the weakest internally. The success of outsourcing will determine whether it will continue or if companies will begin increasing in-house capabilities and efforts. 2022 will be interesting to watch in this regard.



## **Final Thoughts**

We asked if people had any additional comments or anecdotal observations to share.

### Here is a quick recap:

- "Lead attribution is always so foggy as far as for measuring ROI."
- "I work for a professional services firm so our methodology is a bit different than traditional. We tried the "email" marketing route and frankly, I don't think had much success as I suspected. I'm going to switch to content and targeted campaigns, targeted ad placements, and/or thought papers this year and see if that makes an impact."
- "We saw more potential in social media including LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram to find more prospects."
- "For our line of business, digital marketing is only effective in building our brand. SQLs are not that achievable with digital marketing."
- "We're having issues with vendors and recruiting employees. The demand is high and doesn't require much effort to obtain leads, but converting them into sales with a backlog on supplies and being booked out for months isn't helping us maximize on the demand."
- "Email is cooling and niche software is hard to sell through PPC."
- "Would like to know more about what people are seeing and planning in regards to event marketing; trade shows, webinars, etc."
- "We are growing our omnichannel model with a mix of high-tech and high-touch channels. Still in test and learn mode to optimize."

These responses speak to the continued uncertainty that the pandemic has created. That said, if all efforts are effectively tracked, especially using tools like marketing automation, we will continue to see uncertainty turn to purposeful strategy.

Tracking leads, assessing website traffic quality, and curtailing marketing spending are not possible without access to and understanding of the data. What works? What doesn't? And where do we go from here?

There is no longer a need to "guess" as to whether or not your digital marketing efforts are working. Now is the time to engage in a digital marketing strategy that is easily managed and tracked by your organization and/or the digital marketing firm you're using for these efforts.

Welcome to the age of digital marketing visibility and accountability!





## **About Wellspring Digital**

Wellspring Digital is a full-service digital marketing firm with locations in Frederick, MD, Austin Metro, TX, and Naples, FL. We specialize in digital marketing strategy, marketing automation, SEO, paid search, social media marketing, content marketing, email marketing, and website design & development with SailFish, a managed business hosting platform built in the Cloud.

If you would like to learn more about Wellspring Digital, please contact Jon-Mikel Bailey at *301.383.8351* or jon@wellspringdigital.com.

### Services

As a client, you will see these principles in action through all our service offerings:

- Digital Marketing Strategy A highly experienced digital marketing team at your fingertips to help you through planning, strategy, budget, and more.
- SEO Local, Regional, National, International, Multilingual & eCommerce optimization.
- Marketing Automation Generate ROI from these powerful platforms: HubSpot, Pardot, SharpSpring, Marketo, Dynamics365, and more.
- Pay-Per-Click Marketing Leverage ad platforms such as, Google Ads, Bing Ads, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Amazon, and more including Retargeting Ads.
- Content Marketing Blogging, press releases, messaging strategy, podcasts, and more.
- Website Development and Maintenance -Enterprise class website solutions and support.
- Social Media Marketing Leverage organic traffic and optimize communications with creative content.

- Graphic Design Digital/print ads, logo creation, web design, banners.
- World Class Business Hosting on SailFish -Designed for speed and security, and 24/7x365 server management and customized website support SLA.
- **Reputation Management** Press releases, online reviews, surveys, directory management, brand protection.
- Sentiment Analysis Get ahead of the conversations that matter, know where your audience is going, frame your messaging appropriately based on fact, not feeling.
- Virtual Digital Marketing Team Utilize our team and expertise as your whole or partial digital marketing unit, delivering business and marketing solutions with the need, expense, or risk of developing additional inhouse capability.
- App Store Optimization Boost the visibility of your mobile app and improve conversions to maximize ROI.





### **Meet Our Team**



### Karl Hindle CEO

Karl Hindle founded Wellspring Digital and has extensive SEO and digital marketing experience for small to global organizations, he is typically found supporting C-suite and owner/founders on marketing and digital issues. Karl was selected as a Judge for the US Search Awards in 2020 and 2021.



#### Jon-Mikel Bailey CDMO

Jon-Mikel Bailey is the Chief Development and Marketing Officer for Wellspring Digital. Jon has 25 years of digital industry experience and is a frequent contributor to mainstream marketing publications and events.



#### **Cory Runk** *Director of Digital Marketing, Automation & PPC*

Cory Runk joined Wellspring Digital in May 2019 and has served as the Senior Digital Marketing Manager. In his current position, Cory is responsible for managing current marketing automation and pay per click marketing clients as well as developing these services for Wellspring Digital.



#### Sammye Klein Workflow Automation & Project Manager

Sammye is an Asana guru, the platform Wellspring Digital uses to manage our business and deliver transparency and tangible results for clients. Hailing from Texas, she is perfect for keeping everyone on track with workloads.



#### **James Morris** *Director of Web Development*

James has over 20 years of experience in website design, development, support, and project management.



#### Alex Tsygankov Assistant Director of Digital Marketing

Alex Tsygankov joined Wellspring Digital in March 2022. He is a digital marketer with over 10 years of experience in journalism, content marketing, and SEO.



### **Max Fisher** SEO and Marketing Assistant

Max is an SEO and marketing assistant having joined Wellspring Digital in March 2022 having previously worked in telecom engineering in the UK.



#### **Liz Downing** Content Marketing & Ecommerce Consultant

Liz Downing is a writer and marketer with over 13 years experience in creating superior copy and marketing materials across a wide variety of industries. Currently, she is eyeball deep in ecommerce, but she likes to keep her mind nimble and her fingers moving on a keyboard.



#### Liz Shafer Media Coordinator

Liz Schafer is the master of details and getting things done. She has over 20 years of delivering customer solutions in extremely challenging environments.



#### **Emily Hindle** *Media Design Intern*

Emily Hindle is a current student at Full Sail University and a proud member of MCBS. When not on the clock or with her head in the books, she's found going to rock concerts, collecting retro games, or hanging out with her best friends.



#### **Rebecca Oelschlager** *Data Analytics Intern*

Rebecca Oelschlager is looking to learn more about the world of digital marketing. We are happy to show her the ropes.





### **Locations**



### Frederick, MD

4539 Metropolitan Court, Suite 257 Frederick, MD 21704 301.383.8351



### **Austin Metro, TX**

120 W 2nd Street, Suite E2 Taylor, TX 76574 512.598.5244



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