

# 2023 B2B INFLUENCER MARKETING REPORT



# B2B MARKETING IS GETTING MORE CREATIVE, MORE EMOTIONAL, AND MORE CAPTIVATING BY THE MINUTE.

This is an amazing opportunity for all of us, but it's also a massive challenge. On the one hand, we're free to experiment beyond the boundaries of white papers and feature sheets. We can relate to B2B buyers on a human level, bringing our empathy and experience to genuinely add value to their lives — and influence purchase decisions.

On the other hand, as the market gets crowded with creative marketing, it's harder to stand out. Even the most creative B2B marketers struggle with getting their work seen. They are challenged to connect with an audience, establish credibility and build an ongoing relationship.

This environment is perfect for influencer marketing. People want to hear from people, not just brands. Influencers bring a more human perspective to your

content, along with a new audience for your brand's messaging. Influencer co-created content can be creative and emotional, while also building credibility, and increasing reach and resonance.

As marketing budgets come under more scrutiny, B2B marketers are challenged to prove their success with measurable outcomes. Influencer marketing can net some seriously impressive results — as this year's report shows—and it's possible to prove a significant business impact with the right tracking.

It's easy to see why B2B influencer marketing has exploded in popularity. The challenge now is to follow the leaders, pick up their best practices, and build on them.

The 2023 B2B Influencer Marketing Report is a guide for marketers at any stage of their influencer marketing journey. If

you're just getting started, you will find best practices to kick off your program. If you're running a successful program but you've stalled, this report will help you find the next level.

I'm excited to kick off my tenure as TopRank Marketing's CEO and President with this report. Here's to all the creative potential we B2B marketers finally get to unleash!

I can't wait to see what you do with the insights you glean from this guide.



**Donna Robinson**  
*President and CEO,  
TopRank Marketing*





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True B2B influencer marketing isn't marketing at all. It's not about popularity, follower count, nor engagement metrics. It's about value creation, trust-building, problem-solving, and collaboration. Influence matters most when communities feel stronger and wiser, more inspired and motivated, as a result of engagement. Anything else isn't B2B influence.



**Brian Solis**

*Head of Global Innovation, ServiceNow*



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# QUICK QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

## **What is an influencer?**

An influencer, or “influencer marketer”, is someone who has the ability to impact the opinions and actions of their online and offline audiences. These creators, thought leaders, brand ambassadors, subject matter experts, internal advocates and top voices within their specialty collaborate with brands to create niche-specific content, serving as a bridge between consumers and businesses in today’s marketing landscape.

## **What is influencer marketing for B2B?**

B2B influencer marketing is the strategic practice of brands working with knowledgeable and influential figures in a given industry to create, co-create and amplify content..

## **How is B2B influencer marketing different from B2C?**

B2C influencer marketing tends to focus on brand endorsements from entertainers with high follower counts – many of whom create content solely for this purpose. B2B influencer marketing involves tapping the most relevant, trustworthy and experienced people for your audience in order to create valuable, actionable content aimed at influencing business purchase decisions.

## **What makes an effective B2B influencer?**

B2B influence isn’t a popularity contest. The most sought-after influencers have credible expertise rooted in proven experience. They have made substantial contributions to their industry and have helped shape professional opinions.

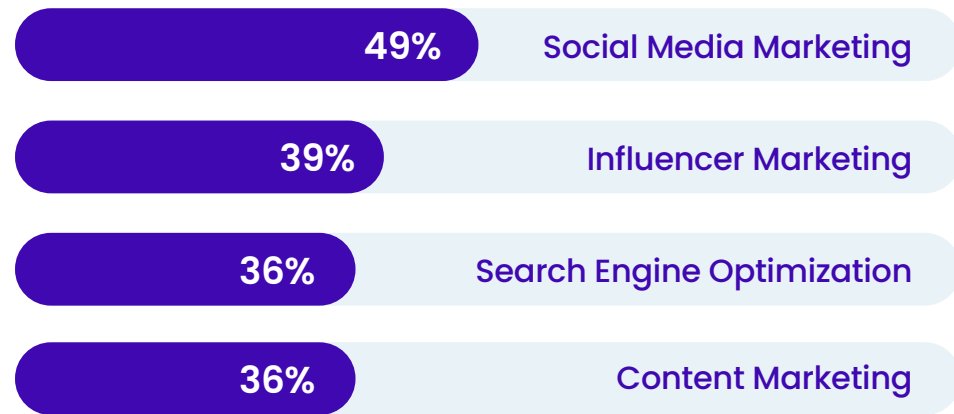
## **How is B2B influencer marketing evolving?**

Over the past three years, we have seen more B2B marketers adopting influencer marketing, and more of those marketers experiencing success. B2B influencer marketing is maturing from an informal practice to a strategic discipline.

## **What makes TopRank Marketing a B2B influence authority?**

TopRank Marketing has a decade of experience creating and refining B2B influencer programs. We have designed programs and achieved results for enterprise brands like SAP, Dell, Adobe and Cisco. This is our third annual report on the state of B2B influence.

## Which of the following contributes most to the success of your marketing programs?



# EVERYBODY'S DOING IT. BUT WHO'S DOING IT RIGHT?

B2B influencer marketing is evolving the same way that content marketing did a decade ago. A few brands started practicing B2B content marketing as a strategic tactic. Their success inspired others to jump on the trend — frequently without the underlying strategy that won the initial success. Now everyone's got a content plan, but only the most sophisticated are seeing strong results.

Research shows that B2B influencer marketing is having its watershed moment. Independent research found that 94% of marketers believe influencer marketing is a successful strategy for B2B.<sup>1</sup>

This growing awareness and interest in influencer marketing is reflected in our own research. In the inaugural 2020 report, only 34% of marketers said they used influencer marketing. In 2022, that number grew to 46%. This year, 85% say that influencer marketing is part of their overall marketing mix. Even better, those who use influencer marketing to any extent are more likely to report successful brand awareness and enhanced credibility.

With the right influencers on the right channels amplifying the right content, influencer marketing is a powerful way to break through content clutter and differentiate your brand. Our respondents rated it one of the most successful tactics.

<sup>1</sup> *Forbes*





# HOWEVER

and it's a big however — only **34% describe their B2B influencer marketing strategy as “extremely effective.”**

Is your brand part of that top 34 percent? If not, this guide can help you join the ranks.

Read on for benchmarks, tips and best practices for every level of B2B influencer marketing sophistication.



If a B2B brand does not already have an influencer marketing program, it is a missed opportunity.



**Ursula Ringham**

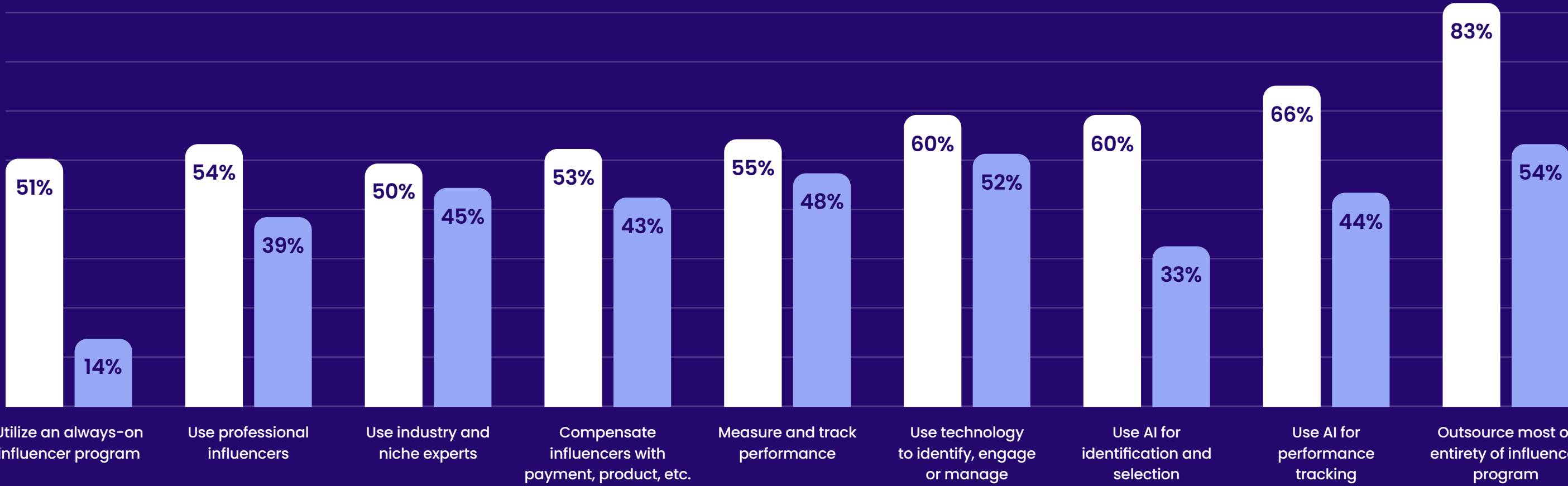
*Head of Global Influencer Marketing, SAP*



**AT-A-GLANCE:**

# HABITS OF HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL INFLUENCER MARKETERS

Very Effective    All Others





From my experience, there are two key criteria for influencer marketing success:

- 1. Make influencer marketing a strategic part of your marketing mix**
- 2. Build deep, long-term relationships that are tied to a joint vision and goals.**

You want to partner with like-minded influencers who share your perspective, vision, and key audiences. Don't engage someone just for their community size if they aren't a fit for your goals, topic alignment or target audience.



**Janine Wegner**

*Global Integrated Thought Leadership Strategist, Dell*





# INFLUENCER MARKETING MATURITY

There's no on/off switch for B2B influencer marketing. Like any marketing strategy, it's a journey of adoption and increased sophistication.

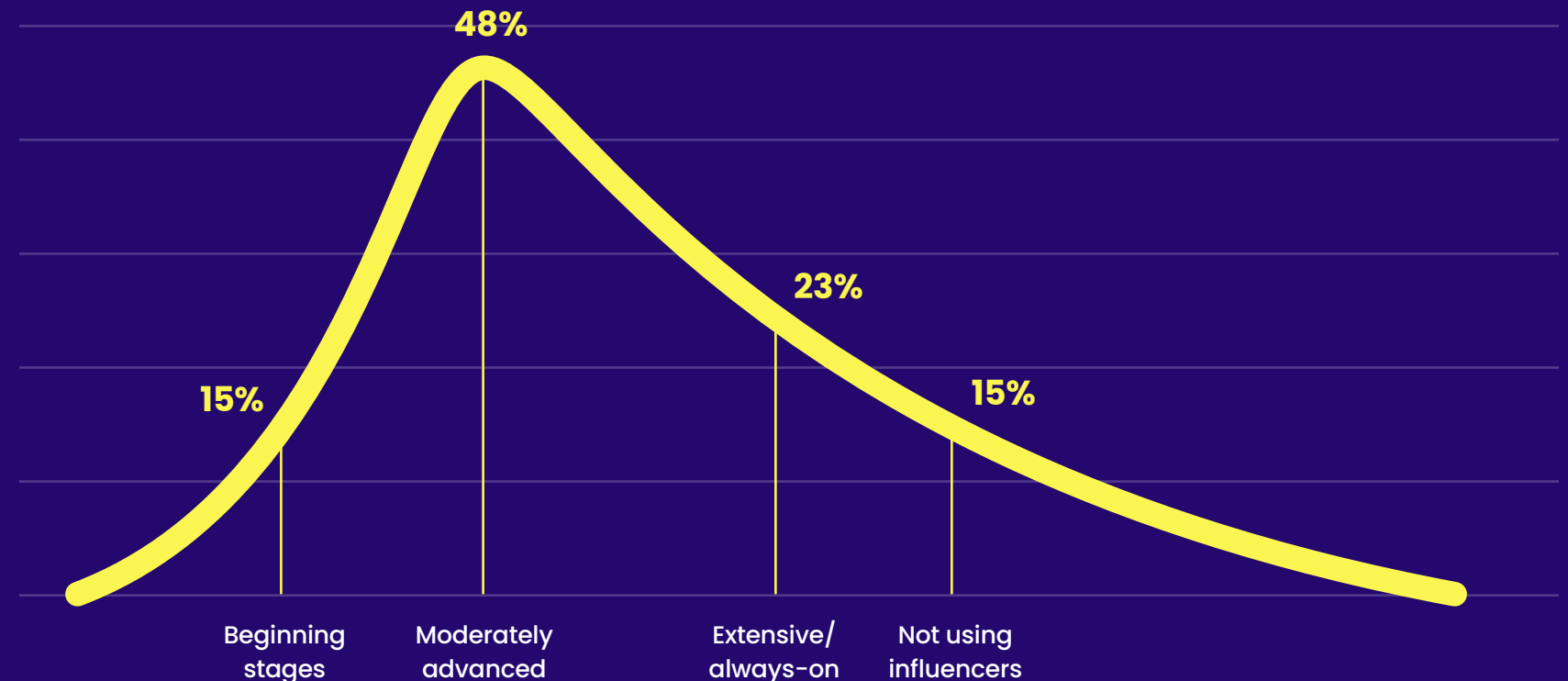
Here's how we define three key stages of influencer marketing maturity.

**BASIC:** Currently researching, polling, or testing influencer marketing

**MODERATE:** Including influencers in one-off campaigns, but not part of a well-developed strategy

**EXTENSIVE:** Utilizing an "always-on" influencer program with consistent engagement and campaigns

For our respondents, influencer marketing maturity tends to follow a bell curve:



It's clear that the early and mid-cycle adopters have made progress in advancing their sophistication. And there's a healthy cohort of new arrivals — it's not too late to kick off and develop a successful program.

**No matter what stage you're currently in, you can take simple steps to increase your maturity level.**



We are in the age of B2B influence. The leaders in this space know that authenticity, intelligence and relevance are the keys to building deep connections between their brand and their buyers.



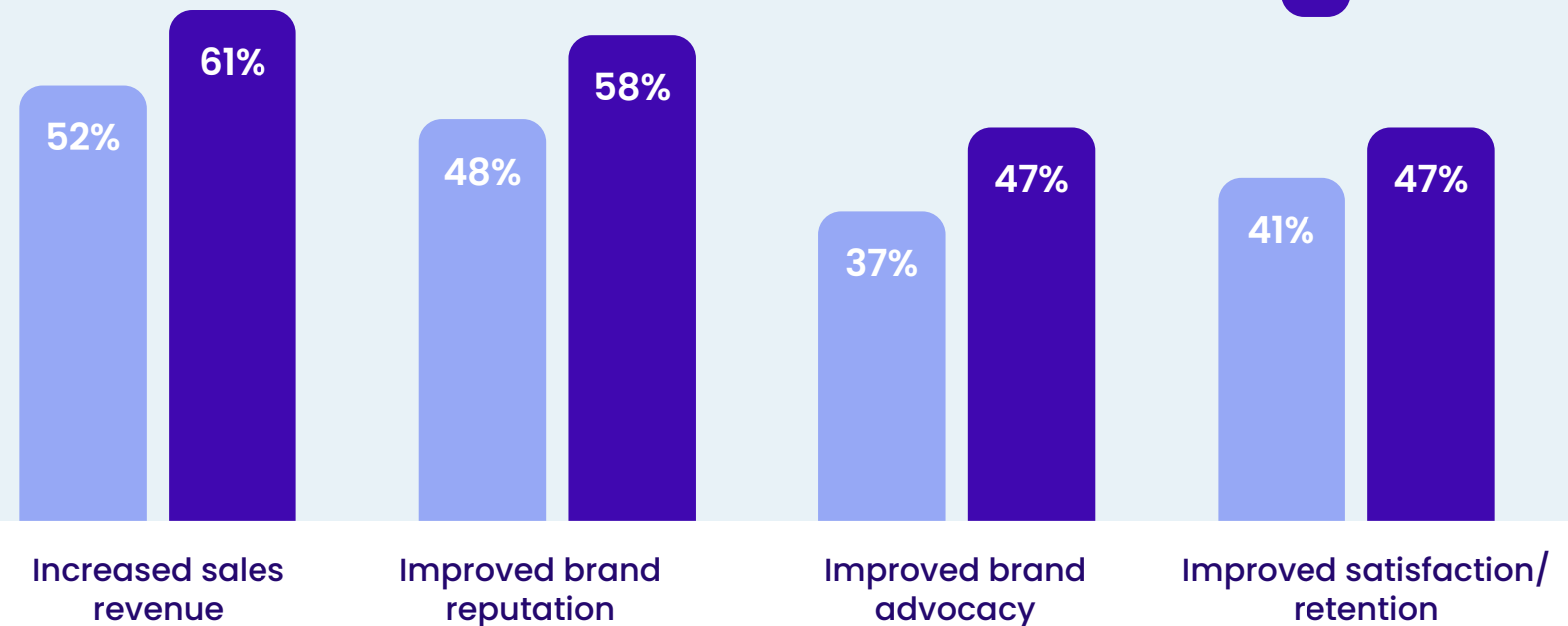
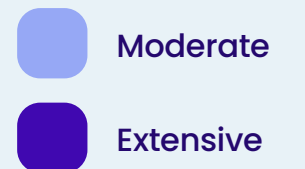
**Katelyn Drake**  
Director of Agency Marketing,  
TopRank Marketing



## BENEFITS OF ELEVATED B2B INFLUENCER MARKETING

Why should your team level-up your influencer marketing program? It's true that all who use influencer marketing are reporting key benefits like increased sales revenue, more brand awareness and improved brand reputation. But the most advanced programs see higher benefits in many key areas:

Benefits of having an influencer marketing strategy in place





Build relationships, build relationships, build relationships. I think I have said this every year since influencer marketing was a mewling newborn tactic... but every year, it's worth repeating.



**Ann Handley**  
Chief Content Officer,  
MarketingProfs



**Few marketers would turn down increased revenue, reputation, advocacy, satisfaction and retention.**

As of 2022, companies were reported to make

**\$5.20**  
for every  
**\$1 spent**

on influencer marketing, indicating a substantial return on investment.

*Source: Zen Media*

Those with extensive, always-on programs can also create an engine of continued engagement and feedback. Independent research shows that brands that partner with influencers enjoy a boost in earned media value (EMV). Each dollar spent on influencer marketing can set off a chain reaction of positive brand attention.





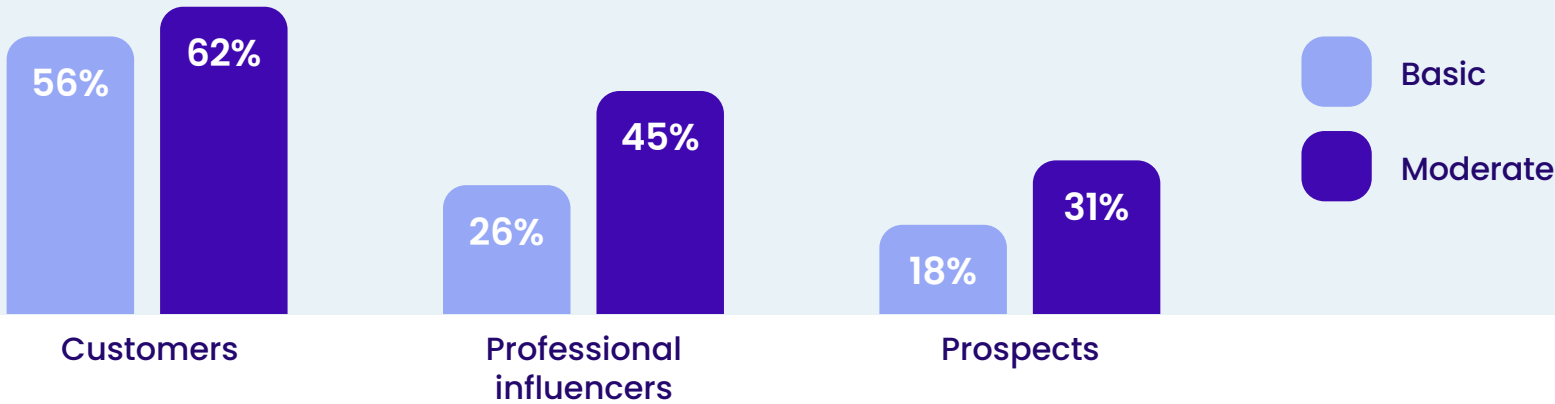
# ELEVATING INFLUENCE: FROM **BASIC** TO **MODERATE**

In the first stage, marketing teams are researching, polling or testing influencer marketing. For those in the research stage, the proof points in the first two sections can help you make the business case.

Those who are in the testing phase are most likely to start with customers and industry experts as influencers. This approach makes sense; including customers in the influencer mix is a good way to build relationships. And, of course, industry experts add credibility to your brand.

Compared to the Basic stage, Moderates make more use of professional influencers and prospects, while still including customers, industry experts and niche experts.

### What types of influencers are you currently using?



# ELEVATING INFLUENCE: FROM MODERATE TO EXTENSIVE



The largest organizations often need influencers the most to help elevate the brand with new ideas, fresh energy, validated thought leadership and creativity that pushes the brand outside the box to find unexpected ways to connect with their audience.



**Debbie Friez**

*Associate Director, Influence & Social Media,  
TopRank Marketing*



Strategy is the key distinction between the two higher levels of influencer marketing maturity. Moderates are comfortable running one-off campaigns with influencer contributions. But starting from scratch with each campaign can lead to wasted effort and a lack of momentum.

Those at the Extensive level have an overarching strategy and continuous nurturing between campaigns. They have a group of influencers they work with regularly, and the most successful provide ways for influencers to interact with each other, the brand, and their audience.

A stable community of influencers makes it easier for the brand and influencers to engage with each other, build deeper relationships and co-create content.

The other key components of an extensive influencer strategy are measurement and integration. The most successful can track influencer campaign performance all the way to the revenue level to demonstrate the business impact of their efforts. To accomplish this, they have integrated their influencer strategy with their other marketing efforts to see its effects on the entire customer journey.



# WHAT DOES A B2B INFLUENCER LOOK LIKE?

With the right amount of zeroes on the check, your B2B brand could work with anyone from Beyoncé to Brad Pitt. But would your target audience take Queen Bey's recommendations on, say, SaaS supply chain solutions?

**B2B influencers are not necessarily the people with the biggest following. A great influencer mix includes four different types of influencers:**



## Thought Leaders

These folks will have the largest audience of the four types. They are recognized authorities in your industry who make a living as influencers. They write books, give keynote speeches, and are eager to promote themselves and share their insights.

This group is useful for increasing your reach and amplifying your content.

### **Ann Handley**

*Chief Content Officer, MarketingProfs*

Expert in Marketing

Has worked with:

DemandBase, NetLine, Sprinklr



## Niche Experts

These influencers have a smaller audience than the first category, but they have a high degree of credibility with a specific group.

Not everybody knows their name, but their audience listens and trusts what they have to say.

This group is good at adding credibility and engaging a specific subset of the audience.

### **Theodora Lau**

*Founder, Unconventional Ventures*

Expert in FinTech

Has worked with:

AT&T, Dell, SAS, SAP



## Practitioners

These are the people who work in your industry. They may not give many speeches, but they've won industry awards and have the respect of their peers.

This group is great for practical advice people can use.

### **Kevin L. Jackson**

*CEO, GC GlobalNet*

Expert in Cloud, AI, and Security

Has worked with:

AT&T, Dell, SAP, Microsoft



## Internal Influencers

This often underutilized group includes executives and employees, people who work in your organization and have expertise on the subject of your content.

This group can help build your brand's thought leadership, credibility, and authenticity.

### **Tyrone Heath**

*Director, Market Engagement,  
The B2B Institute, LinkedIn*

Expert in Marketing, Leadership, DE&I

Has worked with: LinkedIn, Adobe





# GETTING THE RIGHT INFLUENCER MIX

Audience size is a key consideration for an overall influencer mix, but there are many more criteria that determine an effective influencer.

In our survey, those who rated their programs as “very effective” rated size of audience and network in fourth place:

## What are the most important qualities in choosing an influencer?

Our audience sees them as trustworthy

49%

Relevance of audience/network

48%

Professional credentials

45%

Size of audience/network

44%

Subject matter expertise

43%

When evaluating influencers, it’s important to look deeper than audience size. The right influencer should have already-established credibility, relevant expertise, and engagement with their existing audience.

Ultimately, if you could choose between an influencer with a million followers and one with 250,000 followers but high credibility, relevance and engagement rate, often the latter is a better choice.



Pairing executives with influencers is a great way to elevate their platforms to a new audience, share relevant industry expertise and thus get a ‘stamp of authority’ from the influencer and their community.



**Janine Wegner**

*Global Integrated Thought Leadership Strategist,  
Dell Technologies*





## Case Study:

# NetLine Raises Awareness & Generates Leads

NetLine is a B2B marketing technology company that recently launched INTENTIVE, the first buyer-level intent data platform.

## Challenge:

Many solutions in the market promise buyer-level intent data — the ability to see which individuals are in the market for your B2B solution. But most offer account-level data at best. You might see that someone from Company X is researching your solution, but not which individual.

NetLine developed INTENTIVE to offer true buyer-level intent data, a substantial leap beyond what the competition was offering.

In order to reach and persuade their audience, NetLine needed to educate them first. They needed to define true buyer-level intent data, differentiate their approach from competitors, and spark imagination for what their solution could do.

An even bigger challenge: The product hadn't launched yet and was still under wraps.

## Strategy:

In order to change the conversation about intent data, TopRank Marketing gathered some of the brightest minds in sales and marketing. We asked these influencers to imagine what they could do if they could detect intent from individual B2B buyers rather than whole accounts.

Their responses helped draw the distinction between existing intent data capabilities and what NetLine was delivering with INTENTIVE. These predictions and observations formed the core of the campaign's gated asset, supported by promotional material.



# Execution:

TopRank provided the influencers with social assets including images and sample messages that they could share. These influencer activations drove a stunning amount of engagement — 165% above the benchmark.

# Impact:

With the full force of TopRank's network of B2B influencers, NetLine was able to define buyer-level intent data while generating awareness and demand:

**157%**

of 90-day page view benchmark — in **30 days**

**165%**

of social media engagement benchmark

**69%**

of sessions requested a free trial

**61%**

click-through rate on top influencer post



We're here to tell you: the proof is out there. Buyer-level intent data exists — and it's vastly more expansive and inclusive than a smattering of pageviews. It's a better means of identifying and tracking our "UFOs" than any of us have ever had before.

To track down the Truth about buyer-level intent data, we caught up with some of the most savvy, forward-facing data experts working in demand gen today. They made the compelling case that not only is buyer-level intent data very real, but the demand gen experts who want to get ahead are preparing to make it a key part of their strategies starting right now.

Naturally, we got the inside scoop on how, straight from the UFO hunters themselves.

If you're ready to make first contact with the kind of intent data that will drive closer encounters with your customers than ever, read on for practical advice from an out-of-this-world team of data experts.

### What is buyer-level intent data?

First things first: what are we talking about when we talk about "buyer-level intent data"?

The simplest definition of buyer-level intent data is "an amalgam of information indicating a specific individual prospect is in their buying cycle and preparing to make a purchase decision." The operative part of this definition is **individual prospect**.

In contrast to buyer-level intent data, most of today's intent data only goes to the account level. That means you can determine that buying signals are coming from somewhere in an enterprise, but can't pinpoint the individual.

The problem with account-level data is that enterprises are ever-evolving beasts. While account-level data is derived from a lot of information, there's a severe lack of transparency in what those within an account are actually doing. For example, our sleuthing has found that much of today's account-level intent data comes in the form of pageviews, which are a high volume, low intent signal. What emerges from this mess of information is a lot of semi-educated guesses, making it nearly impossible for users to optimize, personalize, or contextualize their GTM activities. And, of course, accounts don't make purchases, people do.

### Evidence Submission

**FIELD AGENT**  
**MORGAN J INGRAM**  
CEO, Ascension Media Productions, 4x LinkedIn Top Sales Voice

**CLASSIFIED**

*Ascension Media Productions CEO Morgan J. Ingram told us how he plans to use buyer-level intent data to ask better questions without creeping out his clients.*

"Sales and marketing can use buyer intent to accelerate the sales process without coming off as invasive by focusing on one core thing for each function.

For sales, if you know a company is interested in a certain topic — for example, maybe you sell sales training and you know that they're interested in prospecting training — you wouldn't just ask them, "hey how's your prospecting?" right, or immediately follow up with, "hey, I saw this intent data and I think that you should pay more attention to this." No. What you should do is figure out what the questions are that we can ask someone for them to admit what their problem is, THEN we can solve that.

So, you're not asking them "how's your prospecting?" You may ask them something like, "how are you rising towards your renewal number?" and "do you have enough pipeline to support that?", for example.

So when I look at intent data, I'm not saying, "hey, I saw this data and I'm asking a question. That's creepy." Instead, I'm framing questions around the data that I saw. Then you can prepare your reps to ask questions to get to the root of the problem that you've identified.

Then on the marketing side, I would say, okay, let's create content around this data. Can we create a webinar series around this? Can we create a blog post around this? Can we do a customer advocacy webinar with this? So that's the way that you can handle using intent data without being invasive."



### Ending the Age of Spycraft

Of course, lack of specificity isn't the only charge demand gen experts tend to level against intent data. In fact, many practitioners are worried about the opposite problem: what happens when intent data gets a little too incisive? Won't it be an invasion of privacy?

It's a fair concern, both for ethical and practical reasons: after all, nobody likes to feel spied on. Buyer-intent data can only accelerate the pipeline of your demand gen team if it helps your team connect with their customers.

Though you might think buyer-level intent would be even more invasive than account-level intent, as it provides so much more information, this isn't actually the case. Instead, buyer-level intent data actually explicitly asks the prospects in question to provide the information they'd like to share — about their demographics, buying preferences, and more — voluntarily.

With buyer-level intent data, the buyer:

- A:** Actually knows you're collecting the data, unlike what usually occurs to gather account-level data
- B:** Knows exactly what they're providing and are providing it of their own free will
- C:** Understands why you're collecting the data, who does (and does not) have access to it, and what it will be used for

For all these reasons, gathering buyer-level data is actually considerably more thoughtful toward buyer privacy concerns than the typical approaches to gaining account-level data used today. Plus, buyer-level data is more accurate, incisive and useful!





Launching a new platform, and creating an entirely new product category, we knew we needed to stand out from the sea of boring and confusing messaging delivered by most in the space. TopRank Marketing helped us take our creativity level to another galaxy, pun intended, and leverage the power of influencers to educate our audience on what buyer-level intent data is first, and then make sure NetLine was the top choice. This was our first-time partnership with B2B influencers, and we saw engagement 165% over the benchmark! The power of influence is undeniable!



**David Fortino**  
*Chief Strategy Officer, NetLine*



# IDENTIFYING THE **MOST** **RELEVANT** INFLUENCERS

It can be challenging to find influencers that hit the sweet spot of reach, resonance and relevance. Over half of our respondents say identifying, qualifying and connecting with influencers is their most significant challenge.



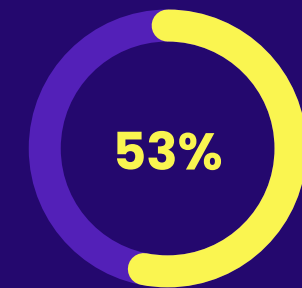
Know your products. Find the influencers who use and believe in your products. Create mutual success between the brand and influencers.



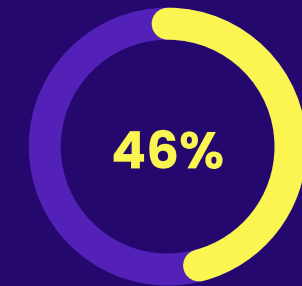
**Pam Didner**  
Vice President,  
Relentless Pursuit



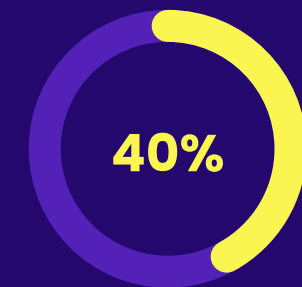
## What are the most significant challenges in your influencer marketing program?



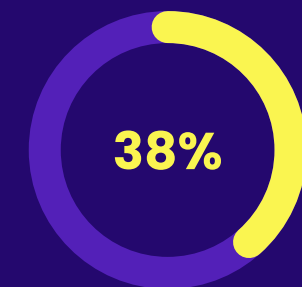
Identifying, qualifying and engaging with ideal influencers



Measuring and reporting results



Collaborating with influencers and creating content



Creating and documenting an integrated strategy





To meet this challenge, over half say they are using technology (tools like Traackr, Meltwater and BuzzSumo) to identify, engage and/or manage influencers. Over 40% say they use AI solutions to help with influencer identification.



AI's advancements in language and image generation are set to reshape influencer marketing. While synthetic influencers offer brand consistency, the true game-changer lies in large language models like ChatGPT. These models can filter influencers by specific criteria, such as emphasizing BIPOC voices. By merging custom databases with AI, brands gain targeted influencer insights.

### How are you using AI for influencer marketing?

Content Creation

53%

Performance Tracking

51%

Campaign Optimization

44%

Influencer Identification and Selection

42%



**Christopher S. Penn**  
*Chief Data Scientist, Trust Insights*







It takes a mature and sophisticated influencer marketing team, with the right tools on hand, to find the right influencers and develop working relationships. As interest in B2B influencer marketing rises, the competition for top influencers increases, and securing participation becomes even more challenging.



AI accelerates B2B influencer research and extends campaigns by crafting diverse content from provided materials, all tailored in the brand's voice, optimizing influencer collaboration.



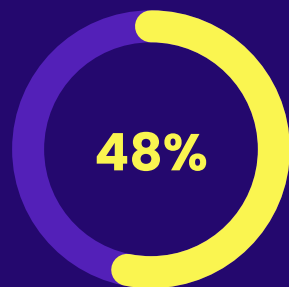
**Justin Levy**

*Senior Director of Influencer Marketing  
and Head of Community,  
Demandbase*

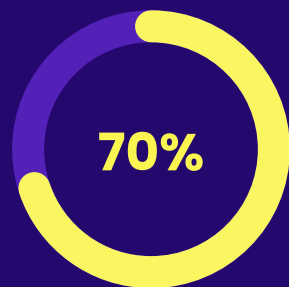


# OUTSOURCING INFLUENCER MARKETING PROGRAMS

As B2B influencer marketing becomes more strategic and specialized, it makes sense that marketing teams are looking for external help. An experienced influencer marketing agency has the tools, established relationships, and skills to meet the most common influencer marketing challenges.



48% of all respondents say their programs are mostly outsourced



70% of the **most effective** say their program is **entirely outsourced**

## An agency can help make a program more effective throughout the process:



**Identification.** Agencies have a full suite of tools to identify relevant influencers, and the experience and expertise to use these tools most effectively.



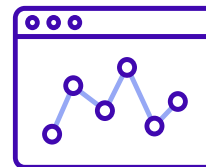
**Nurturing.** Agencies likely have established relationships with the most prominent influencers, and the experience to successfully nurture new ones.



**Contract management.** Agencies can help negotiate compensation, produce and get signatures for contracts, and make sure influencers follow through.



**Payment passthrough.** Agencies can handle the details of influencer compensation, including reimbursement for expenses.



**Measurement.** Agencies can track reach, engagement, conversions and more in order to optimize the campaign and connect efforts to business impact.

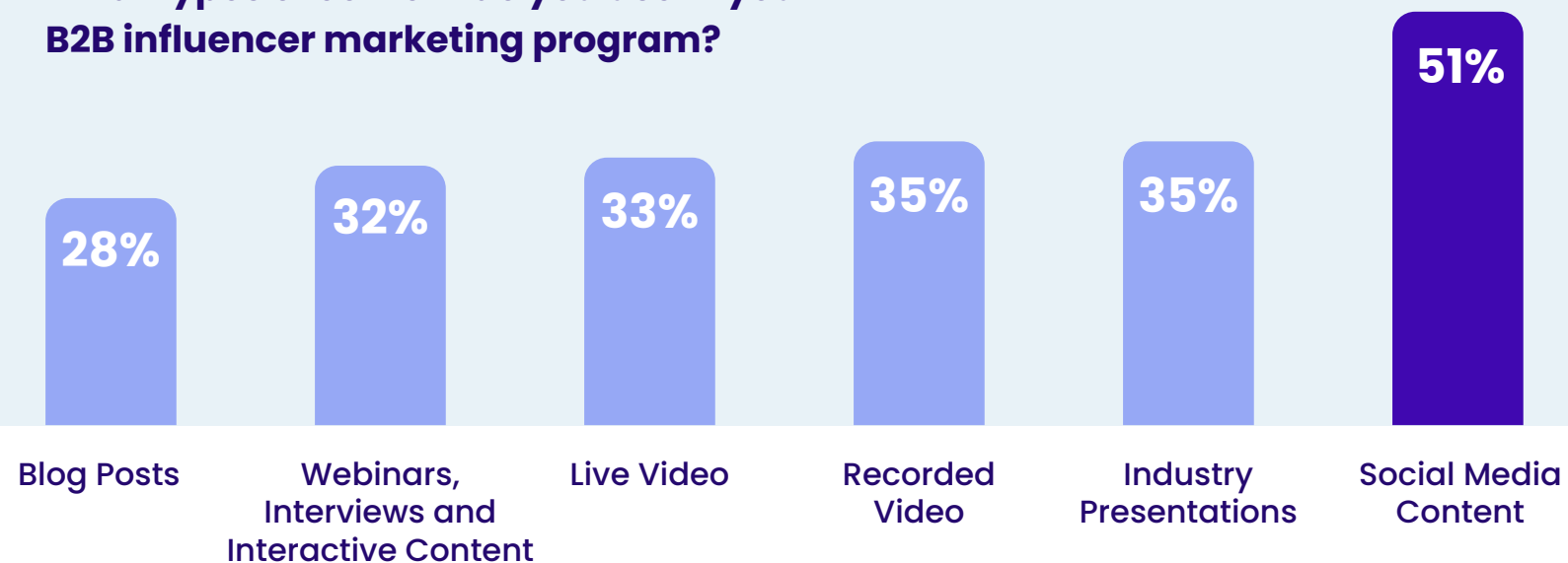


# CO-CREATING CONTENT WITH INFLUENCERS

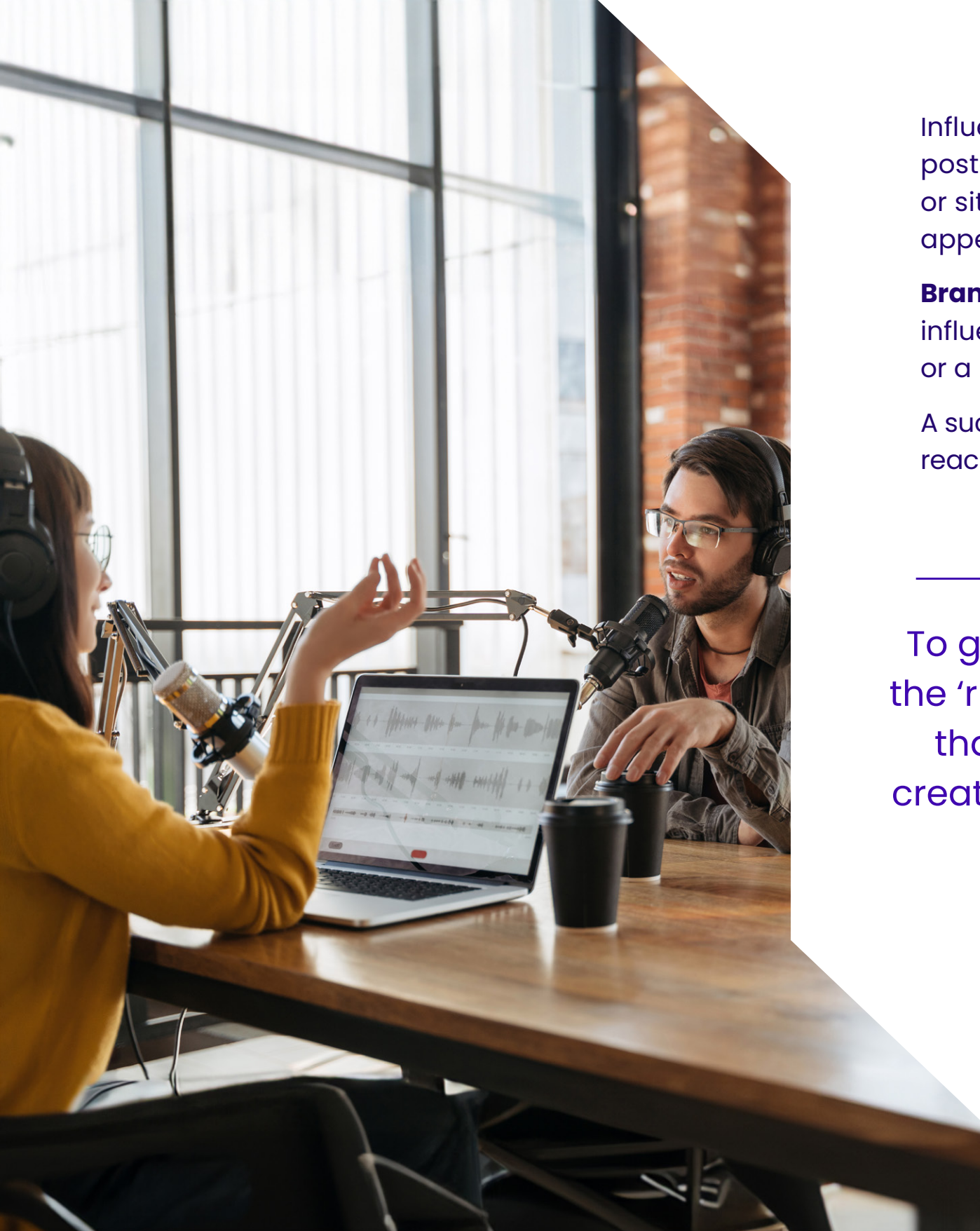
B2C influencer marketing can be as simple as a celebrity holding a product in an Instagram post. But B2B influencer marketing relies on providing value to the audience. The most relevant and meaningful content is a co-creation between brand and influencer, with each adding credibility and insight to the other.

Content that meets these criteria can come in a variety of forms, and the preferred forms are changing over time. Our research shows emerging preferences for video and interactive content, while blog posts are slipping further down the list.

## What types of content do you use in your B2B influencer marketing program?







Influencer content can be either **sponsored** or **branded**. **Sponsored content** is posted on the influencer’s own channel, whether it’s a social media account, blog, or site. The influencer tags the content as sponsored by the brand, but otherwise it appears identical to their native content.

**Branded content** is posted on the brand channels. This type of content includes the influencer’s contribution, along with a tag mentioning the influencer (on social media) or a link to the influencer profile or site.

A successful influencer marketing campaign should include both types of content, to reach and engage both the brand and influencer’s audiences.



To get influencers excited about working with your brand, go for the ‘rule of cool.’ Pitch a creative vision for the content, something that goes beyond your everyday white paper or eBook. A fun creative theme draws more influencers in and makes them more likely to share the awesome work you co-create.



**Joshua Nite**

*Senior Content Marketing Manager, TopRank Marketing*





## Case Study:

# Adobe Drives Engagement & Leads

Adobe Experience Cloud is a robust platform for intelligent, automated marketing and analytics. It supports a suite of solutions including Adobe Real-Time CDP, Adobe Journey Optimizer and Adobe Customer Journey Analytics.

## Challenge:

Adobe is well known for its Creative Suite and Adobe Analytics, but the brand wanted to raise awareness of their full suite of marketing and customer experience solutions. They sought specifically to reach B2B marketers in 900 target accounts in the EMEA region.

## Strategy:

TopRank Marketing identified the influencers who were truly influential within Adobe's B2B marketing audience. As a group, these influencers had the combination of reach, relevance and resonance to make a valuable and fruitful collaboration possible.

## Execution:

The final asset included contributions from industry experts, professional influencers and internal Adobe experts. It was promoted through influencer amplification on social media, paid and organic LinkedIn posts from the brand, and email.





# Impact:

The influencer content sparked benchmark-beating engagement and lead generation:

**2X**  
the engagement of previous Adobe campaigns

**150%**  
more form fills on LinkedIn than previous campaigns



People trust people, not brands.

B2B influencer marketing is fundamentally helping us reach and build trust with new audiences in the buying committee.



**Katrina Neal**

Head of Growth Marketing,  
Data and Insights Solutions, Adobe



**Preparing to analyse the full customer journey.**  
Customer journey analytics requires a holistic approach to customer data organisation. Achieving this type of collaboration takes more than just a new software solution: it requires addressing people and processes as well.

**People: Promote data literacy & prepare for collaboration**

You don't have to turn your entire marketing team into data experts to take full advantage of Adobe Customer Journey Analytics. In fact, part of the solution's appeal is more accessible to all marketers, regardless of their analytics skill set.

That said, it makes sense to train your team in basic data literacy, including:

1. What types of data are useful for marketing across the customer journey?
2. A general idea of how data is collected and analysed
3. Use cases for the insights generated from customer journey analysis

It's also important to reframe working with customer data as an organisational goal, not just one relegated to marketing. This is equal parts a people and process change on the people side. It's about learning to see data as a resource to share, not to hoard. It's preparing people to give up their data fiefdoms and embrace data demography.

**Adobe**

**Market to People,  
Not Data Points.**

Analysing the Full Customer Journey.

**Financial Services: Customer experience optimisation**

TSB is a UK-based financial institution with 7,000 employees. They used Adobe Experience Platform, Experience Cloud, Customer Journey Analytics, Journey Optimizer, Target and more to personalise at-scale for millions of customers.

These tools empowered TSB to:

- Eliminate friction points from their customers' journey, to increase conversions
- Personalise digital experiences for customers
- Unify banking services across channels
- Increase efficiency by incentivising customers to use digital self-service

In the first few months after TSB made these new experiences available to the public, they saw a 200% increase in sales and 92% of existing customers used digital self-service. One year after going live with Adobe Experience Platform, TSB boasted a 400% increase in loan applications.<sup>4</sup>

Adobe Experience Cloud  
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Who doesn't love a marketing multiplier? Our Adobe customers have seen a 3X engagement lift. And you can, too! #CustomerExperience #MarketingAnalytics

Engagement Rate  
**3X**

See how Adobe Customer Journey Analytics boosts your marketing power.  
business.adobe.com

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Engagement Rate  
**3X**

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Less work, more win! Adobe customers have seen a 50% reduction in effort & 10% lift in traffic & order value. #CustomerExperience #MarketingAnalytics

Customer Journey Flow

Reduction in Manual Effort  
**50%**

Site Traffic  
**10%**

Get the guide to see how Adobe elevates marketing analytics.  
business.adobe.com

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Adobe Experience Cloud  
158,556 followers  
22h

We did the math: 3x(engagement) - 50%(manual effort) = happy marketers. See how it adds up in our new guide. #CustomerExperience #MarketingAnalytics

Marketing Campaign

Engagement Rate

Efficiency

Increase efficiency and boost results with smarter marketing at scale.  
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# ACTIVATING INFLUENCERS

Most influencer programs start small, by asking a single question or soliciting a brief quote from an influencer. These contributions can be combined and repurposed into everything from eBooks to social media posts.

There are many other ways to creatively engage influencers, however. A variety of content types and activities can keep influencers enthusiastic about working with your brand, and provide more engagement opportunities for your audience.

## Which influencer activities are most effective for reaching your objectives?



There is great potential in having influencers serve as brand advisors. The truly influential have deep insight into what makes their audience tick – it makes sense for brands to tap into this wealth of information.



To create an authentic connection, you have to be authentic ... Brands need to innovate and find champions and influencers to partner with who are going to collaborate and drive impact with the customer in mind.



**Luxy Thuraisingam**  
Vice President of Global SMB and Partner Marketing, Cisco





My advice for brands is to focus on continuous engagement. Engage with your influencer community regularly, even outside of specific campaigns. Building a sense of community and rapport with influencers can lead to more enthusiastic and effective collaborations.

By emphasizing authenticity, building relationships, and continuously optimizing your efforts, you can excel in B2B influencer marketing and effectively reach and engage your desired audience.



**Ryan Bares**

*Global Social Influencer Marketing Manager,  
IBM*



## CREATING A **POSITIVE** **INFLUENCER EXPERIENCE**

Influencer marketing is as much about relationship-building as it is creating content. When an influencer has a great experience working with your brand, they're more likely to become an advocate, and more likely to work with you again.

There are a few key components of great influencer experience, and our research shows room for improvement in each of them.

- 1. Clarity.** Influencers should know exactly what is expected of them. That includes what type of content, what format, when it will be posted and where, and how their performance will be measured.
- 2. Compensation.** In a crowded market, influencers know their value and expect fair compensation. Our research found that only 47% compensate influencers with payment or products.
- 3. Appreciation.** Influencer marketing shouldn't be purely transactional. Individual attention and gratitude help build relationships. Only 36% said they use events, experiences and the like to show appreciation.
- 4. Community.** Giving influencers the opportunity to network with each other and interact with the brand is a key way to build ongoing relationships. Currently only 37% provide such a community.





Over the years, social B2B marketing has proven it's ability to deliver clear financial ROI. I have experienced expanding business from multiple repeat clients. This has made influencer marketing an essential component of the B2B marketing mix.



**Kevin L. Jackson**  
CEO, GC GlobalNet



## MEASURING PERFORMANCE

In our survey, 93% say the pressure to prove marketing return on investment (ROI) has increased in the past year, with 22% feeling a significant increase. This makes measurement absolutely essential for the ongoing success of an influencer marketing program.

**The good news:** Half of those we surveyed said they measure and/or track performance. Of these, 51% said they use AI to help with tracking and measurement. Those who measure were more likely to rate their program as extremely successful in raising awareness and credibility.

**The bad news:** Half of those we surveyed do not measure or track performance. This is a major opportunity for improving the success of any influencer program.

Tracking influencer effectiveness starts with providing tracked URLs for each influencer in each campaign. This makes it easy to see which influencers are prompting click-throughs and how much traffic each is driving.

More advanced measurement can include tracking engagement on social media channels, tracking share of voice, and even tracking conversions/demo requests/leads generated.





Beyond metrics, marketing is about unraveling the narrative, fine-tuning our plan, and providing authentic value to those we serve.



**Dan Cafiero**

*Senior Program Manager, ABM and Paid Media, Seagate Technology*



In B2B marketing, measurement isn't just a tool — it's the compass guiding our strategies. Only through precise metrics can we truly gauge impact, refine approaches, and drive meaningful business outcomes.



**Alexander White**

*Social Influencer Lead, TopRank Marketing*





# Looking Forward

## Trends & Predictions from Industry Leaders



**Paul Dobson**

Head of Digital Services,  
Cloud Software Group


 @svengelsk

In near terms, budget constraints will push influencer content further down the sales funnel, requiring proof of its impact on sales. Incorporating influencers throughout the customer journey fosters familiarity and strengthens vendor-influencer relationships, benefiting both parties.



**Ursula Ringham**

Head of Global Influencer Marketing,  
SAP

 @UrsulaRingham

Authentic engagement will be key in 2024 and beyond. In the B2B space, we need real people to give their opinions and perspectives about challenges and solutions. No one wants to buy from an AI that hasn't done the work or used the product.



**Debbie Friez**

Associate Director, Influencer and Social Media,  
TopRank Marketing

 @dfriez

We will see a pivotal shift towards authentic connections in B2B influencer marketing over the next year. As measurement techniques refine, the true business impact of genuine relationships will come to the forefront, underscoring the value of trust and credibility in every partnership.



**Ryan Bares**

Global Social Influencer Marketing Manager,  
IBM

 @RyanBares

AI will revolutionize B2B influencer marketing by enhancing influencer discovery, vetting, and collaboration. Expect platforms to integrate AI for content optimization, predictive analytics, and compliance, elevating campaign strategies.





### **Pam Didner**

Vice President,  
Relentless Pursuit


 @PamDidner

Short-form video continues to be a major player in the realm of influencer marketing. I think we will also continue to see brands evaluating their influencer portfolio based on gender, age, and ethnicity to reach a broader audience.



### **Janine Wegner**

Integrated Thought Leadership  
Strategy, Dell Technologies

 @JanineWegner

In the upcoming year, AI, especially generative AI, will dominate, promoting global experts to influencer status. Enhanced translation and creative tools empower diverse voices worldwide, enriching perspectives and championing inclusivity.



### **Justin Levy**

Senior Director, Influencer Marketing &  
Head of Community, DemandBase

 @JustinLevy

By 2024, B2B companies will create distinct influencer roles, separating from standard social media tasks. LinkedIn will face increased API access demands, especially as other platforms limit data. Influencer campaigns will need to demonstrate direct contributions to sales, beyond just raising brand awareness.



### **Theodora Lau**

Founder,  
Unconventional Ventures

 @psb\_dc

This space will continue to evolve and thrive. With in-person events returning in full force, there are more things that KOLs can partner with brands on – making the engagement more interesting and engaging, and providing more channels to connect than ever.





### Amy Higgins

Owner,  
Amy Higgins Consulting

@amywhiggins

The leaders in the space are finding creators who have clear points of view and add to the brand's story. We are going to continue to see more co-marketing efforts between brands and between brands and influencers.



### Jay Acunzo

Co-Founder,  
Creator Kitchen

@JayAcunzo

In 2024, the creator economy will redefine B2B marketing. As traditional B2B reach wanes, genuine creator voices gain traction. B2B brands will prioritize partnerships with these impactful creators and cultivate such talent in-house.



### Christopher S. Penn

Chief Data Scientist,  
Trust Insights

@cspenn

B2B influencer marketing in 2024 confronts a data gap due to platform fragmentation. Direct customer surveys, community monitoring, and adaptive strategies will be vital to gauge influencer impact in this evolving landscape.



### Casey Borrero

Influencer Marketing Strategist,  
TopRank Marketing

Influencer marketing is expected to undergo a transformation through the implementation of data-driven strategies. The process of selecting influencers will heavily depend on the utilization of sophisticated analytics tools to assess the effectiveness of campaigns and make informed decisions based on data. This methodology will enhance strategies and achieve maximum ROI.



# 25

## Top Influencer Marketing Experts to Follow

### Evolve, Elevate, Ignite

B2B marketing is experiencing a creative renaissance right now. Buyers value creative, useful content — but they demand credibility and authenticity as part of the package. Influencer marketing can bring more value to your audience and more credibility to your brand at the same time. Strategically co-created influencer content is the new frontier in B2B content marketing.



### Victoria Tokarz

Head of Influencer Marketing,  
Scribe



### Anton Shulke

Head of Influencer Marketing,  
Duda



@anton\_shulke



### Tequia Burt

Editor in Chief, LinkedIn Collective  
& LinkedIn Ads Blog, Senior Content  
Marketing Manager,  
LinkedIn



@TequiaBurt



### Meg Crawford

Senior Digital Media & Influencer  
Marketing Manager,  
Splunk



@Postgrad



### Jon Leiberman

Vice-President of Content,  
Social and Influencer Marketing,  
Demandbase



@reporterjon



### Lina Forrestal

Program Manager, Influencer Marketing  
and Social Media Content Strategy,  
Cisco



@linaforrestal



### Renee Roth

Head of Influencer Marketing  
Dropbox



### Drew Tambling

Senior Director, Analyst & Influencer Relations  
Sprinklr



@Drew\_Tambling







**Lucinda R. Henry**

Brand Content & Global Influencer Program Strategist, Hewlett Packard Enterprise

@lucindarhenry1



**Gale Daikoku**

Director, Global Influencer Marketing Lead, SAP

@galedb



**Patrick Jones**

Social Business Team, Influencer Relations, Dell Technologies

@WhoPJones



**Karin Apjarova**

Global Marketing Director - Communication Industry Oracle

@karinapjar



**Srijana Angdembe**

Director, Digital Marketing, Ellucian

@srijanaa



**Pamela Stephens**

Digital Media Manager | Media Partnerships & Influencer Marketing, 3M

@PBJstories



**Nic Michael**

Manager, Influencer Partnerships and Social Media, Alteryx



**Angela Lipscomb**

Influencer Relations Manager SAS





**Ryan Lytle**

Director, Social Media,  
Adobe

@rlytle



**Leah Marshall**

Senior Director, Influencer Marketing,  
Association of National Advertisers

@LeapCast



**Pam Moore**

CEO and Founder,  
Marketing Nutz

@PamMktgNut



**Joe Pulizzi**

Founder  
The Tilt

@JoePulizzi



**Neal Schaffer**

Digital & Social Media  
Marketing Consultant

@NealSchaffer



**Jay Baer**

Founder,  
Convince & Convert

@jaybaer



**Carla Meyer**

Director of Social Media,  
Content and Influencer Marketing,  
Gen



**Lee Odden**

Founder & Board Advisor  
TopRank Marketing

@leeodden



**Debbie Friez**

Associate Director, Influence & Social Media  
TopRank Marketing

@dfriez

# Elevate Your Influence with TopRank Marketing

Whether you're at the inception of your influencer marketing journey, aiming to capitalize on initial success, or endeavoring to establish an always-on, value-driven community, TopRank Marketing is here to help.

We partner with the most influential B2B tech and enterprise brands in the world, including Adobe, Dell, 3M, LinkedIn, SAP and others. We know B2B and helped define B2B influencer marketing as a strategic practice.

**Ready to ignite your influencer strategy?**

[Connect with our team now!](#)







## Methodology

Ascend2 benchmarks the performance of business strategies and the tactics and technology that drive them. They used a custom online questionnaire to survey a panel of 425 marketing decision-makers in management or higher roles. These individuals represent mid-market and enterprise B2B brands, from a range of industries. The survey was fielded during the months of July and August 2023.

In addition to the web-based survey, TopRank Marketing completed interviews with influencers, partners, clients, prospects, peers and team members for supplemental insights, predictions and best practices.



## About the Research Partners

TopRank Marketing has over two decades of experience helping brands connect with their most valuable audiences. The agency has been endorsed by the Forrester Report as a “Top B2B Content & Influencer Marketing Agency” and recognized as an industry thought leader by institutions including Ad Age and Edelman’s Social Media Index.

In 2023, TopRank Marketing received the “Best Content Marketing Program” award at the B2B Marketing Elevation Awards for their outstanding work with the LinkedIn Marketing Solutions Blog.

The TopRank Marketing Blog consistently offers insights that attract attention from publications including The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, and Forbes.

Ascend2 conducts comprehensive research studies and surveys to gather insightful data on B2B and consumer behavior, industry trends, and competitive landscapes. Leveraging a team of experienced researchers and cutting-edge methodologies, Ascend2 is a trusted partner for companies seeking to optimize their marketing initiatives and stay ahead in a rapidly evolving business landscape.