

The future of the B2B marketing brief

Insights from 426 marketers on planning, measurement, brand impact, and AI—and research-backed frameworks to improve each.

Marketers understand what outcome-driven marketing should look like. Campaigns should begin with a clear business objective, aligned stakeholders, measurable success criteria, and a shared understanding of the customer journey.

But B2B marketing has become a lot more complex. Most teams now manage a larger number of media platforms, yet regularly stitch data together by hand. Even then, only 10% are extremely confident in the measurements they produce. These teams manage more channels, platforms, data, and partners than ever before while also under the pressure to move faster and prove results sooner.

As complexity grows, cracks start to appear. After talking directly to B2B marketers, here were the **key takeaways**:

57%

say defining business outcomes should be the first step in campaign planning, yet only 42% actually start there.

64%

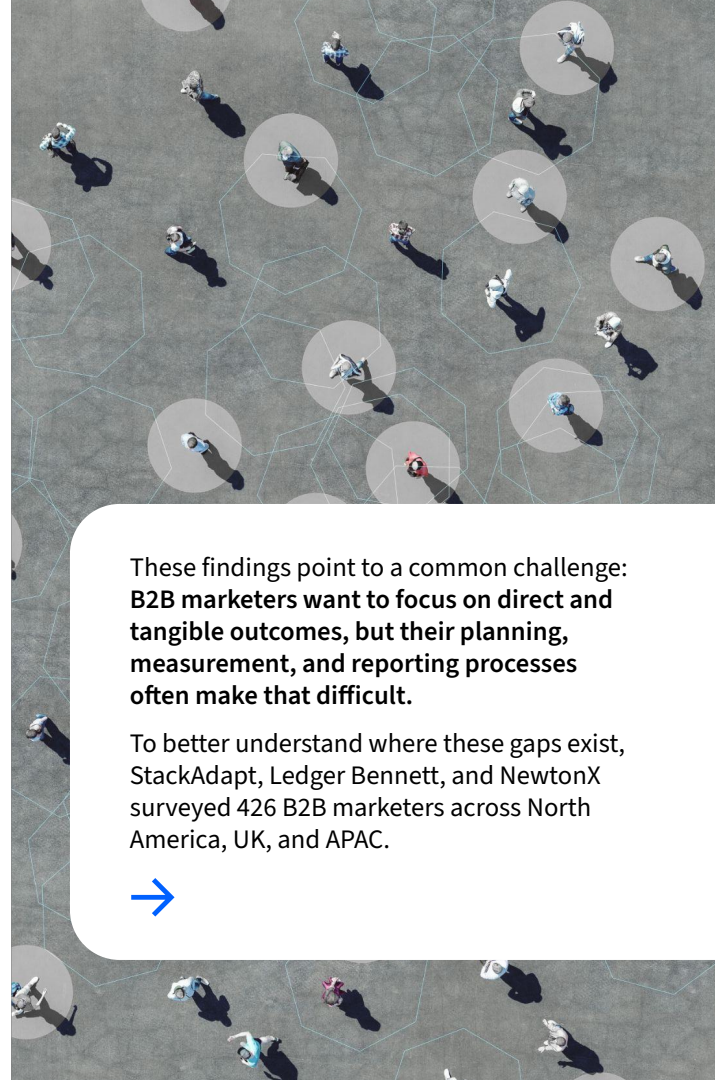
manage six or more media platforms, but only 1% have a unified reporting layer.

1 in 4

respondents evaluate AI in their briefs against defined criteria, leaving 75% with AI questions that give vendors no meaningful accountability.

These findings point to a common challenge: **B2B marketers want to focus on direct and tangible outcomes, but their planning, measurement, and reporting processes often make that difficult.**

To better understand where these gaps exist, StackAdapt, Ledger Bennett, and NewtonX surveyed 426 B2B marketers across North America, UK, and APAC.



Contents

The research highlights **four challenges** facing modern B2B marketers:

- 1 Campaign planning often starts before teams align on outcomes
- 2 Measurement systems struggle to keep up with cross-channel marketing
- 3 Brand objectives are written into briefs but rarely measured as business outcomes
- 4 AI adoption is moving faster than evaluation standards



To understand where these challenges begin, our research focuses on one of the first steps in campaign planning: **the media brief or request for proposal (RFP)**. What happens here echoes through the rest of the campaign. Get the brief wrong, and the problems tend to compound. Get it right, and the rest of the process becomes much easier.

The research also points to another challenge: most B2B marketers recognize these problems, **but many still lack playbooks for solving them**. Throughout this report, we'll share practical frameworks and approaches that can help teams write stronger briefs, build better measurement plans, evaluate brand impact, and assess AI usage more rigorously.

CHALLENGE 1

Campaign planning often starts before teams align on outcomes

Campaigns are built around a series of decisions: what business outcome to drive, which partners to involve, how success will be measured, who to reach, and which channels to use.

In theory, those decisions should happen in that order. But in practice, many teams move into execution before they've aligned on the outcome.

CHALLENGE 1 CAMPAIGN PLANNING OFTEN STARTS BEFORE TEAMS ALIGN ON OUTCOMES

By the time key partners are brought into the conversation, many of the biggest decisions—such as target audiences, channel selection, budget allocation, and success metrics—have already been made.

The result is a narrower planning process, with less opportunity to pressure-test ideas, consider different approaches, or identify gaps before the campaign launches.

Has a key execution decision ever been locked in before the strategic question it was built to answer was fully defined? What was the result?



In some cases, execution decisions like channel or format get defined early based on past playbooks or timelines before the underlying strategic question is fully clear. When that happens, it can limit flexibility and sometimes lead to suboptimal performance because the campaign is built around a predefined approach. (...) In those cases, the campaign usually underperformed relative to expectations, not necessarily because of the channel it was run on, but because the strategy and execution were not fully aligned.

Senior Growth Manager,
Brand-Side Advertiser, Technology, United States



The organizations seeing the strongest results create that alignment earlier, bringing partners into the planning process before channels, budgets, and measurement plans are finalized.

INSIGHT 1

Start with the outcome, not the channel

A majority of B2B marketers (57%) say defining business outcomes should be the first step in the campaign planning sequence. However, only 42% actually define these first, revealing a 15-point gap between goals and reality.

Most B2B marketers agree that business outcomes should guide campaign planning. Yet defining tangible objectives compete with launch deadlines, stakeholder pressure, procurement requirements, and pre-existing channel preferences.

When we asked them what most often forces operational and tactical decisions ahead of strategy, two answers lead: 46% point to a lack of clear strategic direction from leadership at the outset, and 45% to pressure from leadership for fast activation.

Here are the top five:

WHAT PUSHES EXECUTION DECISIONS AHEAD OF STRATEGY

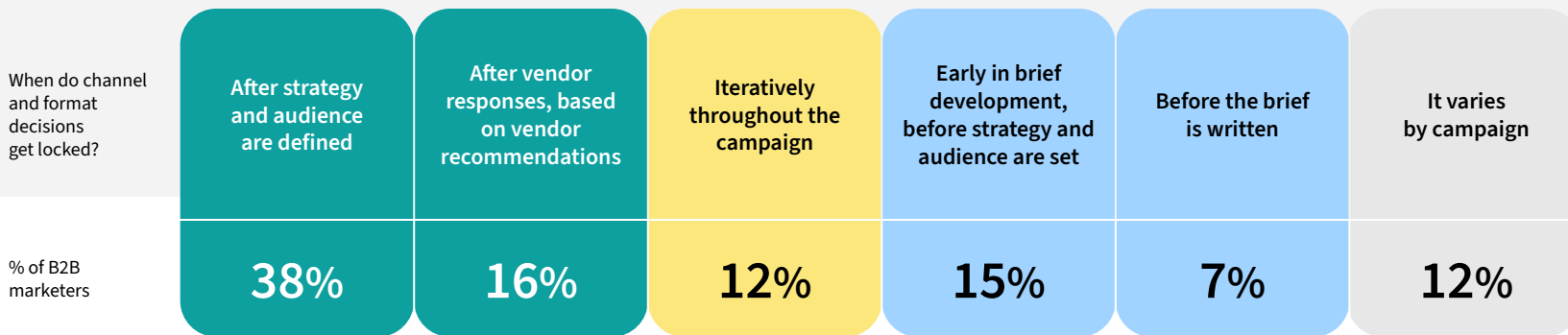


Base: 426 B2B marketers

Similarly, the channels selected for a campaign should be a function of the audience and outcome defined in the brief, not the other way around. When channel decisions are made before the strategy is clear, teams risk building the campaign around a preferred tactic rather than the problem they're trying to solve.

About half of B2B marketers do a good job of strategic stage:

● Excellent job ● Fair job ● Poor job ● N/A



Base: 426 B2B marketers

More than one in five (22%) marketers planning a campaign confirm their channels before strategy is set. Another 16% confirm them only after vendor responses.

Partners can help brands define which channels, formats, and audiences actually perform against a given objective to sharpen a strategy that already exists.

This breaks when a partner is brought in to transact rather than to advise:

Has a key execution decision ever been locked in before the strategic question it was built to answer was fully defined? What was the result?



Unfortunately, this happens all too often. Sometimes we haven't even finished issuing RFPs yet, and a media vendor meets directly with the client, and the client says: 'I want to buy this'.

They tell us what they want to buy before we even evaluate it. In a perfect world, a good client will tell us, can you make sure to give this person an RFP and evaluate them and let me know if you recommend or don't recommend them. Can you give me a POV? That doesn't always happen. (...) Typically, those don't perform.

— VP, Engagement Strategy,
Agency, Healthcare, United States



INSIGHT 2

Brief media before creative

When creative is consulted before media, the brief inherits creative assets that were never built for the audience the campaign is meant to reach. **Most teams aren't briefing in the order the brief was designed to support.**

When B2B marketers brief media too late, the campaign can end up built around existing creative rather than the audience. The question becomes, *"Where can we use this?"* instead of, *"What will reach the buyer?"* The majority of marketers are losing strategic leverage and wasting creative resources, adapting to what becomes convenient instead of focusing on the true needs of their target audience. When campaign assets and channel mixes are not tailored, strategic marketing goals become harder to achieve and resources are potentially drained.

Brief media first, with creative built against the channel plan.

11%

Handle creative and media inside the same agency or team

28%

16%

Say it varies by campaign.

14%

Brief creative first; media planning follows whatever creative produces (structurally backwards).

32%

Brief creative and media simultaneously (*workable in disciplined organizations, problematic in most*).

Base: 426 B2B marketers

INSIGHT 3

Move safeguards upstream

Most B2B marketers recognize that brief development needs guardrails. The question is whether those guardrails prevent backwards planning before it happens or merely document it after the fact.

● Before/during the brief is drafted ● After the brief is drafted

What safeguards do you use to keep brief and RFP development grounded in business strategy?

% of B2B marketers

Defined KPIs locked at the start, not during the campaign	53%
Dedicated planning phase before brief drafting begins	45%
Cross-functional review or RFP gate meetings	36%
Pre-brief stakeholder alignment workshops	34%
Formal sign-off before brief release	50%
Head-of-team or senior leadership review before vendor invitation	44%
Standardized brief templates with required strategic fields	42%

Base: 426 B2B marketers



Pre-brief stakeholder alignment workshops are the only safeguard that creates dedicated time for outcome definition *before* the document opens, but sit at the bottom of the adoption list at 34%.

WHAT HIGH-PERFORMING MARKETERS DO DIFFERENTLY

Top performing teams use more safeguards—earlier

Every team faces the same pressure. But teams with more strategic briefs respond to it differently. They use more safeguards, install them earlier, and force outcome alignment before the brief is written.

The two safeguards that happen before the brief is drafted have the widest gap between basic and highly strategic teams:

✓
Pre-brief alignment workshops

✓
Cross-functional review meetings

Where the gap is widest between brief maturity level

Safeguards used in brief development	Template-driven	Highly strategic	Delta
Pre-brief stakeholder alignment workshops	19%	39%	+20pp
Cross-functional review or RFP gate meetings	26%	42%	+16pp
Head-of-team review before vendor invitation	38%	50%	+12pp
Defined KPIs locked at the start	38%	55%	+17pp
Dedicated planning phase before brief drafting	36%	47%	+11pp
Standardized brief templates with required strategic fields	38%	47%	+9pp



The takeaway is simple: strategic teams don't just plan better, they plan earlier and align on the outcome before the brief locks anything in.

Leadership and budgetary pressures aren't going away. What changes the outcome is whether the team has built enough discipline into the process for the brief to hold up under it.

Base: template-driven (n=47), highly strategic (n=231); Throughout this report, "highly strategic" and "template-driven" describe how B2B marketers rated the sophistication of their own briefs on a 1–5 scale, where highly strategic = 4-5 and template-driven = 1-2.

The Collaborative Campaign Planning Process

To help B2B marketers strategically plan their campaigns, we've built a collaborative framework that prioritizes strategic outcomes over tactical execution, with partner and measurement alignment built into the middle.



FRAMEWORK 1

THE COLLABORATIVE CAMPAIGN PLANNING PROCESS



THE LEGACY

THE MODERN

Define the business outcome	1	Define the business outcome
Define the audience/accounts	2	Align on measurable success criteria
Set the budget	3	Identify the audience and buying journey
Create the brief or template	4	Bring strategic partners into planning early
Set success metrics/KPIs	5	Establish the measurement framework
Select channels and formats	6	Determine budget allocation
Bring in strategic partners	7	Select channels and formats
Brief creative/concepts	8	Launch and optimize collaboratively

CHALLENGE 2

Measurement systems struggle to keep up with cross-channel marketing

If planning is where the brief breaks at the start, measurement drift is where the brief breaks at the end. The brief is where measurement commitments get made, but **what gets measured at the end isn't always what was specified at the start.**

One reason is fragmentation. B2B marketers are running campaigns across more channels and platforms than ever before, but most organizations still don't have a dedicated cross-channel measurement system. As a result, marketers lose visibility into important cross-channel metrics.

INSIGHT 1

Centralize reporting into a single cross-channel ecosystem

B2B marketers are managing more platforms than ever before. Nearly **two-thirds (64%)** manage **six or more** media platforms, and **44%** are actively evaluating and adding new ones.

Complexity itself isn't necessarily a barrier to success. StackAdapt's internal platform data shows that top performers often run campaigns across **five or more** channels. The challenge is understanding how all of those channels work together and measuring their impact consistently.

Source: [The State of Programmatic Advertising 2026](#), StackAdapt.

What the data says about how B2B marketers measure today:

1%

have a unified reporting layer across multiple channels and platforms.

>
10%

are extremely confident in their ability to accurately measure campaign performance across multiple channels and platforms.



What's striking is that **63%** of B2B marketers spend most or all of their time manually reconciling data across platforms, yet only a small minority are extremely confident in their resulting measurements. Every hour spent stitching data together is an hour not spent strategically sequencing creative or evaluating campaign outcomes.



Since I have different media partners running different campaigns on different channels, they do not work together. They all claim to take a lot of credit for the performance. So currently I have to do the combined cross-channel management and decide what I think is driving the most success. So it's really an individual decision, not repeatable. It's not scalable, which is detrimental to optimizing for our entire company. (...) I often don't have time to do this, so it is very poorly done if it gets done at all.

— Senior Manager or Manager, Brand-Side Advertiser, Utilities, United States

When marketers are asked to name the single biggest downside of multi-platform fragmentation, these were their top responses:

23%

Inconsistent measurement across channels

18%

Higher operating complexity for the team

16%

Limited visibility into full-funnel impact

15%

Higher costs or operational inefficiency

8%

Slower or weaker decision-making

7%

Difficulty holding vendor accountable for outcomes

6%

Data loss or integration issues

4%

Slower campaign optimization

Base: 426 B2B marketers



Fragmentation comes at a cost.

StackAdapt's platform data suggests that the strongest performers take a different approach, consolidating technology and measurement wherever possible:



Top performers are **4x** more likely to consolidate or modernize their technology stack



53% of top performers say consolidated platforms deliver stronger ROI (vs. 31% of everyone else)

Source: [The State of Programmatic Advertising 2026](#), StackAdapt.

How does using multiple platforms impact your ability to measure and report on performance consistently across campaigns?



The fact that we use multiple platforms does slow us down because we have to pull reporting from multiple different systems and then cobble the information together. (...) So it just means that we have to pull data from a couple of different sources and then kind of consolidate everything and string the data points together, which takes a long time.

— VP Marketing, Brand-Side Advertiser, CPG, United States

INSIGHT 2

Don't let measurement priorities drift mid-campaign

Only **8%** of B2B marketers say the metrics outlined in the brief make it through to post-campaign reporting unchanged.

Some metrics are more likely to survive than others. Brand lift, cross-channel impact, and other long-term measures often fall away between planning and reporting. Pipeline and revenue metrics, on the other hand, tend to remain.

The reason is simple: marketing teams are under pressure to demonstrate business impact. As reporting becomes more complex, the metrics tied most closely to immediate accountability stay front and center, while others become harder to maintain.



8%

of B2B marketers say the metrics outlined in the brief make it through to post-campaign reporting unchanged.

What gets measured changes between planning and reporting:

Metric		Brand lift, awareness shift, consideration shift	Cross-channel attribution or unified-funnel impact	Viewability or attention metrics	AI-driven outcome metrics	Engagement rates	Account engagement	Marketing qualified leads (MQLs)	Sales qualified leads (SQLs)	Revenue impact or closed-won attribution	Pipeline contribution
% of B2B marketers	In the brief	66%	48%	36%	28%	57%	33%	50%	48%	56%	31%
	Measured post-campaign	56%	39%	29%	23%	51%	28%	46%	46%	58%	34%
		-10pp	-9pp	-7pp	-5pp	-5pp	-5pp	-4pp	-2pp	+2pp	+2pp


Base: 426 B2B marketers

Measurement drift isn't random. The metrics most likely to disappear are those tied to long-term outcomes and cross-channel performance. Brand lift drops from 66% in briefs to 56% (-10pp) of post-campaign measurement, while cross-channel attribution falls from 48% to 39% (-9pp).

At the same time, pipeline contribution and revenue impact are among the few metrics that become more common by the end of the campaign. **As reporting pressures increase, teams gravitate toward the metrics leadership expects to see, even when other outcomes were part of the original plan.**

-10pp 

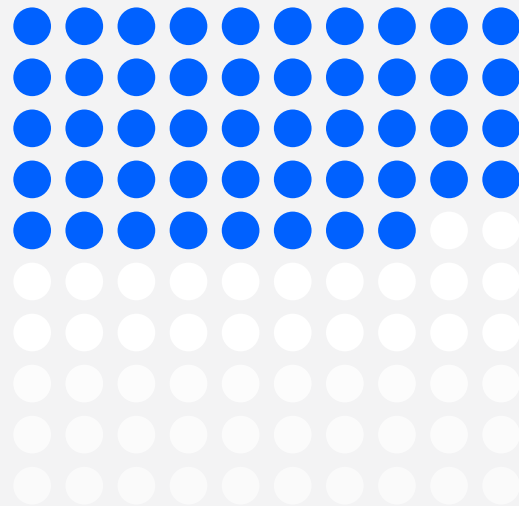
Drop in brand lift tracking from to post-campaign

-9pp 

Drop in cross-channel attribution between brief and post-campaign



When performance is spread across multiple platforms, it becomes harder to determine who is responsible for the outcome.



Nearly half (48%) of B2B marketers say that when a vendor underperforms, the result is simply a performance discussion with no commercial consequences.

INSIGHT 3

Strong measurement starts with a strong brief

Confidence in cross-channel measurement is closely linked to process maturity. Among highly strategic, **62%** are very or extremely confident in their ability to measure performance across channels. Among less mature, template-driven teams, that figure drops to **23%**.

I'm definitely not confident in my ability to attribute performance accurately across all channels. It is extremely difficult to stitch to get performance data across different platforms. So all you can holistically do is try to find a commonality like an engagement and define an engagement across these different opportunities across each channel and just tell that story to the client when you present your report.

VP, Engagement Strategy, Agency, Healthcare, United States



62%

of strategic marketers are very or extremely confident in their ability to measure performance across channels.

23%

of less mature marketers are very or extremely confident in their ability to measure performance across channels.



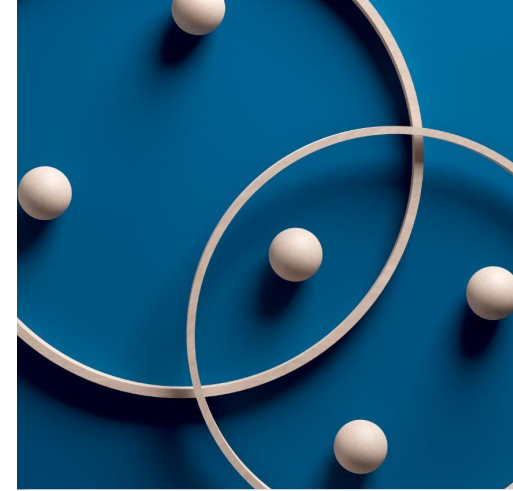
WHAT HIGHLY STRATEGIC TEAMS DO DIFFERENTLY

		Measure AI-driven outcome metrics post-campaign	Measure cross-channel attribution post-campaign	Measure brand via downstream conversion influence	Measure brand via long-term LTV, retention, or equity	Brief metrics match post-campaign metrics (most or always)
% of B2B marketers	Template-driven	11%	32%	17%	15%	38%
	Strategic	32%	44%	37%	36%	67%
	Delta	+21pp	+12pp	+20pp	+21pp	+29pp

Base: template-driven (n=47), highly strategic (n=231); Throughout this report, "highly strategic" and "template-driven" describe how B2B marketers rated the sophistication of their own briefs on a 1-5 scale, where highly strategic = 4-5 and template-driven = 1-2.



The **29pp** gap on brief-to-post-campaign alignment is the most consequential. However, the drift is smaller for teams that have built measurement discipline into how they work.



Five Ways High-Performing Marketers Spend Their Time Instead Of Building Reports

When measurement runs on disconnected tools, the work goes into assembling reports, manually and with low confidence. When it runs on a connected system, that time comes back. Here's where the strongest teams redirect it:

FRAMEWORK 2

FIVE WAYS HIGH-PERFORMING MARKETERS SPEND THEIR TIME INSTEAD OF BUILDING REPORTS



	✘ Instead of...		✔ Redirect time to...
1	Reconciling who-saw-what across platforms	→	Audience analysis
2	Compiling delivery and pacing reports	→	Creative sequencing
3	Stitching channel data after the fact	→	Journey optimization
4	Defaulting to whatever auto-populates	→	Brand measurement
5	Being the person who assembles everyone's numbers	→	Cross-functional planning



CHALLENGE 3

B2B marketers brief for brand but report on clicks

Brand objectives aren't missing from B2B briefs. More than half (54%) of B2B marketers say they include brand-building or upper-funnel goals most of the time or always. Yet those objectives rarely carry the same weight once a campaign is underway.

Two forces pull brand off the table once a campaign is running. The first is pressure: leadership wants to see pipeline and revenue, so lower-funnel metrics often dominate campaign evaluation, even when brand goals were part of the original brief.

The second is measurement: only **31%** of B2B marketers are confident in their ability to measure long-term brand impact, and roughly **half** say they lack the frameworks needed to evaluate brand alongside performance.

31%

of B2B marketers are confident in their ability to measure long-term brand impact.



Brand survives the briefing stage and then drops off the scorecard, because the pressure is immediate and the measurement is hard.

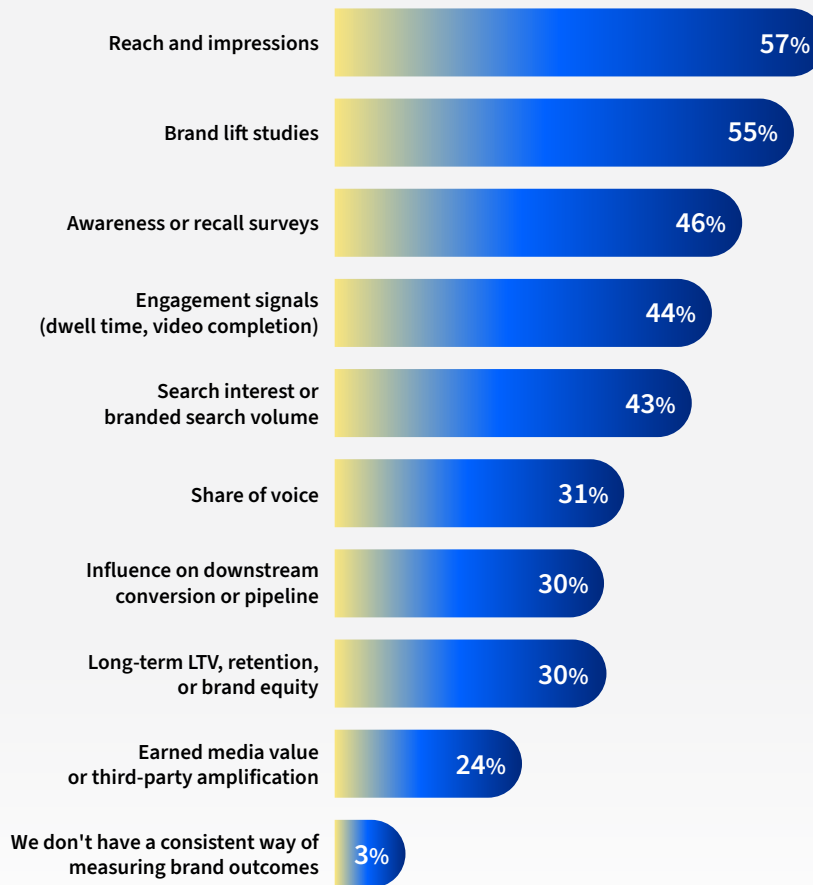
INSIGHT 1

Measure brand outcomes, not brand activity

When brand or upper-funnel objectives are included in a brief, this is how success is typically measured:

Base: 426 B2B marketers whose briefs include brand objectives (n=424).

BRAND MEASUREMENT APPROACH



% OF B2B MARKETERS

The most-used 'brand measurements' are reach and impressions. 57% of B2B marketers with brand-objective briefs use reach and impressions as brand success measures, but they don't tell you whether the campaign built the brand. Metrics that actually prove brand impact, such as downstream conversion influence, long-term LTV, and brand equity, are each used by just 30% of respondents.



Most brands measure exposure through reach and impressions (57%). Fewer measure whether perception actually shifted (brand lift, 55%; recall, 46%), and fewer still connect brand to business outcomes (downstream conversion and LTV, each 30%).



Even when brand goals are included in the brief, campaign evaluation often comes down to leads. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of B2B marketers say lower-funnel metrics dominate vendor evaluation, regardless of what the brief originally set out to achieve. Only 15% disagree.

The Full-Funnel Brand Measurement Framework

Nearly half (49%) of B2B marketers say they lack effective frameworks for measuring brand impact alongside performance metrics. The intent is there—93% include brand objectives in their briefs at least some of the time—but many struggle to evaluate those objectives once the campaign is over.

That uncertainty shows up in confidence levels. Only 31% of B2B marketers are very or extremely confident in their ability to measure long-term brand impact.

This framework is designed to help close that gap. It provides a practical way to measure brand over time, connecting early signals of awareness and engagement to long-term objectives:

FRAMEWORK 3

THE FULL-FUNNEL BRAND MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK



TIER	TIMEFRAME	SIGNALS
Short-term (attention and engagement)	Months 1–3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reach ✓ Video completion ✓ Engagement lift ✓ Branded search growth ✓ Direct traffic
Mid-term (consideration and buying behavior)	Months 4–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Account engagement ✓ Return visits ✓ Content consumption depth ✓ Opportunity acceleration ✓ Share of voice
Long-term (commercial impact)	Months 7–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reduced CAC ✓ Faster sales cycles ✓ Higher win rates ✓ Higher LTV ✓ Market-share growth

CHALLENGE 4

AI adoption is moving faster than evaluation

The AI questions most asked today were designed to evaluate automation and efficiency gains. They weren't built to evaluate AI that decides who sees an ad and when. **B2B marketers are asking about AI capability and vendors are describing it, but neither side is rigorously evaluating whether the capability actually changes campaign outcomes.**

INSIGHT 1

Move beyond AI 'checklists'

86% of B2B RFPs and media briefs include some kind of AI question. But asking about AI isn't the same as evaluating it. When we looked at how AI is typically assessed, only **one in four** respondents described a process that could be considered rigorous:

Base: 426 B2B marketers whose briefs reference AI (n=414)

WHAT TOP PERFORMING TEAMS DO DIFFERENTLY

AI is treated as a feature expected of vendors, **but without specific evaluation criteria.**

36%

24%

AI is described as part of our organization's own context, **not a vendor requirement.**

AI is treated as a specific capability we ask vendors to demonstrate, **with defined evaluation criteria.**

25%

14%

AI is mentioned but not defined; the brief assumes vendors will explain.

Only 25% attach defined evaluation criteria. For everyone else, AI is mentioned without a clear standard for success. Vendors are asked to talk about AI, but not necessarily prove its impact.

And even among marketers who ask whose briefs do include AI-specific questions, not all questions are equally useful. Questions about features, use cases, and workflows are common. Questions that require evidence of performance are much less so.



WHAT TOP PERFORMING TEAMS DO DIFFERENTLY

Description of AI use cases relevant to our campaign	Validation methodology (how the vendor tests A)	Human oversight model (where humans intervene)	Data inputs and how data sources are evaluated	Specific examples of campaigns where AI changed the outcome	Distinction between targeting AI versus operational or reporting AI	Comparable client results (with AI versus without AI features enabled)
64%	54%	50%	49%	49%	43%	29%

Base: B2B marketers whose briefs ask vendors about AI capabilities (n=253)

The most-asked AI question is "describe your AI use cases." It's also the most vague. Any vendor can answer it with a polished explanation of features and workflows without demonstrating real-world impact.

Marketers are not commonly asking for proof and are failing to evaluate the difference seen by enabling AI. Though marketers may understand AI's capabilities and efficiencies, they aren't able to directly link it to tangible results.

MOST-ASKED AI QUESTION:

"Describe your AI use cases."



INSIGHT 2

Rely on frameworks to evaluate how AI is actually used

65% of B2B marketers are either already using AI as a means for achieving business objectives or are actively moving in that direction. But assessment and evaluation frameworks haven't caught up.

AI is now an expected part of vendor evaluation, but most organizations still lack a standardized framework for assessing its effectiveness. In most briefs, AI-related questions are vague enough that vendors can answer them without saying much of substance.

Base: 426 B2B marketers;
% selecting; Single-select.

39%

AI is currently used, with expansion from efficiency-focused to outcome-focused use.

23%

AI is currently used and evaluated, primarily for efficiency and automation.

26%

AI is currently used and evaluated, primarily for outcome-driving applications (*predictive targeting, propensity modeling*).

8%

AI is currently used, but no significant change is expected.

4%

AI isn't currently used and there are no plans to start.

CHALLENGE 4 AI ADOPTION IS MOVING FASTER THAN EVALUATION**WHAT HIGH-PERFORMING MARKETERS DO DIFFERENTLY**

The marketers who evaluate AI well ask the vendor to prove it, and they probe three things buzzwords can't survive.

1 They demand evidence of outcomes, not descriptions of capability:

We ask about examples of previous work and showing how they've materially optimized a campaign through AI... examples of their work that are in the wild that we can go take a look at.

Senior Director, Brand-Side Advertiser,
Technology & IT Services, United States

**2** They interrogate the mechanics, because trust depends on how the AI works:

We ask questions specifically about what kind of platform they're using, whether it's a large language model, if the data is reliable, if it's been verified, if it goes through a human process as well in order to ensure that the data isn't being hallucinated... to understand if their capabilities match what they're claiming.

Services Senior Marketing Advisor, Brand-Side Advertiser, Technology,
United Kingdom

3 They test whether the capability is real and lasting, not a slide:

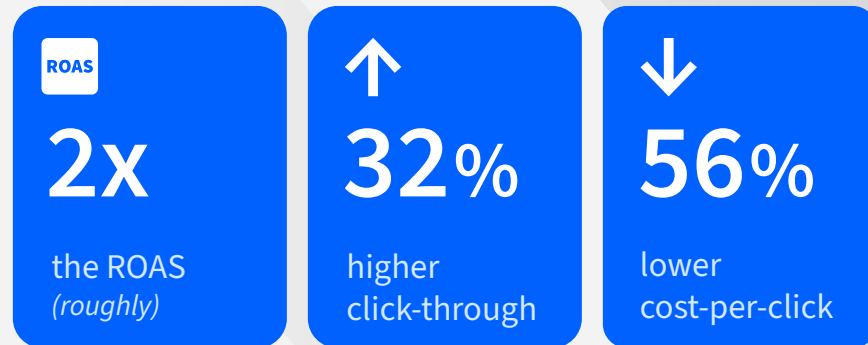
How long has the capability been operational? What are the results, both quantitative and qualitative? Real client testimonials and referrals... and a roadmap in terms of development.



Senior Account Director,
Agency, Professional Services,
United Kingdom

And the rigor pays off. StackAdapt's internal platform data shows its top performers are far more likely to invest in AI and to see returns.

The teams treating AI as an outcome capability to be proven, not a checkbox to be ticked, are the ones it works for.



Source: [The State of Programmatic Advertising 2026](#), StackAdapt.

7 Questions Every Marketer Should Ask About AI

The questions are designed to help teams move beyond features and buzzwords and focus on what matters: whether AI is actually improving outcomes.



FRAMEWORK 4

7 QUESTIONS EVERY MARKETER SHOULD ASK ABOUT AI



1. What business problem is AI solving?
2. What workflow is being improved?
3. Is the impact efficiency-based or outcome-based?
4. What KPI should improve because of AI?
5. How is performance validated?
6. What human oversight exists?
7. What changes with AI versus without AI?

WHERE THIS LEADS

The industry is ready for a new operating model

The research points to a simple conclusion: B2B marketing has become more complex, but many of the processes used to plan, measure, and evaluate campaigns haven't kept pace.

Teams are managing more channels, more data, and more technology than ever before. Yet many still struggle with the same challenges: agreeing on outcomes before execution begins, measuring performance across channels, evaluating brand alongside pipeline, and determining whether AI is actually improving results.

Many of the challenges explored in this report don't begin in reporting, brand measurement, or AI evaluation. They begin much earlier, in the decisions that shape the brief.

The good news is that marketers already recognize these problems. What's often missing is a practical way to address them. That's why we've built this report around four frameworks:

- 1 **Define the outcome before the channel**, bringing partners in early so the brief sets direction instead of ratifying decisions already made.
- 2 **Centralize measurement** so the hours lost to manual stitching go back into strategy, and the brief's promises survive to the end.
- 3 **Give brand its own scorecard**, with signals that track it from first touch to commercial impact rather than defaulting to leads.
- 4 **Make vendors prove AI's impact**, not just describe it, with questions a buzzword can't answer.



The brief may be just one document, but the choices made there, influence everything that follows.

ABOUT THIS RESEARCH

StackAdapt and Ledger Bennett partnered with NewtonX to investigate what separates a well-written B2B RFP or media brief from one that fails.

This report draws on four complementary inputs:

1.

Qualitative interviews.

NewtonX conducted 30 AI-moderated interviews with B2B marketing decision-makers and practitioners.

2.

Quantitative survey.

NewtonX surveyed 426 enterprise brand-side advertisers and agencies serving enterprise clients across North America, the United Kingdom, and APAC. All respondents held budget authority or direct execution responsibility for B2B media campaigns.

3.

Analysis of real briefs.

StackAdapt reviewed 22 live B2B RFPs and media briefs — spanning technology, financial services, insurance, professional services, and media — coding each for how it defined success, planned, and evaluated AI. This directional review of the documents themselves surfaced patterns the survey then tested at scale.

4.

Platform and performance data.

Findings are further supported by StackAdapt's proprietary platform data, covering 484 senior marketers and performance signals from more than 6,000 advertisers.



Together, these inputs reveal what marketers say, what their briefs actually contain, and how campaigns perform—creating a practical guide for action.

ABOUT STACKADAPT

StackAdapt is the leading AI advertising and orchestration platform marketers rely on to drive brand growth and revenue. Built entirely in-house with an easy-to-use interface, tackAdapt unifies programmatic and owned channels—including CTV, DOOH, display, native, audio, email, and more—into one seamless experience. The platform makes it easy to find the right audience, personalize creative, run campaigns, optimize, and measure results in one place. Trusted by the most forward-thinking brands and agencies, StackAdapt combines speed of innovation, deep vertical expertise, and partnership that powers real business growth.

For further information, visit www.stackadapt.com.

ABOUT LEDGER BENNETT

Ledger Bennett is the B2B agency built around a singular vision: helping ambitious enterprises turn one-time buyers into Forever Customers. Founded in 1985, and acquired by Havas in 2024, we do this by uniting data, creativity, and technology to turn insight into the engine for long-term growth.

Operating across EMEA, APAC and North America, we work with leading technology, industrial and services brands including GE Digital and LinkedIn. Backed by 40+ years of expertise and the global scale of Havas, we help brands modernize their GTM - delivering radical relevance, predictable pipeline and intelligent customer experiences.

For further information, visit www.ledgerbennett.com.

ABOUT NEWTONX

NewtonX is an end-to-end strategic market research and data partner, turning the toughest B2B questions into decision-ready answers. Through premium-quality data, expert research services, and AI-driven technology, we help businesses uncover the actionable insights that drive growth. With verified professionals in over 140 industries, from Fortune 500 executives to niche experts, we guarantee data no one else can provide. Paired with AI-enabled insights via the NewtonX Hub, we provide businesses with the industry's most powerful tools for analysis and decision-making.

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