

B2B CONTENT MARKETING



“Content marketing is a marketing technique of creating and distributing relevant and valuable content to attract, acquire, and engage a clearly defined and understood target audience – with the objective of driving profitable customer action.”

– Junta42

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About the Survey

This research is designed to help us understand current content marketing practices as well as trends that will lead to marketing success. The research can be used to benchmark your organization against others, as well as help you build your business case to justify the value of content marketing to senior management.

About the Respondents

Number of Respondents: 118

Industry

- Marketing Agency 25%
- Manufacturing 23%
- Professional Services 21%
- Information 15%
- Finance & Insurance 5%
- Healthcare & Social Services 4%
- Construction 2%
- Utilities 1%
- Other 4%

Type of Business Engaged

- B2B 85%
- B2C 11%
- Non-Profit 4%

Role of Survey Respondent

- Director/Manager 37%
- Owner/CEO/President 25%
- Marketing/Creative Staff 19%
- Senior Executive-VP/CMO, etc. 14%
- Consultant, Agency Professional 3%
- Other 4%

Size of Organization

- Micro, 1-9 employees 27%
- Small, 10-99 employees 21%
- Mid-size, 100-999 employees 15%
- Large, 1000+ employees 36%

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Executive Summary

CONTENT MARKETING is one of the most important, if not *the* most important, marketing techniques used in today's B2B world. Eight in ten B2B firms engage in content marketing, and a significant portion of their marketing budgets goes to that endeavor. Although many firms see themselves as average or better than average at content marketing, there are key challenges facing them, and plenty of room for improvement. *B2B Content Marketing: A Benchmark of Strategy, Practices, Challenges, and Performance* looks at the practice of content marketing to provide some guidance to marketers in building their content marketing capability.

Content Marketing Strategy

Our research shows clearly that it's critically important to have a documented content marketing strategy. Higher performing firms are far more likely to have a strategy. In fact, those firms with a strategy performed better on all measures of marketing performance.

The research also shows, however, that more than half of all firms (54%) don't have a strategy. Many firms at least recognize the fact that strategy is important by citing "developing a content marketing strategy" as one of the top marketing challenges facing them.

Generating leads is by far the most important content marketing goal for B2B firms. It's one of the most important goals for almost two-thirds of the firms surveyed. But there's a huge disparity between the importance of this goal and the ability to achieve it. Firms are just average at generating leads — a whopping 22% of them are poor or very poor at it (and they're even worse at nurturing those leads).

Key Stats

- 54% of firms don't have a documented content marketing strategy.
- 40% of firms see generating leads as their primary marketing goal.
- 22% of all firms are poor or very poor at generating leads.

Content Marketing Practices

Once firms have established their marketing strategy and set goals, they need to develop initiatives to reach those goals. So what kinds of content marketing practices do B2B firms engage in? First, all firms use some type of digital/online content (seven different types for each firm, on average). Only 75% of B2B firms use print content, although more high performers (80%) use print content than low performers (67%).

E-mail is the most used type of digital content, followed by white papers, press releases, and case studies. Marketing/product litera-

Most Firms Engage in Content Marketing

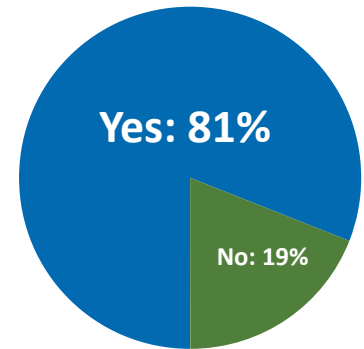


Fig. 1. *B2B Content Marketing: Strategy, Challenges, Practices, Performance*. BMA-Philadelphia/Pennypacker & Associates, 2011.

Higher Performers vs. Lower Performers

Throughout this report we refer to *Higher Performers* and *Lower Performers*. We identified those two groups by comparing the responses to the question Please rate the performance of your firm for the following measures of marketing effectiveness:

- market share
- brand awareness
- lead generation
- customer retention/loyalty
- return on marketing investment
- customer engagement
- rate of growth compared to the competition and the market.

Those firms whose overall marketing performance rated in the top 50% are *Higher Performers* and those who rated in the bottom 50% are *Lower Performers*.

Higher performers are far more likely to have a documented content marketing strategy than lower performers.

ture is the only print content type used by more than half of the firms surveyed. Print formats used by more than a third of firms include white papers, case studies, and magazines & journals.

Almost all firms have a website, and a majority of firms use webinars, videos, and blogs (surprisingly, only 54% of firms have blogs).

Key Stats

- **100% of firms use some form of digital/online content marketing.**
- **75% of firms use some form of print content marketing.**
- **91% of firms use social media.**

Content Marketing Challenges

Given the practices described above, what challenges are B2B firms facing? Although they face a wide variety of challenges, firms cite “measuring the impact of content marketing” as their most important challenge, by far. Sixty percent of firms listed it as their first, second, or third most important challenge.

Other top challenges suggest that firms have difficulty in finding the resources they need, to provide either the effort or the knowledge and skills required to carry out their initiatives. These top challenges, found in more than a third of firms, are “having time to execute programs,” “developing a content marketing strategy,” and “producing engaging content.”

Key Stat

- **60% of firms say measuring the impact of content marketing is their first, second, or third most important challenge.**

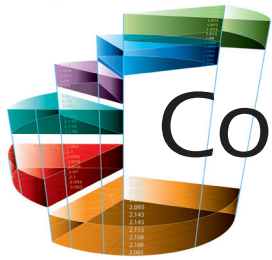
Content Marketing Performance

How well do B2B firms perform. Some pretty well. Others? Most firms are very good at generating customer retention/loyalty, market share, brand awareness, and rate of growth compared to the competition. But most are only average at best at reaching their primary goal of generating and nurturing leads. They rate themselves as better than average in their content marketing capability (59% as “effective” or “starting to feel good”), but there are still many firms (28%) that are below average, still “learning” or “behind the times.”

As far as discovering best practices, our research is inconclusive. Blogs, webinars, and white papers were identified most often by firms as their most effective tactics, but these practices were identified by other firms as their least effective tactics.

Key Stats

- **68% of firms are good or very good at customer retention/loyalty.**
- **63% of firms are average, poor, or very poor at generating leads.**
- **67% of firms are average, poor, or very poor at nurturing leads.**



Content Marketing Strategy

What the Survey Results Tell Us about Content Marketing Strategy

ON STRATEGY

- More than half (54%) of all firms surveyed do not have a documented content marketing strategy. In fact, developing a content marketing strategy is one of the top marketing challenges cited in the survey. Mid-size/large firms are far more likely than micro/small firms to be without a documented marketing strategy.
- Showing the importance of strategy to the success of a firm, higher performers are far more likely to have a documented content marketing strategy than lower performers. That is, firms with a content marketing strategy performed better than those without. In fact, those firms with a strategy performed better on every measure of performance surveyed: market share, brand awareness, lead generation, customer retention/loyalty, return on marketing investment, customer engagement, lead nurturing effectiveness, and rate of growth compared to competition and the market.
- Not surprisingly, firms with a content marketing strategy have a significantly greater content marketing capability than those that don't. Sixty-six percent of firms with a strategy rated themselves as expert or effective, while only 22% of firms without a strategy rated themselves at that level of capability.
- Most of those firms with a content marketing strategy developed it exclusively in-house.

ON IDENTIFYING NEEDS

- Firms use multiple methods for identifying the information needs of their prospects or customers (four different methods on average).
- The most often used methods for identifying needs are asking the prospects/customers directly and getting feedback from sales professionals. Higher performers are much more likely to ask their customers directly to identify their needs. They are also much more likely to use formal approaches, like survey research and interviews or focus groups. Lower performers are much more likely to identify needs by looking at what their competitors are doing and either copy that or try to do something better.

A Majority of Firms Don't Have a Content Marketing Strategy

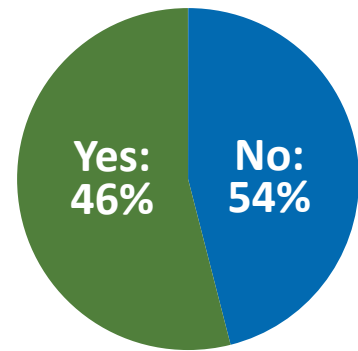


Fig. 2. B2B Content Marketing: Strategy, Challenges, Practices, Performance. BMA-Philadelphia/Pennypacker & Associates, 2011.

Firms with a content marketing strategy were 27% better in generating leads than those without a strategy.

How Firms Identify the Information Needs of Prospects and Customers

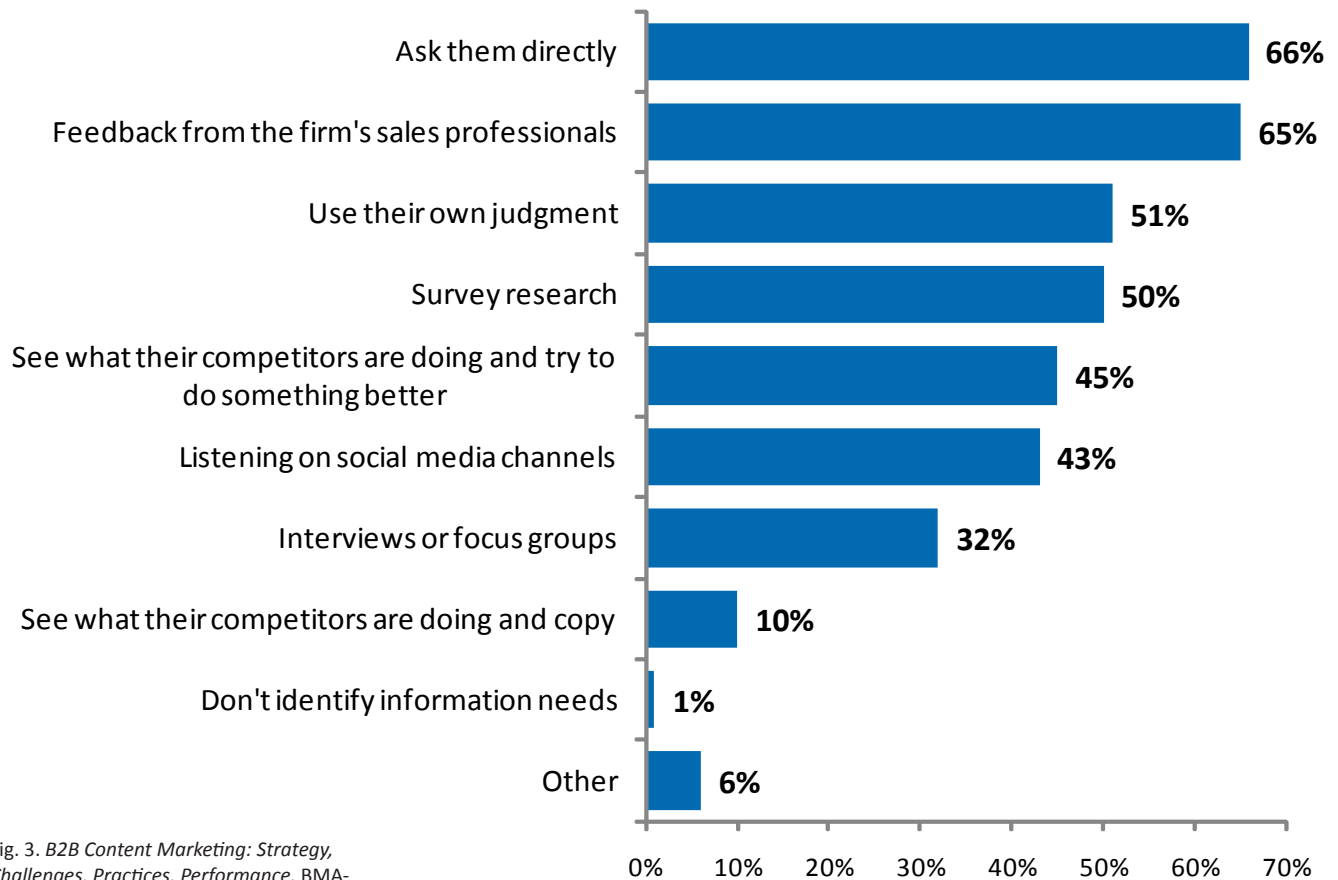


Fig. 3. *B2B Content Marketing: Strategy, Challenges, Practices, Performance*. BMA-Philadelphia/Pennypacker & Associates, 2011.

ON GOALS

- Generating leads is by far the most important marketing goal for firms, regardless of size, industry, or content marketing capability. It's a primary content marketing goal for almost two-thirds of the firms surveyed.
- Establishing a thought leadership position is the second most important goal. It's not the primary goal for most firms, but it is an important goal for almost two-thirds of the firms surveyed. And lower performers are more likely to see establishing a thought leadership position as their most important marketing goal (perhaps seen as a solution to their lower performance rating).

Most Important Content Marketing Goals

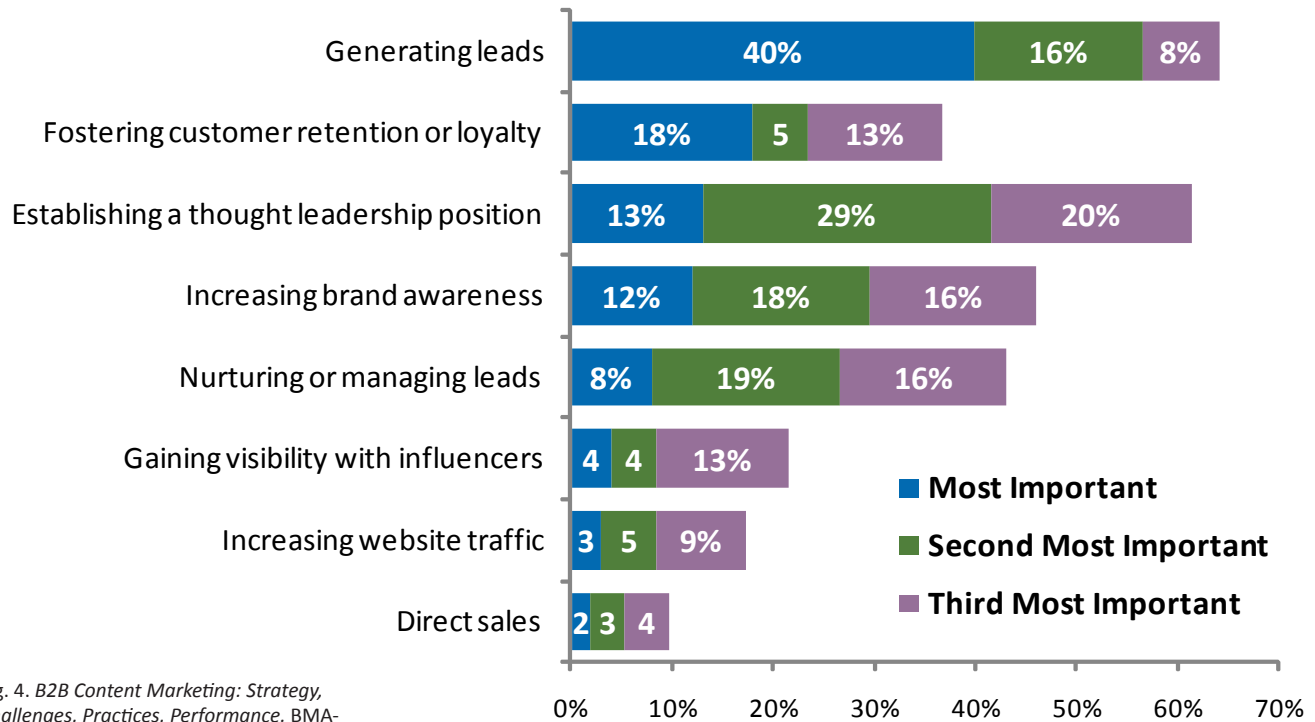
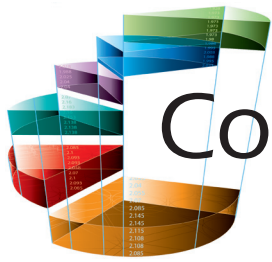


Fig. 4. B2B Content Marketing: Strategy, Challenges, Practices, Performance. BMA-Philadelphia/Pennypacker & Associates, 2011.

- Recognizing the importance of selling to the existing customer base, higher performers and mid-size/large firms, which are usually more mature businesses, are much more likely to see fostering customer retention/loyalty as an important marketing goal than lower performers and micro/small firms.
- More likely to be newer and less mature businesses, micro/small firms are far more likely than mid-size/large firms to see increasing their brand awareness as an important marketing goal.
- Direct sales, increasing website traffic, and gaining visibility with influencers are not primary marketing goals for most firms.

ON ATTAINING GOALS

- There's a huge disparity between the importance of the primary marketing goal of firms and their ability to achieve that goal. Firms are just average at generating leads. And a whopping 22% of them are poor or very poor at generating leads.
- Firms are fairly good, however, at generating brand awareness. A quarter of them are very good. And firms are also good at generating customer retention/loyalty. A full third of them are very good.



Content Marketing Practices

Content Types that Firms Use

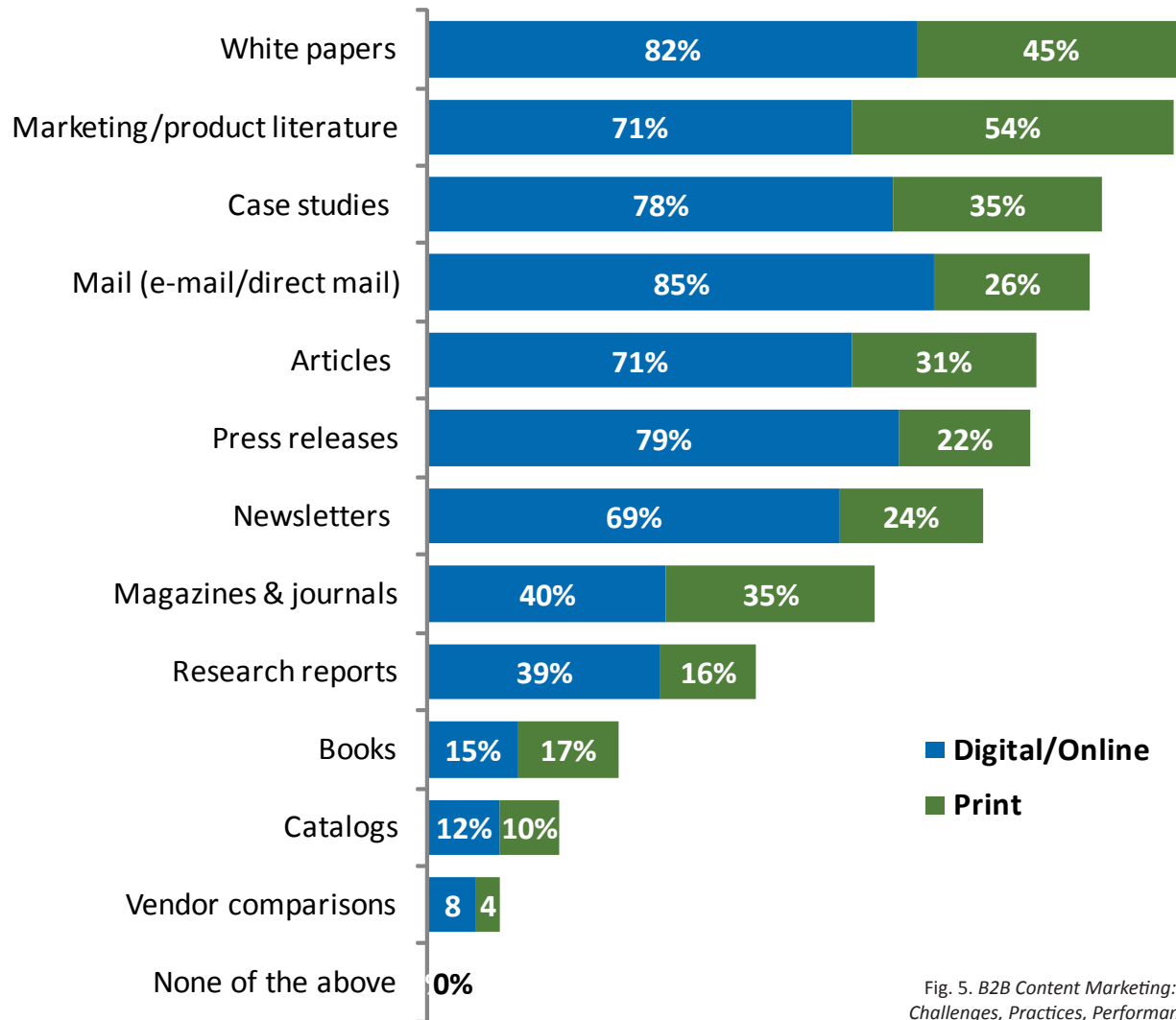


Fig. 5. B2B Content Marketing: Strategy, Challenges, Practices, Performance. BMA-Philadelphia/Pennypacker & Associates, 2011.

What the Survey Results Tell Us about Content Marketing Practices

ON CONTENT TYPES

- All firms surveyed use some form of digital/online content marketing, and they use a wide variety of types — seven different types of digital content for each firm, on average. E-mail is the most used type, followed by white papers, press releases, and case studies.

Digital/Online Media Channels that Firms Use

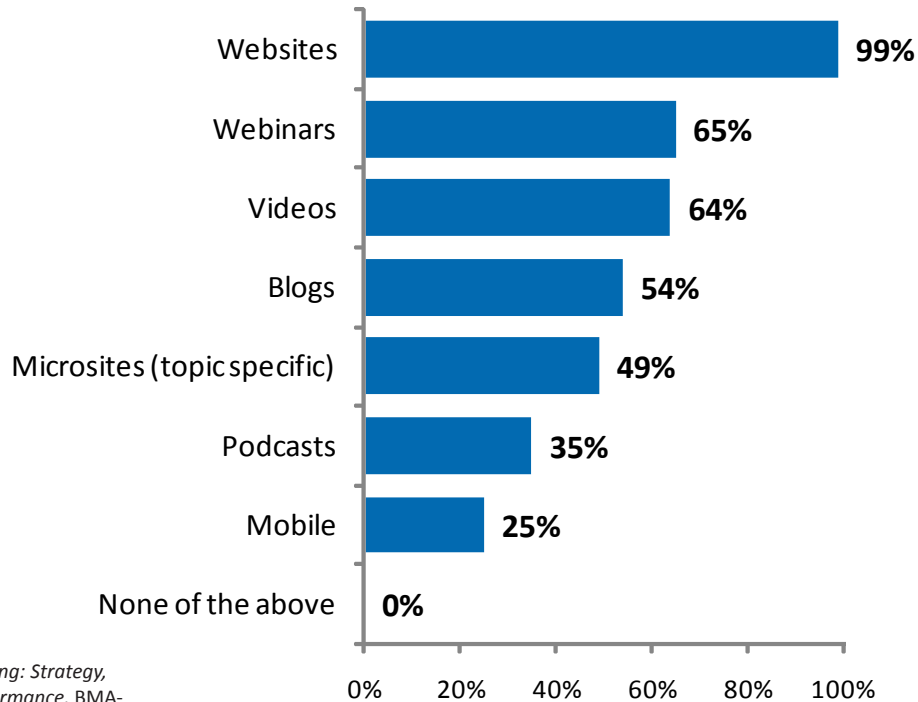


Fig. 6. *B2B Content Marketing: Strategy, Challenges, Practices, Performance*. BMA-Philadelphia/Pennypacker & Associates, 2011.

- Three quarters of all firms surveyed use some form of print content marketing, and they use only a few types on average — three different types of print content for each firm. Marketing/product literature is the only print content type used by more than half of the firms surveyed. Print formats used by more than a third of firms include white papers, case studies, and magazines & journals. More high performers (80%) and mid-size/large firms (86%) use print content than low performers (67%) and micro/small firms (66%).
- For almost every content type, firms that use print formats also use a digital format of that same type. The only exception is books, where about one third of firms publish books in print format only, one third in digital/online format only, and one third in both formats.
- The digital content type most used by higher performers is white papers, followed closely by e-mail and press releases. They are also more likely to use digital white papers, magazines & journals, research reports, and catalogs than lower performers.
- The print content type most used by higher performers is white papers, closely followed by marketing/product literature. They are significantly more likely to use printed white papers, newsletters, research reports, books, and catalogs than lower performers.

Social Media Channels that Firms Use

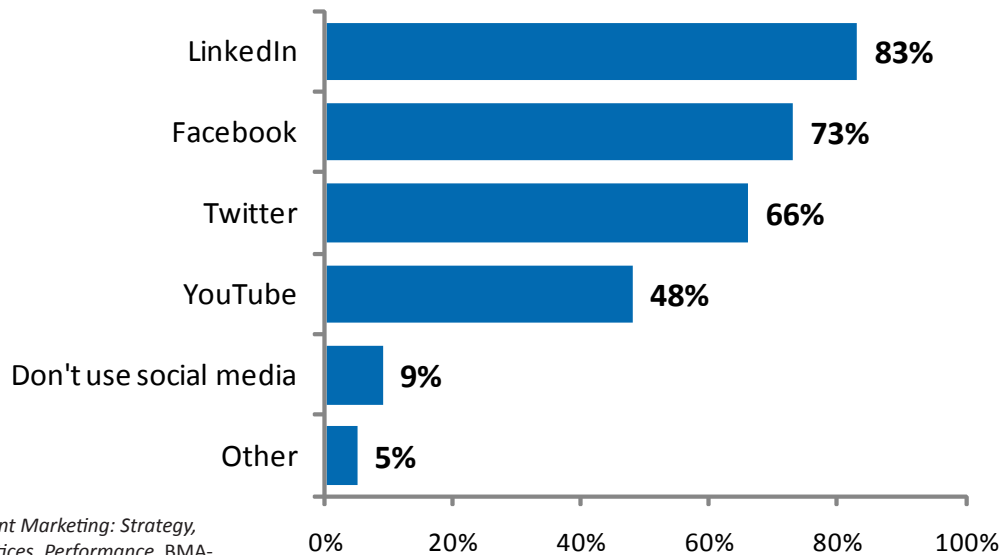


Fig. 7. B2B Content Marketing: Strategy, Challenges, Practices, Performance. BMA-Philadelphia/Pennypacker & Associates, 2011.

- The digital/online content type used most by mid-size/large firms is the press release, followed by white papers and e-mail. The digital content type most used by micro/small firms is e-mail, followed by white papers and case studies.
- Mid-size/large firms are far more likely than micro/small firms to use print formats, and they use twice as many different types. More than a third of micro/small firms don't use print formats at all. And mid-size/large firms are far more likely to use print marketing/product literature and magazines/journals, even though marketing/product literature is the most often used type of print format used by micro/small firms. Micro/small firms are more likely to use printed books than mid-size/large firms.

ON CONTENT CHANNELS

- All firms use digital/online media channels. Almost all firms have a website, and a majority of firms use webinars, videos, and blogs. Surprisingly, however, only 54% of firms use blogs, fewer than those who use videos and webinars. And a significant number of firms, a quarter, are using mobile marketing channels.
- Higher performers are significantly more likely to use microsites than lower performers. Higher performers are also more likely to use blogs, podcasts, and videos.

Who Contributes to Creating Marketing Content

Respondents were asked to what extent the following people contributed to content creation

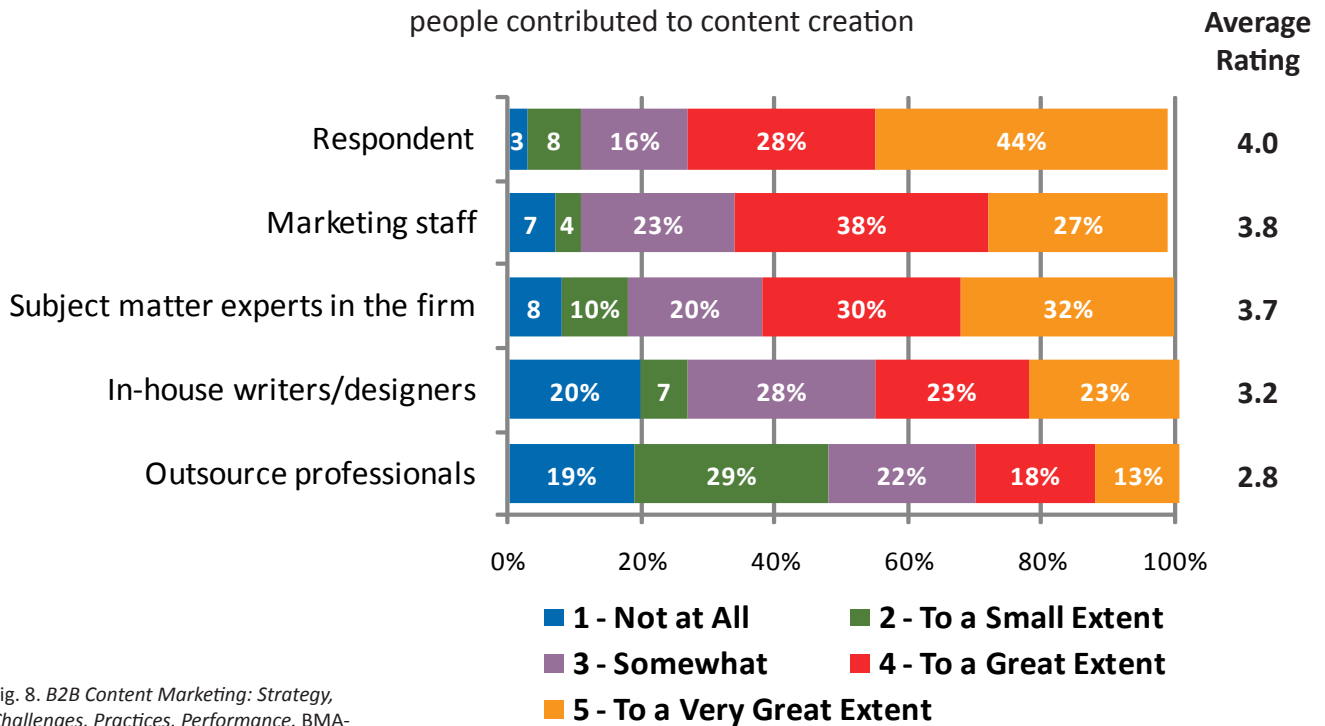


Fig. 8. B2B Content Marketing: Strategy, Challenges, Practices, Performance. BMA-Philadelphia/Pennypacker & Associates, 2011.

- Micro/small firms are far more likely to use blogs than mid-size/large firms. Mid-size/large firms are more likely to use microsites, podcasts, webinars, and videos than micro/small firms.
- Most firms use social media, with LinkedIn used the most, followed by Facebook and Twitter. Higher performers are more likely to use Twitter and YouTube than lower performers. Micro/small firms use Twitter and LinkedIn more than mid-size/large firms.

ON CONTRIBUTORS TO CONTENT

- The survey respondents were the biggest contributors to creating their marketing content, contributing to a great extent. A majority of them were either owners and senior executives of their firms (generally the smaller firms) or marketing directors and managers.
- Firms rely on their marketing staffs to a great extent to contribute to their marketing content. Very few firms don't rely on their staffs.
- Firms rely somewhat on in-house writers and designers to contribute to creating marketing content. A substantial number of firms rely on them to a very great extent and, at the same time, a substantial number of firms do not rely on in-house writers/designers at all.

Content Marketing Functions that Firms Outsource

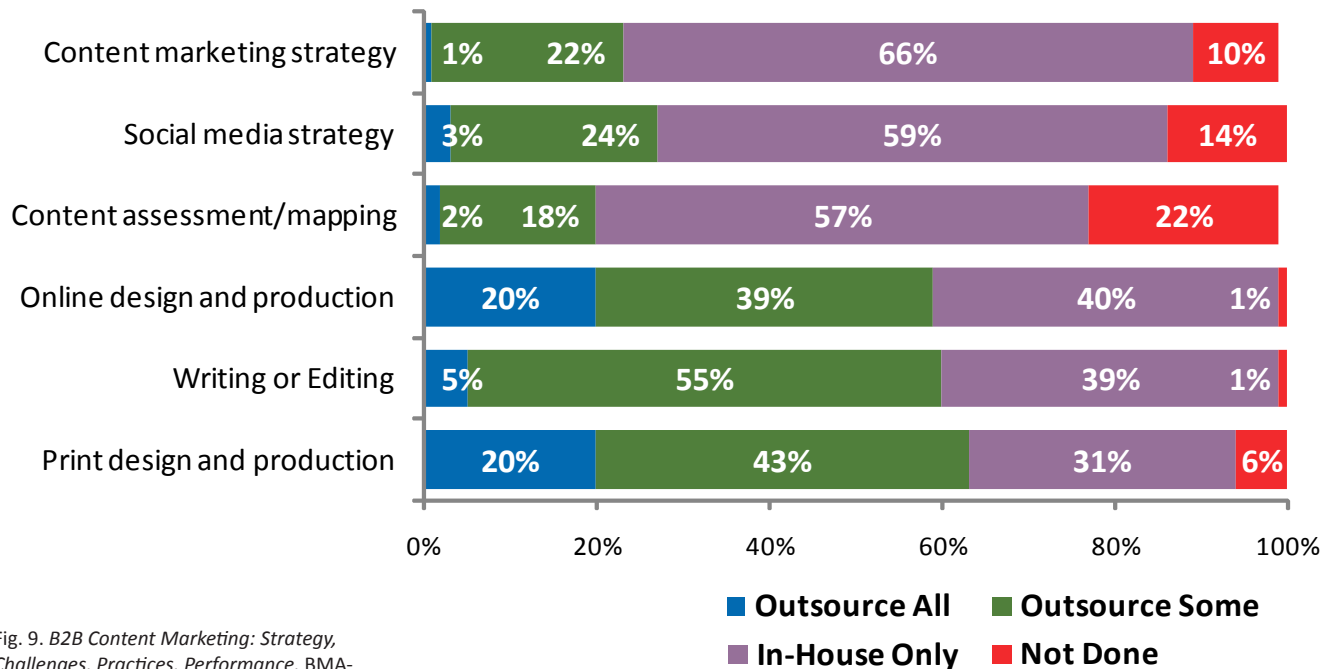


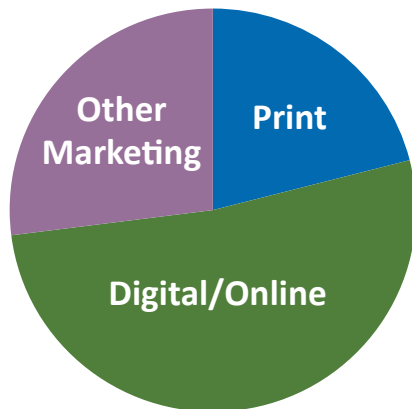
Fig. 9. B2B Content Marketing: Strategy, Challenges, Practices, Performance. BMA-Philadelphia/Pennypacker & Associates, 2011.

- Firms rely to a great extent on their subject matter experts to contribute to creating marketing content.
- There's not much difference between higher performers and lower performers in who contributes to creating content in their firms.
- Mid-size/large firms rely more on subject matter experts in their firms to create content whereas micro/small firms rely more on the survey respondents (who were primarily owners and senior executives).

ON OUTSOURCING

- Firms are average on their use of outsourcing to create marketing content, with a substantial number of firms at every point on the scale, from not at all (20%) to a very great extent (13%). And, although 8 in 10 firms outsource some of their content marketing functions, design and production, for both print and online content, are the only functions that are totally outsourced by a significant number of firms (20%).
- Higher performers are a little more likely to develop their content marketing strategy in-house than lower performers.

Marketing Budget = 14% of Corporate Budget



The marketing budget is divided into the following expenses:

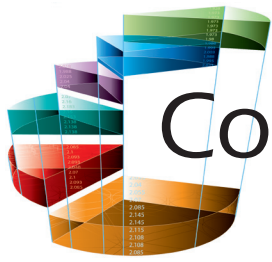
- Print content marketing ... 21%
- Digital/online content marketing ... 52%
- Other marketing ... 27%

Fig. 10. *B2B Content Marketing: Strategy, Challenges, Practices, Performance*. BMA-Philadelphia/Pennypacker & Associates, 2011.

- Higher performers are much more likely to assess/map their content in-house than lower performers (but almost a quarter of firms do not engage in content assessment/mapping at all).
- Lower performers are a little more likely to outsource their print and online design and production of content.
- Micro/small firms are more likely to develop content marketing strategies, assess their content, and write and edit content in-house than mid-size/large firms. But they are more likely to outsource both print and online design and production than mid-size/large firms.

ON BUDGETS

- A huge percentage of firms' marketing budgets (73%) is spent on content marketing, and a majority of the content marketing budget (71%) is spent on digital/online content marketing.
- The percentage of overall budget spent on marketing is similar for both higher performers and lower performers. But higher performers spend a significantly lower percentage of their marketing budget on digital/online content marketing than lower performers. Both higher performers and lower performers spend similar percentages of their marketing budgets on print content marketing.
- Micro/small firms spent a larger percentage of their overall budgets on marketing than mid-size/large firms, and they are far more likely to spend a larger percentage of their marketing budgets on digital/online content marketing. Mid-size/large firms spent a larger percentage of their budget on print content marketing than micro/small firms.



Content Marketing Challenges

Most Important Challenges

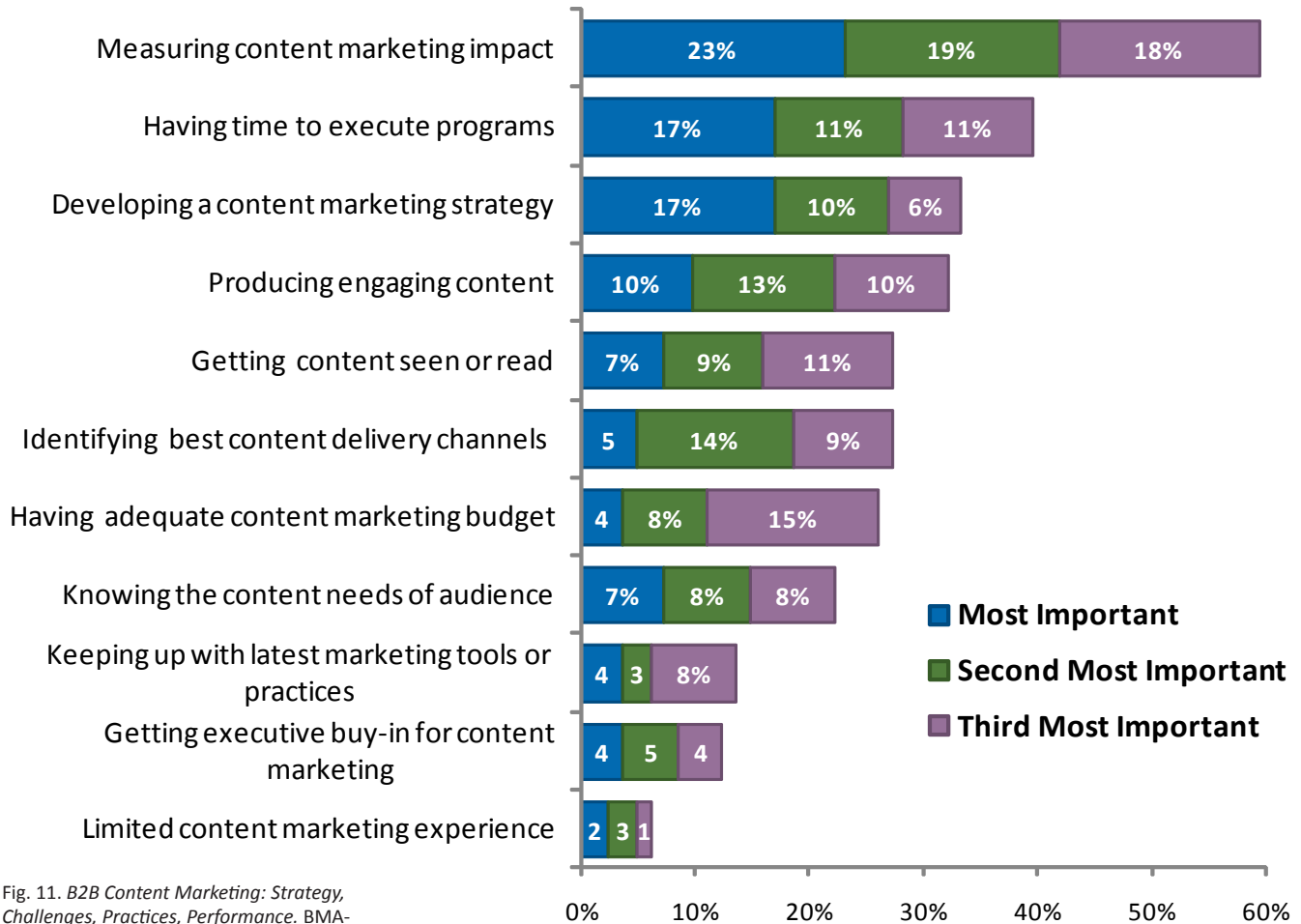


Fig. 11. *B2B Content Marketing: Strategy, Challenges, Practices, Performance*. BMA-Philadelphia/Pennypacker & Associates, 2011.

What the Survey Results Tell Us about Content Marketing Challenges

ON THE CHALLENGES

- Measuring the impact of content marketing is by far the most important challenge to firms. Sixty percent of firms listed it as their first, second, or third most important challenge.
- Other top challenges, found in more than a third of firms, are having time to execute programs, developing a content marketing strategy, and producing engaging content.

- Micro/small firms differ from mid-size/large firms in their most important content marketing challenge — micro/small firms are far more likely to see having time to execute programs as their biggest challenge while mid-size/large firms are slightly more likely to see measuring content marketing impact as their biggest challenge.
- Lower performers are much more likely than higher performers to see producing engaging content as their most important content marketing challenge.
- Higher performers are slightly more likely than lower performers to see developing a content marketing strategy their most important content marketing challenge.
- The following are not seen as significant challenges to most firms: limited content marketing experience, getting executive buy-in for content marketing, or keeping up with the latest marketing tools or practices.

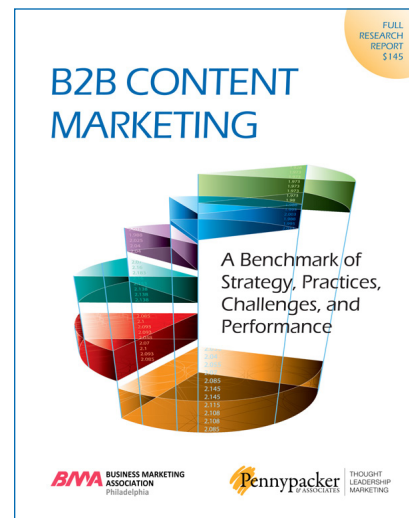
Measuring the impact of content marketing is by far the most important challenge to firms. Sixty percent of firms listed it as their first, second, or third most important challenge.

Buy the Full Research Report — Just \$145

In the full report ...

- Detailed responses to all survey questions
- 66 additional charts and tables
- Complete list of B2B firm's most effective content marketing practices
- Complete list of B2B firm's least effective content marketing practices
- Cross-tabulations comparing the differences between companies with and without a content marketing strategy, higher performing firms vs. lower performing firms, and micro/small firms vs. mid-size/large firms
- Survey questionnaire

BUY NOW »



- 86 pages
- Format: E-book, PDF for Adobe Digital Editions



Marketing Performance

What the Survey Results Tell Us about Marketing Performance

ON CAPABILITY

- On a self-rating scale of capability (from Behind the Times to Expert), firms are slightly above average in their content marketing capability. Firms display a fairly wide range of capability, with a majority of firms (59%) average or above average, but a significant number of firms at both the highest and lowest ends of the scale.
- Higher performers have a much higher content marketing capability than lower performers. In particular, significantly more higher performers rate themselves as experts. Two-thirds of higher performers rate themselves as effective or experts. And significantly more lower firms rate themselves at the bottom of the scale, behind the times.
- Firms with a content marketing strategy have a significantly greater content marketing capability than those that don't.
- Micro/small firms have a much higher content marketing capability than mid-size/large firms. In particular, significantly more micro/small firms rate themselves as experts. And significantly more mid-size/large firms rate themselves at the bottom rungs of the scale.

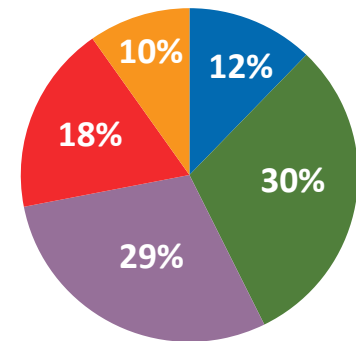
ON EFFECTIVENESS

- Different types of content marketing tactics are effective for different firms, but using blogs, webinars, and white papers were identified as effective by more firms than other tactics.
- Different types of content marketing tactics have been ineffective for different firms as well. Various types of social media tactics appear to be the least effective tactics for a number of firms. In fact, most of the *least effective* content marketing tactics show up on the *most effective* tactics list as well.

ON PERFORMANCE

- Firms are just average at generating leads. A 22% of them are poor or very poor.
- Firms are good at capturing market share. Very few of them (6%) are poor or very poor, and 26% are very good.
- Firms are fairly good at generating brand awareness — 63% of them are good or very good.

How Firms Rate Their Content Marketing Capability



- Expert ... 12%
- Effective ... 30%
- Starting to feel good ... 29%
- Still learning ... 18%
- Behind the times ... 10%

Fig. 12. B2B Content Marketing: Strategy, Challenges, Practices, Performance. BMA-Philadelphia/Pennypacker & Associates, 2011.

Marketing Effectiveness

Respondents were asked to rate the performance of their firms for each of the following measures of marketing effectiveness

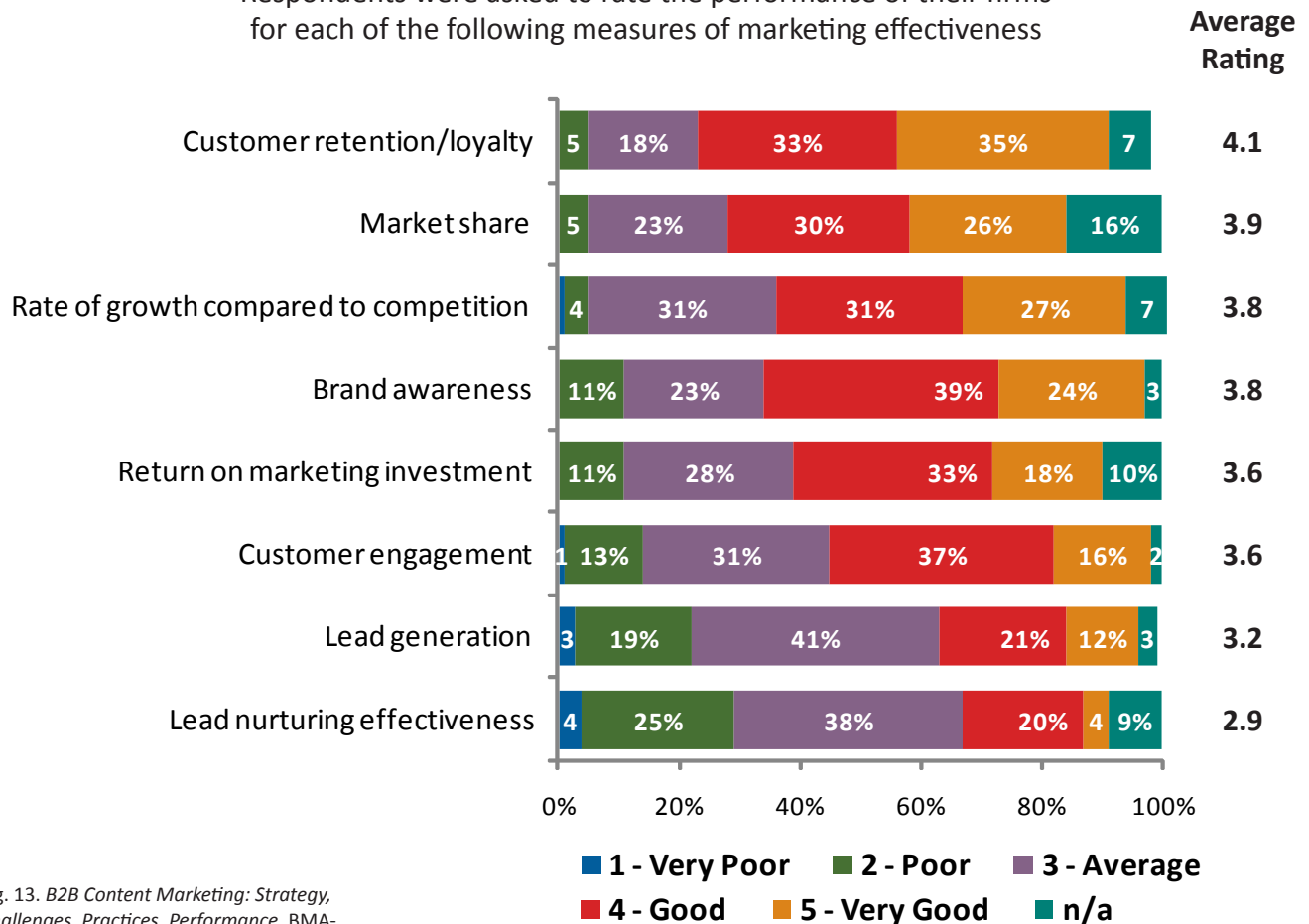
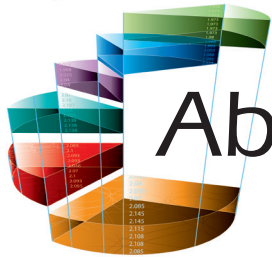


Fig. 13. B2B Content Marketing: Strategy, Challenges, Practices, Performance. BMA-Philadelphia/Pennypacker & Associates, 2011.

- Firms are good at generating customer retention/loyalty. A 35% of them are very good.
- Firms are fairly good at generating a return on marketing investment. None are very poor.
- Firms are fairly good at engaging their customers.
- Firms are fairly good in their rate of growth compared to their competition. More than a quarter of them are very good. Very few firms are poor or very poor.
- Firms are slightly lower than average at lead nurturing effectiveness. Few are very good or very poor.
- Micro/small firms are better at lead nurturing than mid-size/large firms; otherwise there is little difference in marketing performance based on firm size.



About the Sponsors



Business Marketing Association Philadelphia

Begun in 1922 as the National Industrial Advertising Association, the Business Marketing Association today represents a lifetime of expertise in business-to-business marketing and communications. For more than 80 years, the BMA has been the pre-eminent service organization for professionals in this vital industry.

The Philadelphia BMA chapter is dedicated to improving professional skills and networking for business-to-business professionals through hosted educational events, panel discussions, expert guest speakers, instructional webinars and social and networking events. The chapter also includes 'having fun' in its list of objectives!

<http://www.bmaphiladelphia.org>



Pennypacker & Associates

Pennypacker & Associates is one of the few marketing consulting firms in the country to focus specifically on positioning clients as thought leaders in their market. As thought leaders, firms are trusted, credible authorities who customers turn to when they are ready to buy. Services include thought leadership coaching, strategic positioning, action planning, research and analysis, content creation and implementation, and marketing performance measurement.

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