



The **CMO** Survey[®]

Leading Marketing in a Complex World

Highlights and Insights Report | 2025

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About the Survey

Mission

Founded in 2008, The CMO Survey collects and disseminates the opinions of marketing leaders to predict the future of markets, track marketing excellence, and improve the value of marketing in organizations and society.

Reports

The Highlights and Insights Report shares key metrics, trends, and insights over time.

The Topline Report offers an aggregate view of results.

The Firm & Industry Breakout Report displays survey results by sector, size, and online sales.

The CMO Survey is sponsored by Deloitte, Duke University's Fuqua School of Business, and the American Marketing Association. Sponsor support includes intellectual and financial resources. Survey data and participant lists are held in strict confidence and are not provided to sponsors or any other parties.

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Survey Method

Questions

The CMO Survey monitors key marketing indicators. Since 2008, marketing spending and performance indicators have been measured to offer benchmarks and insights to the marketing profession.

This 34th edition continues to follow these trends while also offering an in-depth examination of "Leading Marketing in a Complex World." This includes leading digital and human resources and managing key relationships within the company.

Interpretive Guide:

B2B = Business-to-Business Companies

B2C = Business-to-Consumer Companies

Administration

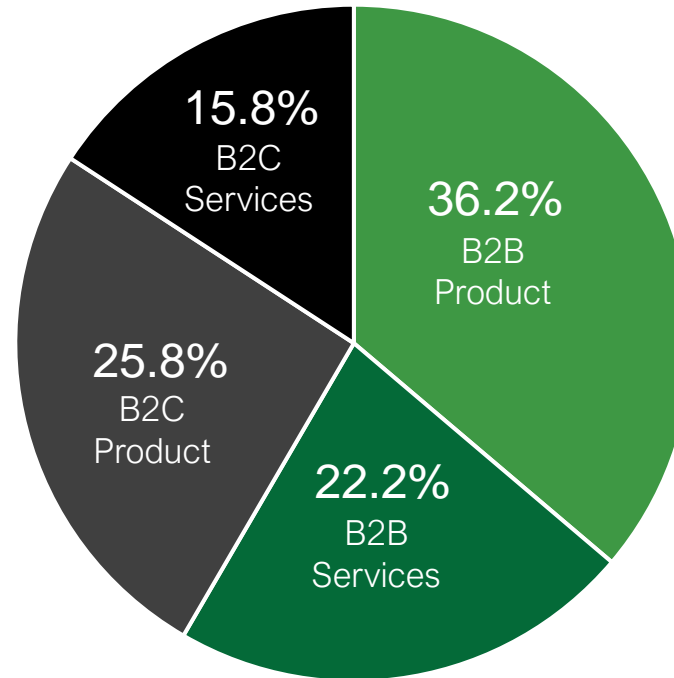
- Survey was in the field January 21-February 12, 2025.
- In 2023, the survey shifted to a Spring and Fall administration. In 2025, the survey moved to a yearly administration. This is reflected in calendar labels used throughout this report.

Sample

Sample (n=281)

- 2,047 marketing leaders at for-profit U.S. companies
- 281 responded for a 13.7% response rate
- 99% of respondents are VP-level or above

Economic Sector

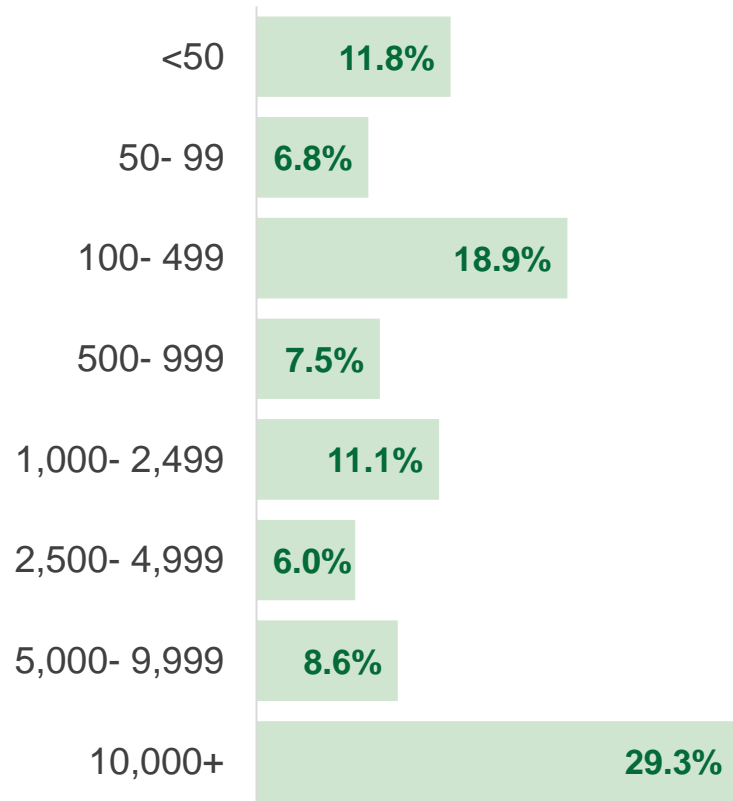


Industry Sector

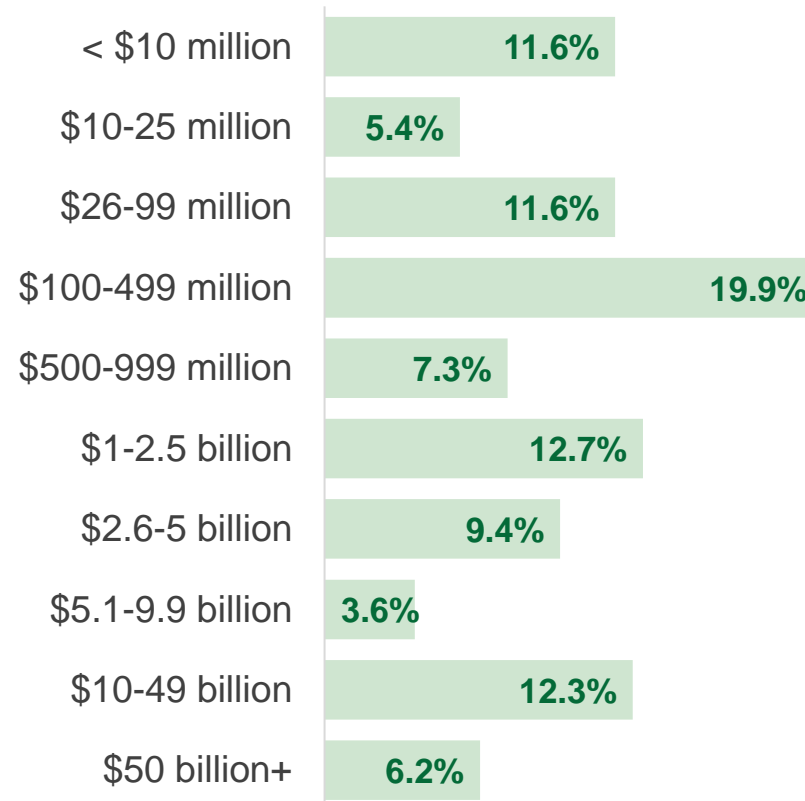
Tech / Software / Platform	15.7%
Healthcare	12.5%
Manufacturing	11.4%
Banking / Finance / Insurance	10.7%
Retail / Wholesale	10.3%
Consumer Packaged Goods	10.0%
Pharma / Biotech	6.8%
Professional Services	5.3%
Communications / Media	3.6%
Transportation	3.2%
Education	2.5%
Consumer Services	2.5%
Real Estate	2.5%
Energy	2.1%
Mining / Construction	1.1%

Sample (continued)

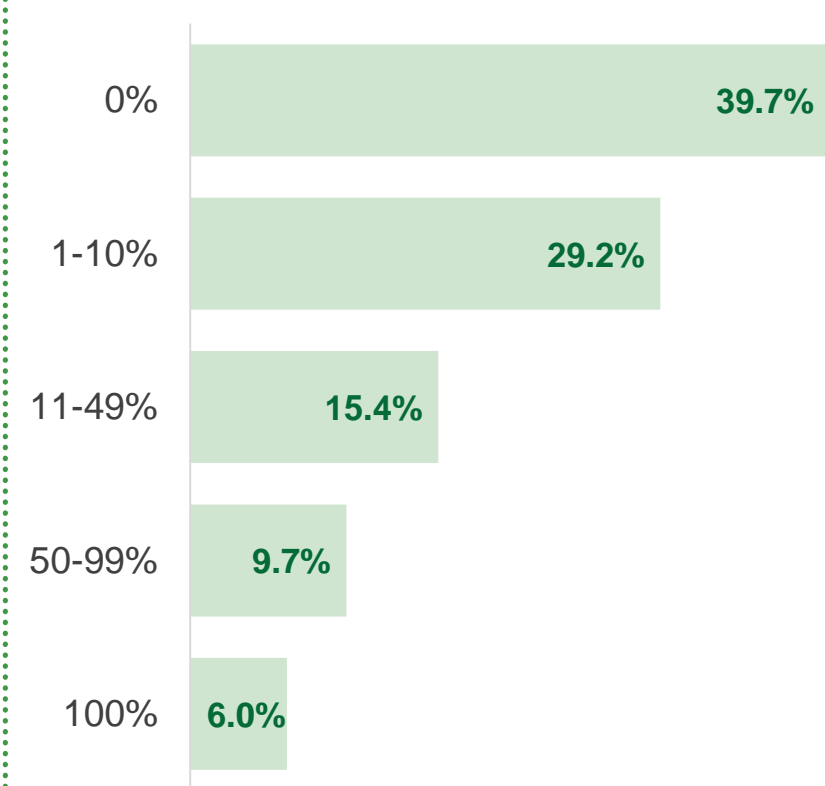
Number of Employees



Sales Revenue



% of Online Sales





Macroeconomic Forecasts

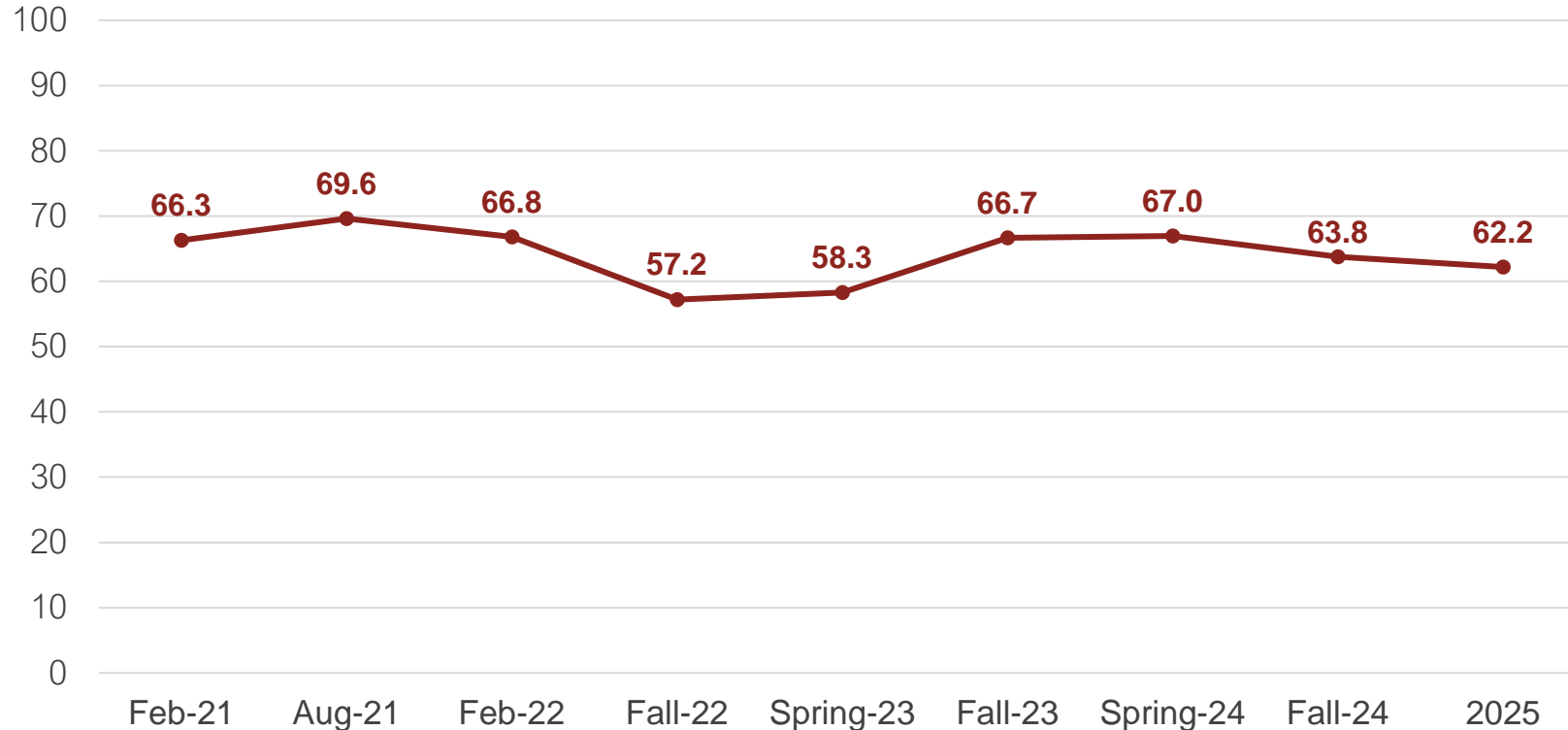
Marketers' optimism about the U.S. economy has declined to 62.2 (where 0 is least optimistic and 100 is most optimistic) from 63.8 reported in Fall 2024. Nearly half (48.2%) of marketers report they are "less optimistic" about the U.S. economy compared to last quarter, while only 31.2% are "more optimistic" and 20.6% report "no change."

Inflationary pressures continue to impact marketing spending levels, with nearly half (43.5%) of companies reporting decreases, though this represents an improvement from Fall 2024 (48.7%). There is, however, substantial heterogeneity among industry sectors. B2C companies have had a higher decrease in marketing spending with B2C Product at 47.8% and B2C Services at 47.1% compared to B2B Product at 40.2% and B2B Services at 43.1%.

The largest number of marketing leaders (41%) believe there will be "no change" in regulation in 2025, while almost one-third (31.5%) expect "less regulation" and the remainder (27.5%) expect "more regulation." B2B companies lead the "no change" group, while B2C Product companies (41.8%) expect "more regulation" and B2C Services companies (45.7%) expect "more regulation." Among the companies that expect "more regulation," nearly half (46.4%) believe it will decrease marketing spending, while a clear majority of those expecting "less regulation" (81%) believe it will have no impact on marketing spending.

Marketer optimism continues to decline post-election

Rate your optimism about the U.S. economy on a scale from 0-100 with 0 being the least optimistic and 100 being the most optimistic.



Economic Sector

B2B Product	61.2
B2B Services	61.3
B2C Product	61.8
B2C Services	67.6

Industry Sector

Most optimistic industries

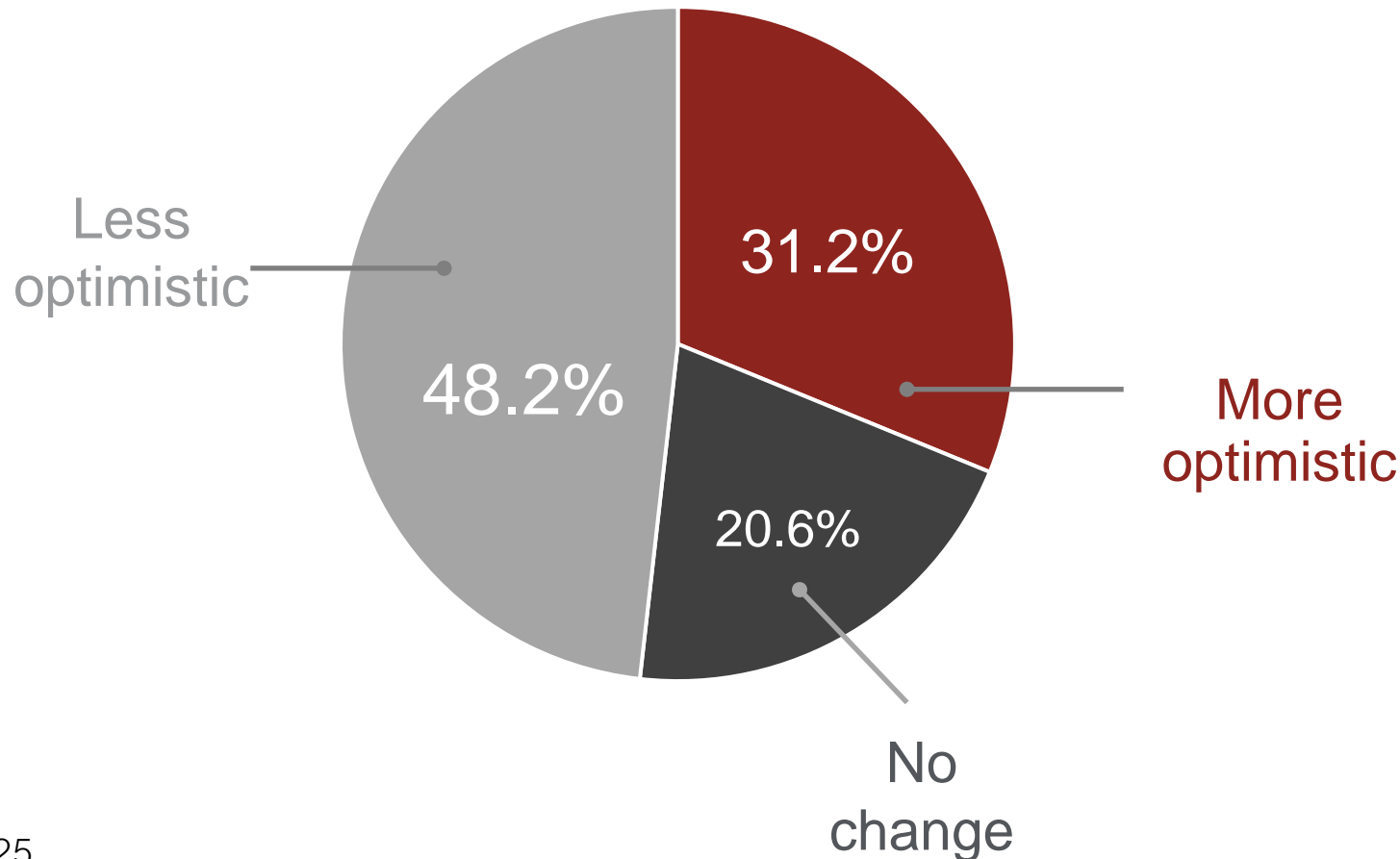
- Real Estate (72.4)
- Transportation (72.0)
- Healthcare (68.6)

Least optimistic industries

- Communications / Media (48.4)
- Education (50.2)
- Mining / Construction (51.7)

Approximately half of marketers report they are less optimistic about the U.S. economy compared to pre-election ratings

Are you more or less optimistic about the U.S. economy compared to last quarter?



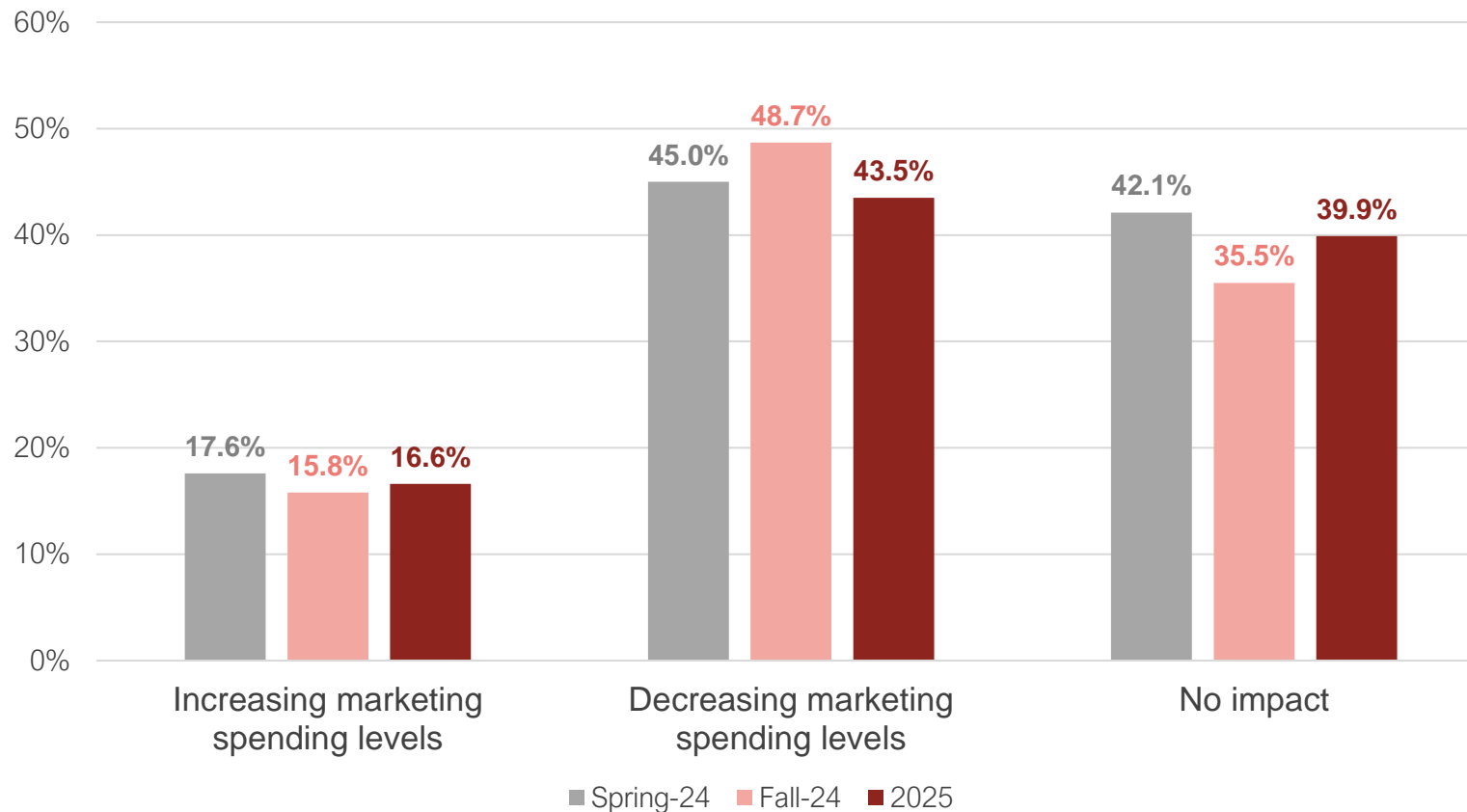
Insights

Almost half of marketers are “less optimistic” about the U.S. economy compared to last quarter. This is a 64% increase over the 29.4% that were “less optimistic” in Fall-2024. The number of marketers who are “more optimistic” has decreased from 37% in Fall-2024 to 31.2% in 2025. Inflation, new policies, and the potential for additional tariffs may be driving these more pessimistic views.

Among the economic sectors, the range of being “less optimistic” goes from 44.1% in B2C Services to 49.5% in B2B Product. The majority of industries are reporting “less optimistic” views. The least optimistic views are in the Energy (83.3%) and Education (80.0%) sectors. Those with “more optimistic” views are in the Transportation (57.1%) and the Healthcare (44.4%) sectors.

Inflationary pressures continue to decrease marketing spending levels

Are current inflationary pressures impacting marketing spending levels in your company?

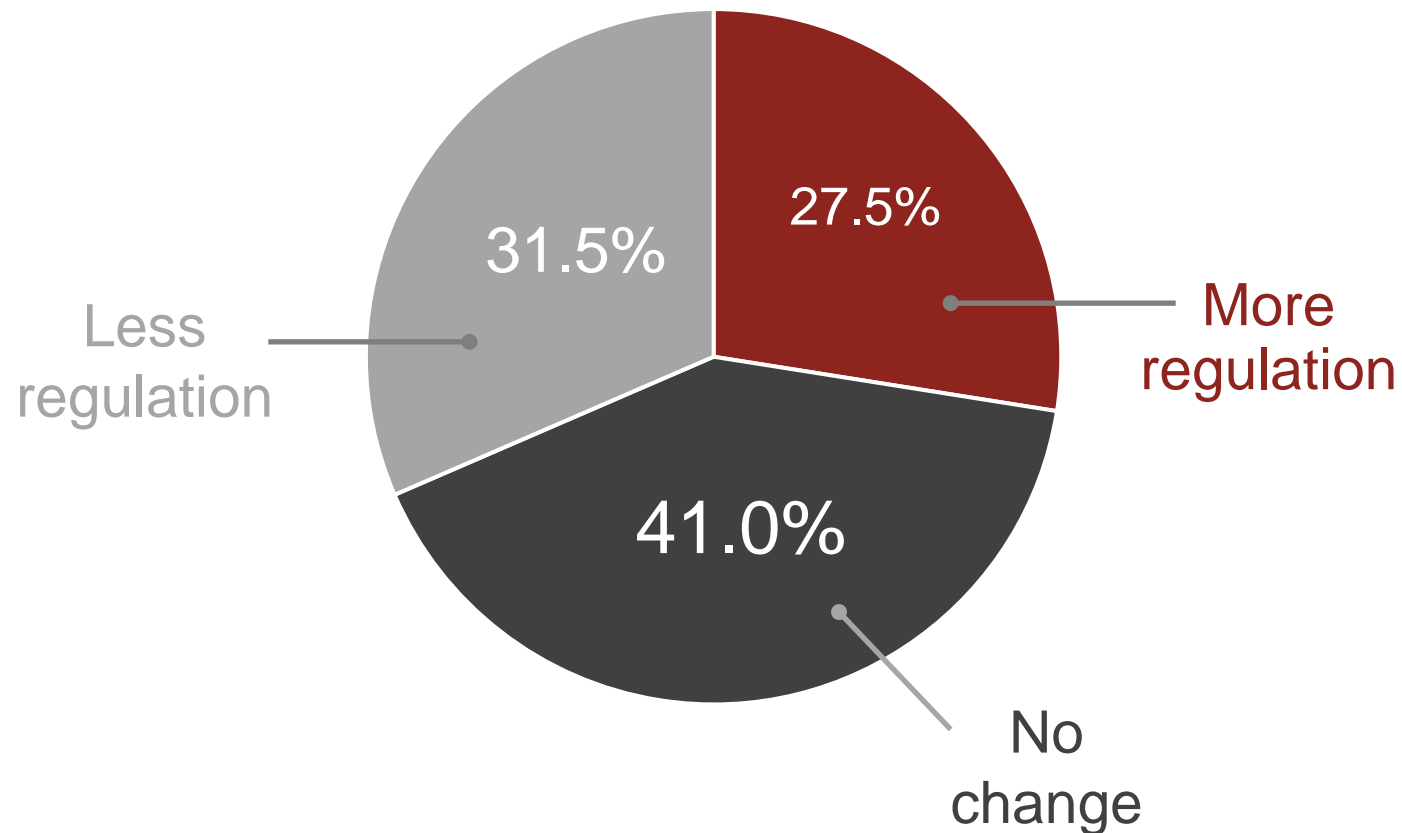


Insights

Although inflationary pressures continue to have a negative effect on marketing spending levels, these pressures are weakening as shown by the decrease from 48.7% reporting negative pressures down to 43.5%. Consistent with this view, more marketers are reporting "no impact" in 2025. There is, however, substantial heterogeneity among industry sectors. B2C companies have had a higher decrease in marketing spending with B2C Product at 47.8% and B2C Services at 47.1% compared to B2B Product at 40.2% and B2B Services at 43.1%. The Transportation (85.7%) and Communications / Media (70.0%) sectors have the largest decreases in marketing spending.

Marketing leaders do not believe 2025 will bring more regulation

Do you believe there will be more, less or no change in the amount of regulation for your company in 2025?

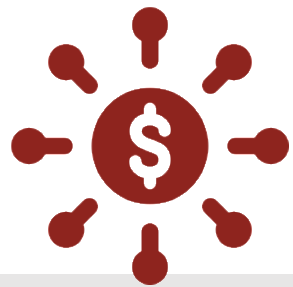


Insights

The largest number of marketing leaders (41%) anticipate that there will be no change to the amount of regulation for their companies in 2025. The economic sectors that have the highest amount of “no change” expected are B2B Product (43.3%) and B2B Services (45.6%). The economic sector with the highest percentage of “more regulation” of regulation is B2C Product (41.8%) while the highest percentage of “less regulation” is B2C Services (45.7%). The industry sectors with the most predicted “no change” to regulation are Mining / Construction (66.7%) and Education (60.0%). The industry sectors that have the highest percentage of “more regulation” are Consumer Packaged Goods (44.4%) and Pharma / Biotech (44.4%) while the highest percentage of “less regulation” is Energy (66.7%).

More regulation is expected to lead to a decrease in marketing spending while less regulation will have no impact on marketing spending

How will the change in regulation impact marketing spending levels in your company?



% leaders believe **more regulation** will... % leaders believe **less regulation** will...

	% leaders believe more regulation will...	% leaders believe less regulation will...
Increase marketing spending	20.3%	15.2%
Have no impact on marketing spending	33.3%	81.0%
Decrease marketing spending	46.4%	3.8%

Insights

Among the 27.5% of marketing leaders who believe there will be more regulation, the largest number (46.4%) believe it will decrease marketing spending, while 20.3% believe it will increase marketing spending. Larger companies, measured by sales revenue and number of employees, expect larger decreases as do the Education, Healthcare, Pharma / Biotech, and Consumer Packaged Goods sectors.



Customers and Channels

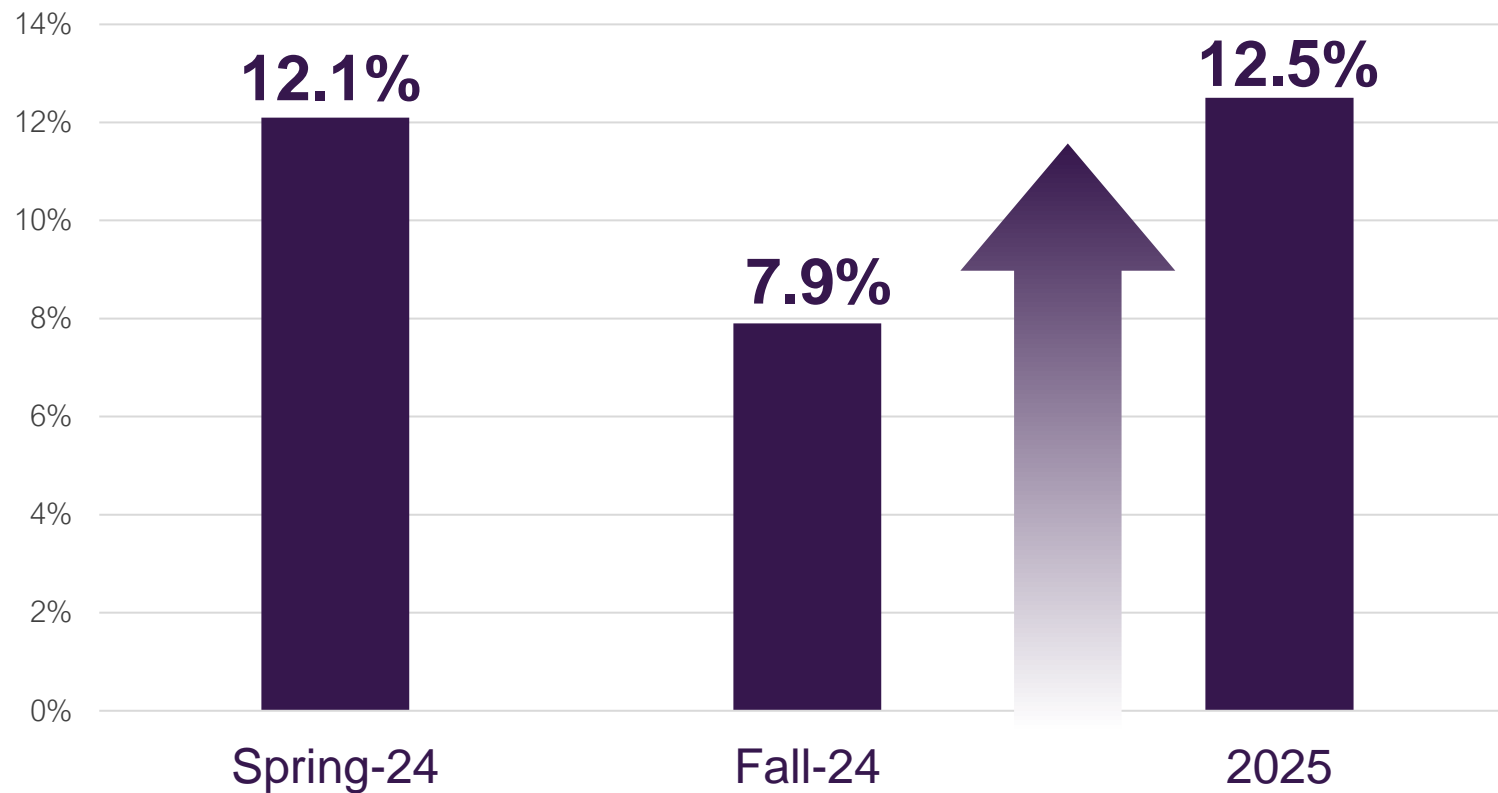
Marketers have enjoyed significant revenue growth in their largest market in 2025 (12.5%), up from Fall 2024 (7.9%) and returning to Spring 2024 levels of 12.1%. B2B companies experienced stronger growth (B2B Services: 20.4%, B2B Product: 13.3%) than B2C companies (B2C Services: 6.9%, B2C Product: 7.8%).

Superior product quality remains customers' top priority (35.5% of marketers reporting it as their customers' first priority), followed by low price (19.4%) and superior innovation (12.4%). Marketers rate their own performance on superior product quality and trusting relationships highly (6.1 for both categories where 0 is poor and 7 is excellent). They rate themselves lowest on low price performance (4.4).

Channel partner use has increased (66.5%) from Fall 2024 (61.5%), with B2C Product companies being the heaviest users (83.3%). Meanwhile, online sales represent 16.5% of total sales, a decrease from pandemic highs (19.4%) while remaining above pre-pandemic levels (9.9% in February 2019). Marketing leaders identify "improving data sharing" (19.9%) as the biggest challenge in managing channel partners, followed by "building trust and loyalty" (18.6%).

Revenue growth rebounds in the largest revenue market

By what percent are revenues in your largest revenue market growing or decreasing in size?



Economic Sector

B2B Product	13.3%
B2B Services	20.4%
B2C Product	7.8%
B2C Services	6.9%

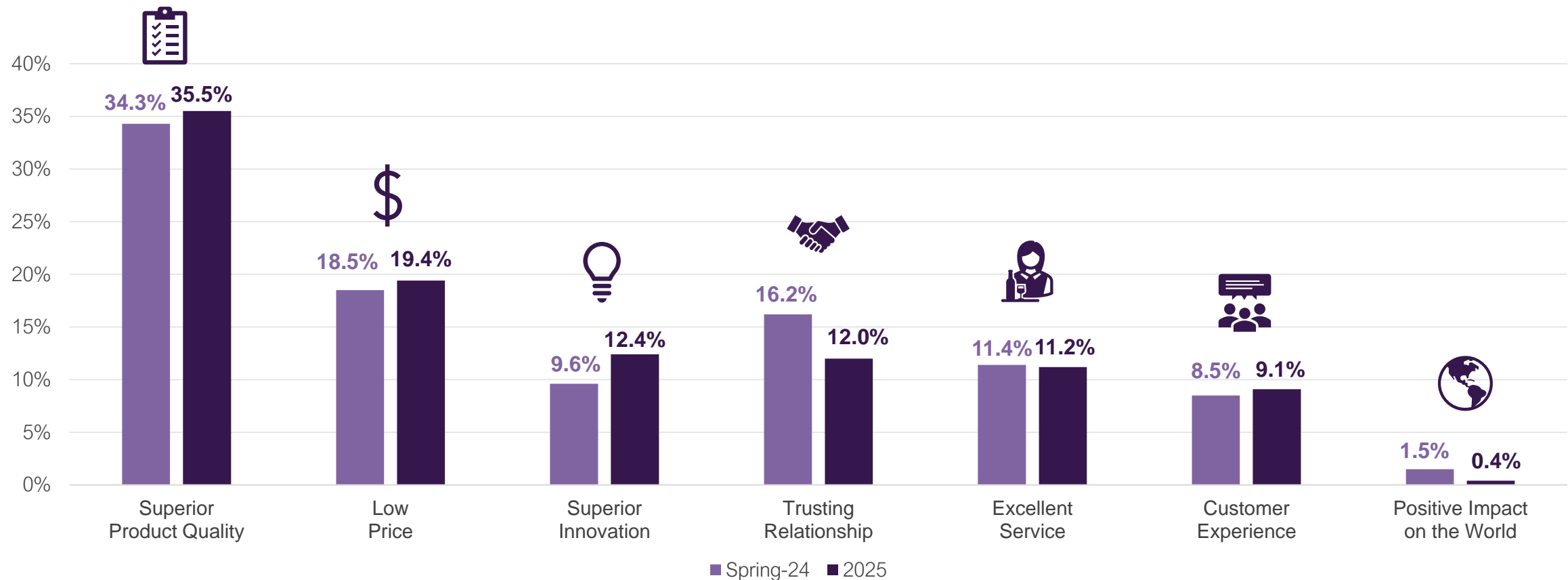
Insights

Revenue growth in largest revenue market (12.5%) rebounded back to the level witnessed in Spring-24 (12.1%). Among economic sectors, B2B companies saw higher revenue growth in their largest market than B2C companies.

The highest revenue growth in the largest market for industry sectors is Energy (46.8%). The only industry sector to experience a decrease in revenue is Communications / Media (-3.8%).

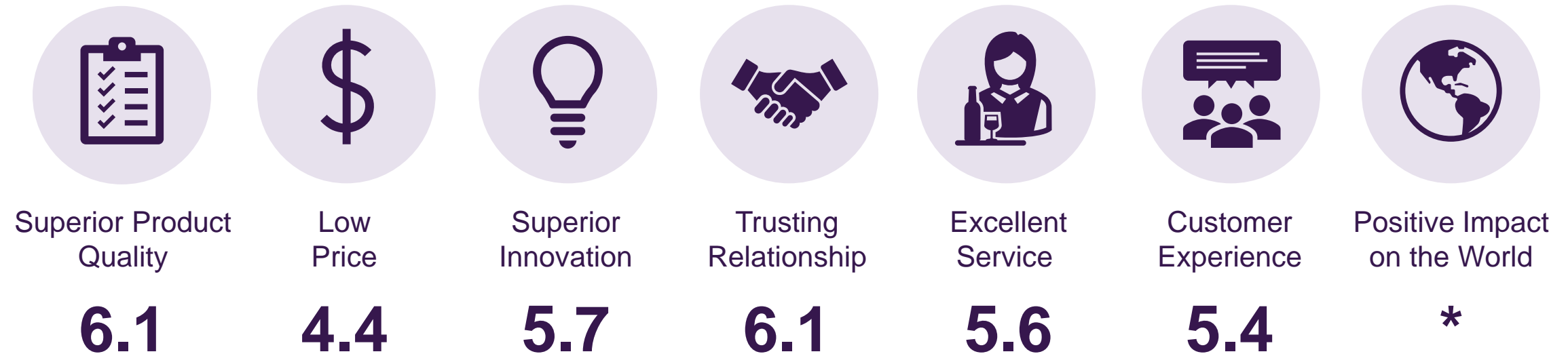
Superior product quality remains the top priority for customers

Rank your customers' top three priorities over the next 12 months. (% reporting 1st priority)



On average marketing leaders report that their companies are having a positive performance on their customer's top priority

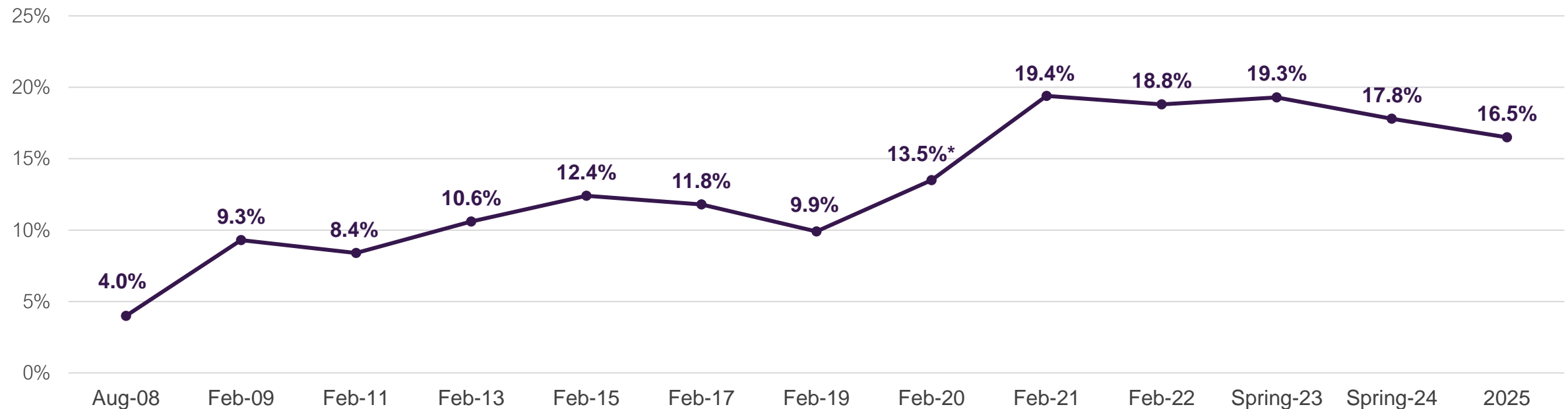
How well does your company perform on the customer's top priority of ...? (1=poorly, 7=excellent)



*Only 1 response received in 2025

2025 sales through internet, 16.5%, are lower than Covid onset in June 2020 but higher than pre-Covid levels

What percent of your company's sales occur online?



*February 2020 data were collected in January 2020 before pandemic lockdowns.

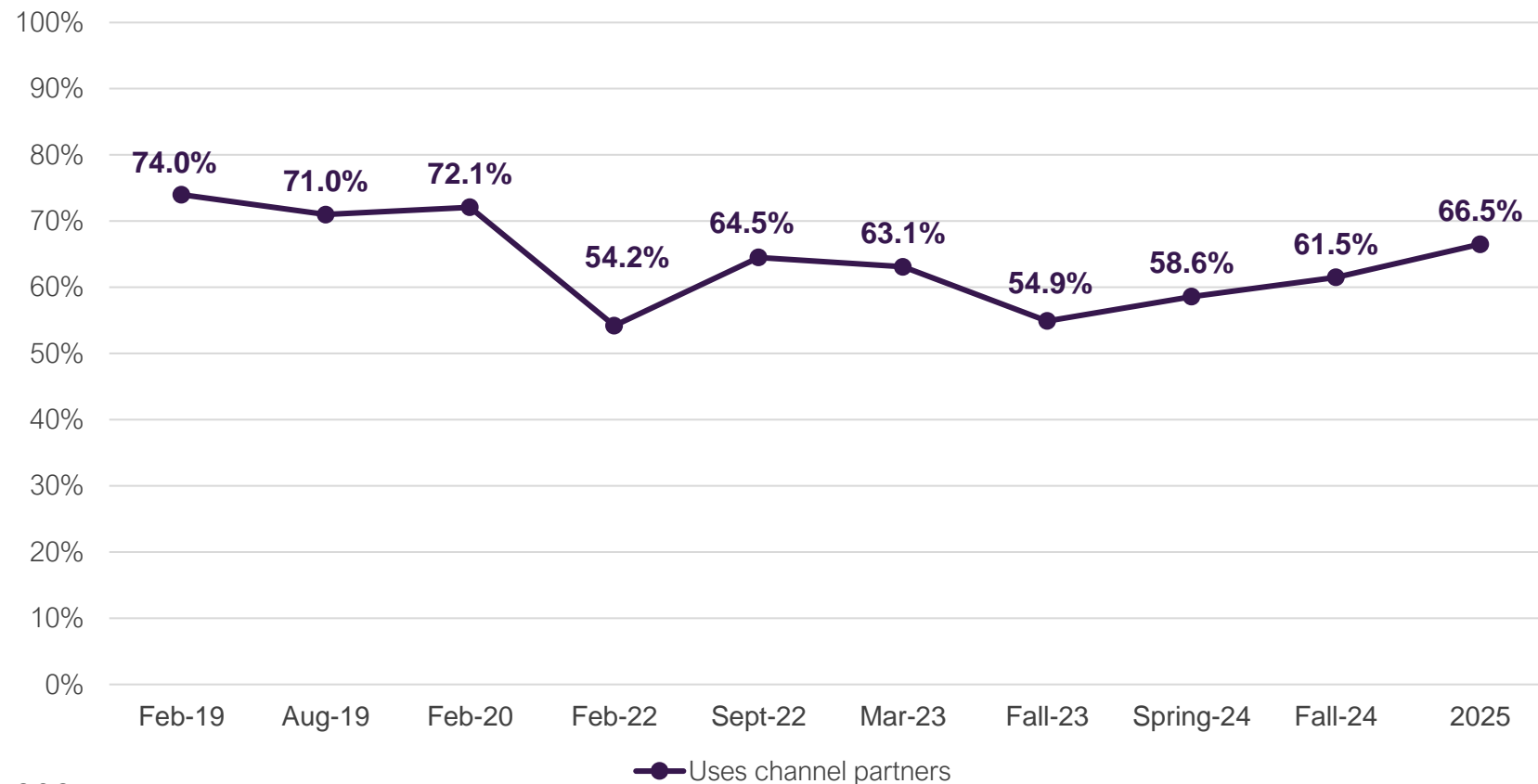


Insights

Sales through the internet (16.5%) have decreased 15% since the February 2021 high of 19.4%. This is presumably due to individuals being more comfortable with shopping in person and spending more time outside the home—both of which were severely constrained during the pandemic. In addition to this change, other CMO Survey results show that during this time, nearly two-thirds of companies have increased the number of channels they use. Further, only 6.7% of companies report that their face-to-face (F2F) channels have become completely digital—meaning most have stayed F2F—and 28% of companies are opening new F2F channels. These are likely reasons for the drop-off and lack of growth.

Channel partner use has rebounded, but not back to pre-Covid levels

Will you use a channel or go directly to market?



Economic Sector

	Channel	No channel
B2B Product	65.3%	34.7%
B2B Services	50.0%	50.0%
B2C Product	83.3%	16.7%
B2C Services	65.9%	34.1%

Internet Sales

	Channel	No channel
0%	54.7%	45.3%
1-10%	71.8%	28.2%
11-49%	68.3%	31.7%
50-99%	73.1%	26.9%
100%	75.0%	25.0%

Marketing leaders report biggest challenge in managing channel partners is “improving data sharing between our company and partners”

What is the biggest challenge in managing your channel partners? (check the most important challenge)



Improving data sharing between our company and partners

19.9%

Top Economic Sector:

B2C Product (25.5%)

Top Industry Sector:

Mining / Construction (100.0%)



Building trust and loyalty with partners

18.6%

B2B Services (28.0%)

Education & Energy (50.0%)



Keeping channel costs low

17.9%

B2C Product (35.3%)

Retail / Wholesale (57.9%)



Partners are growing in power

16.0%

B2B Services (28.0%)

Pharma / Biotech (46.2%)



Ensuring consistency in how partners represent our brand

14.1%

B2C Services (19.0%)

Transportation (66.7%)



Getting quality products and / or services from partners

13.5%

B2C Services (23.8%)

Education (50.0%)



Marketing Budgets

Marketing budgets as a percent of revenues and overall company budgets show signs of recovery. Smaller, higher online sales, and B2C companies have the largest marketing budgets as a percent of revenues and overall budgets.

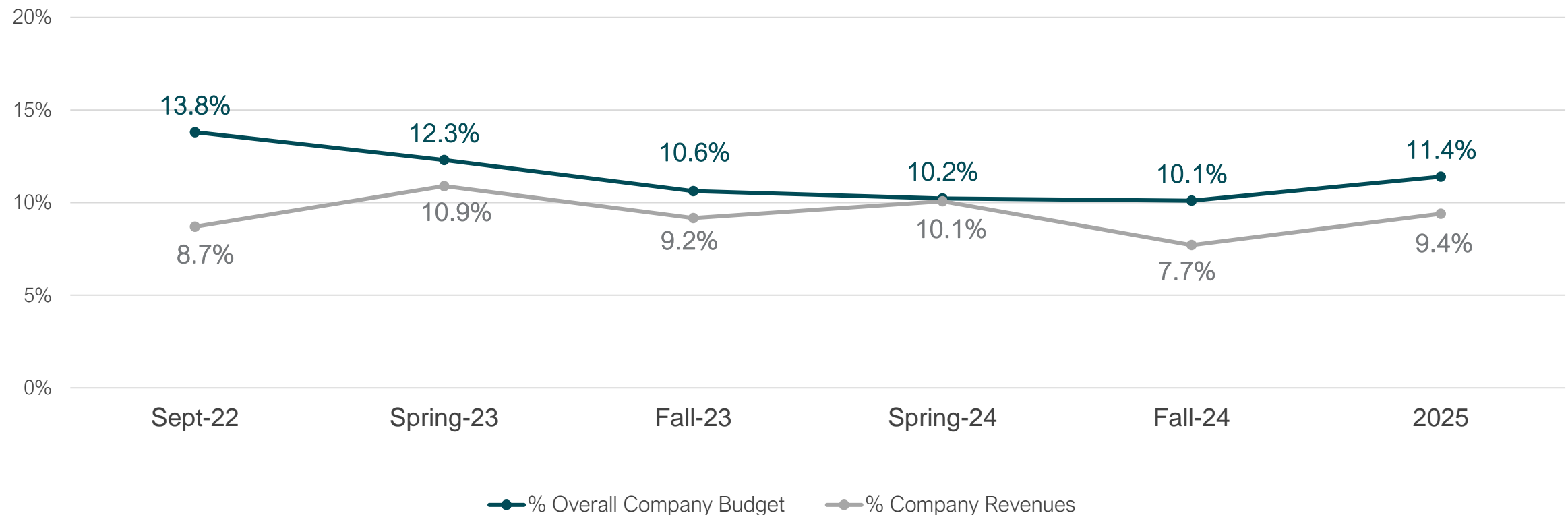
Overall marketing spending increased by 3.3% over the prior 12 months, with digital marketing spending up 7.3%. These growth rates are substantially weaker than in the Fall of 2024 when they were 5.8% and 11.1%, respectively. Marketers predict stronger budget growth, with 8.9% increase in overall marketing spending and 11.9% growth in digital marketing spending over the next year. Spending on customer relationship management, brand building, customer experience, and new products and services is also expected to grow at slower rates in the next year.

Traditional advertising spending is once again in negative growth territory (-0.3%)—a trend we have witnessed over the last decade with a few exceptions. Social media spending decreased to 11.3% of marketing budgets, down from 12.1% in Fall 2024, though marketers predict this will increase to 13.3% in the next 12 months and 18.4% in five years—expectations that CMO Survey research finds have not been met over time.

Marketing budgets as a percent of revenues and company budgets rebound

Marketing expenses account for what percent of your company's overall budget?
 Marketing expenses account for what percent of your company's sales revenues?

Company and industry breakouts on next slide



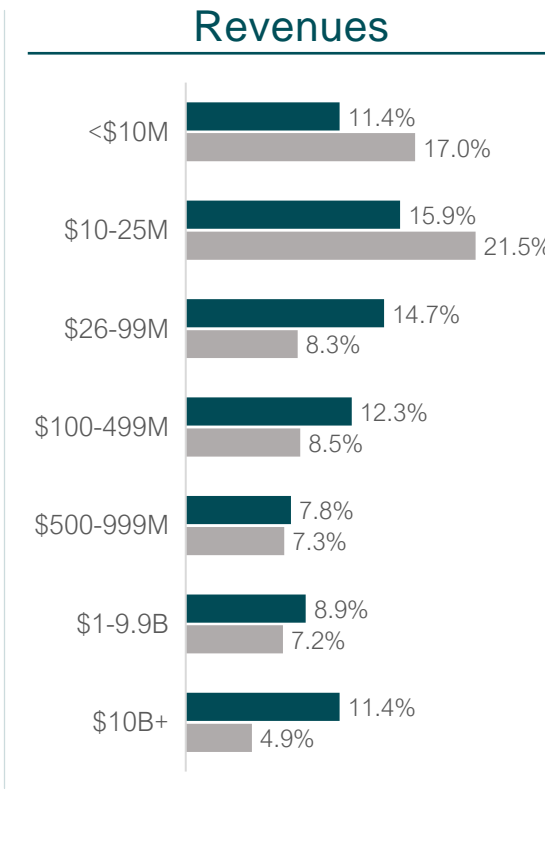
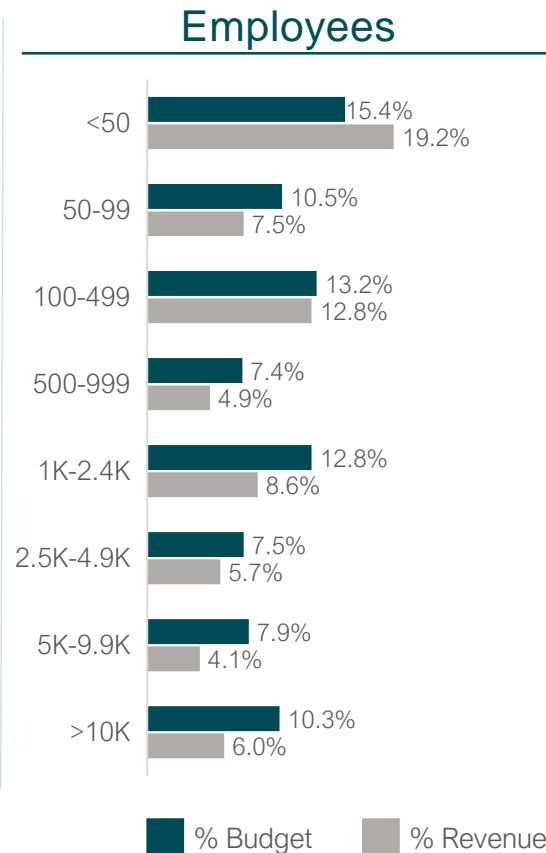
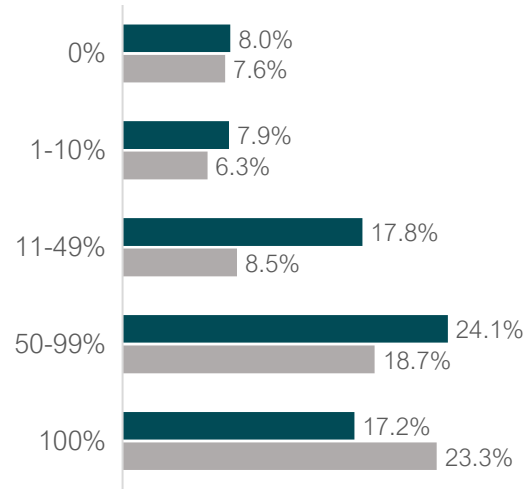
How marketing budgets vary by company and industry

Marketing expenses account for what percent of your company's overall budget? of revenues?

11.4% of overall budget

9.4% of revenues

Online Sales



Economic Sector

	% Budget	% Revenues
B2B Product	7.4%	6.4%
B2B Services	6.7%	9.0%
B2C Product	21.5%	15.5%
B2C Services	11.7%	6.0%

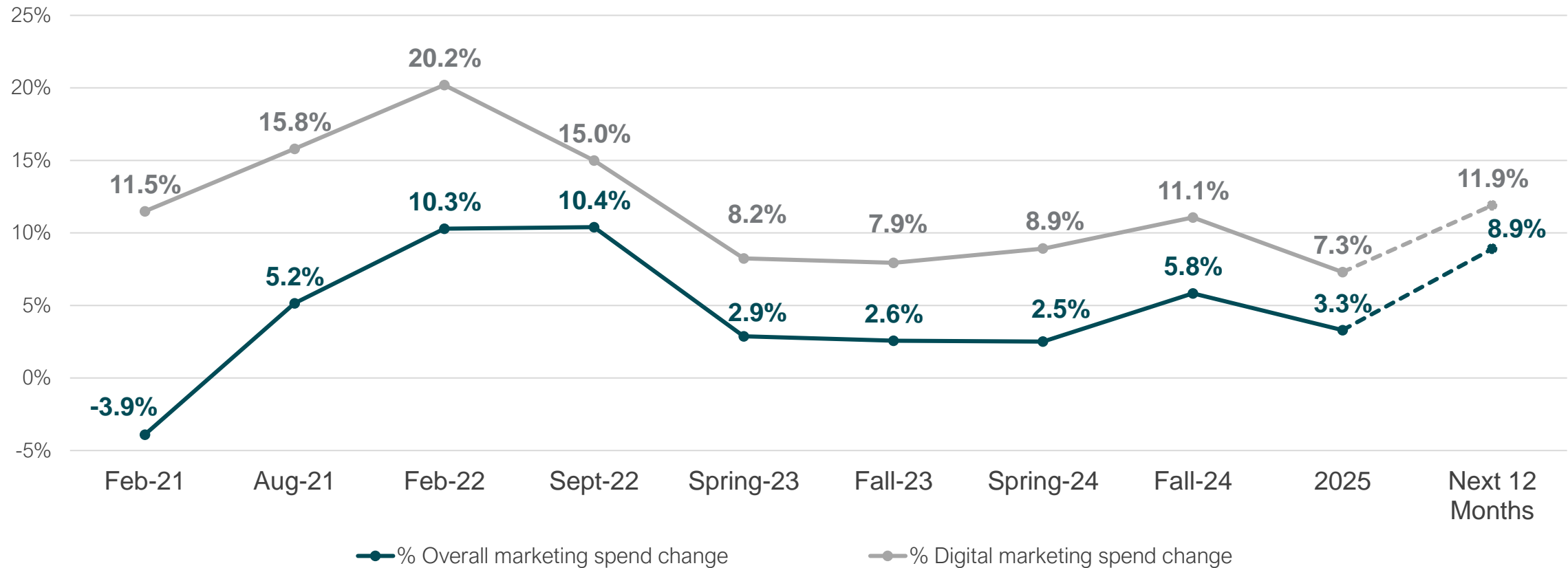


Industry Sector

	% Budget	% Revenues
Top Sectors	Consumer Packaged Goods (26.0%)	Communications / Media (27.4%)
Bottom Sectors	Mining / Construction (1.5%)	Energy (1.0%)

Overall marketing spending and digital marketing spending growth rates slow, but are predicted to increase in 12 months

By what percent has your overall marketing spending (digital marketing spending) changed in the prior 12 months? Expected change during the next 12 months?



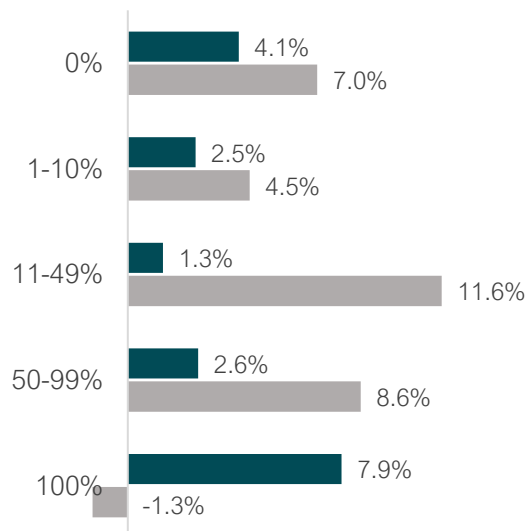
How marketing spend varies by company and industry characteristics

By what percent has your overall marketing spending (digital marketing spending) changed in the prior 12 months?

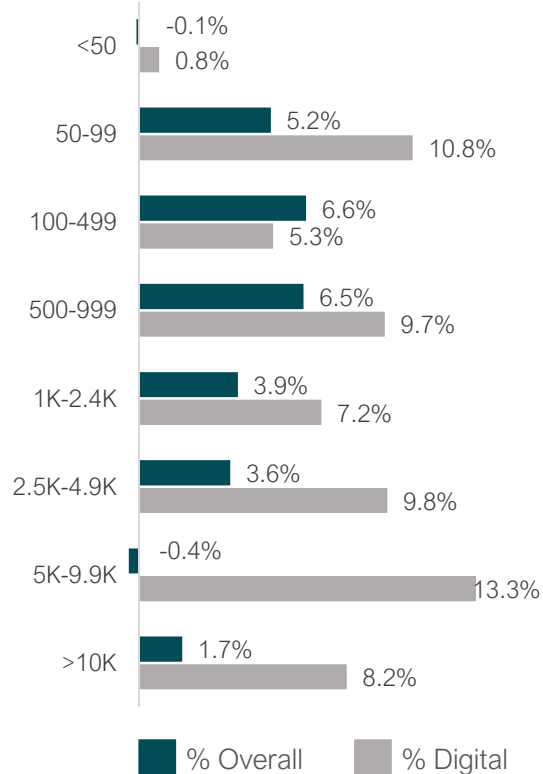
3.3% of overall spend

7.3% of digital spend

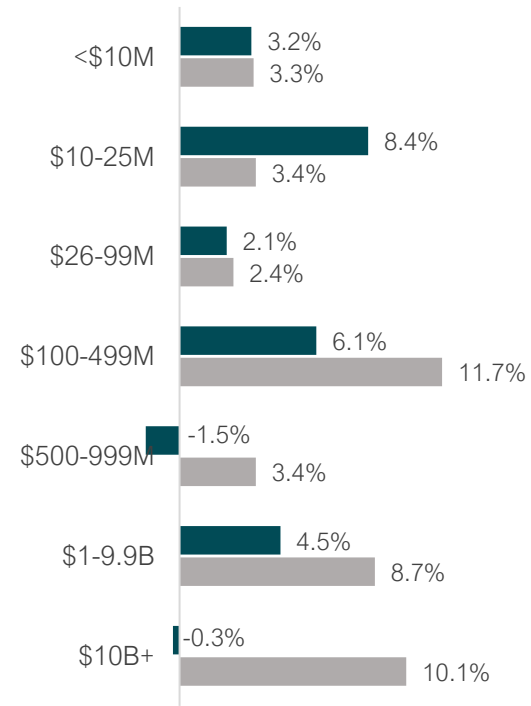
Online Sales



Employees



Revenues



Economic Sector

	% Overall	% Digital
B2B Product	2.5%	5.9%
B2B Services	4.3%	6.0%
B2C Product	5.2%	8.8%
B2C Services	1.2%	10.4%

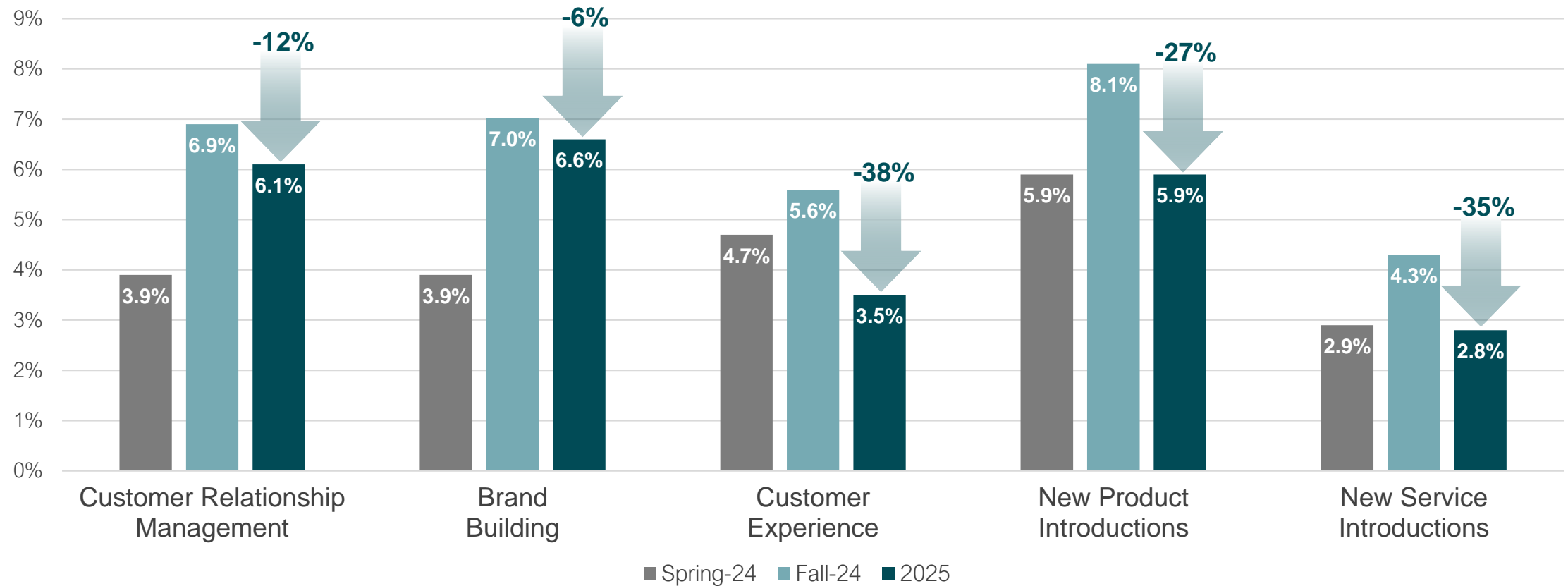


Industry Sector

	% Overall	% Digital
Top Sectors	Tech / Software / Platform (8.2%)	Consumer Packaged Goods (14.6%)
Bottom Sectors	Mining / Construction (-12.5%)	Energy (-14.2%)

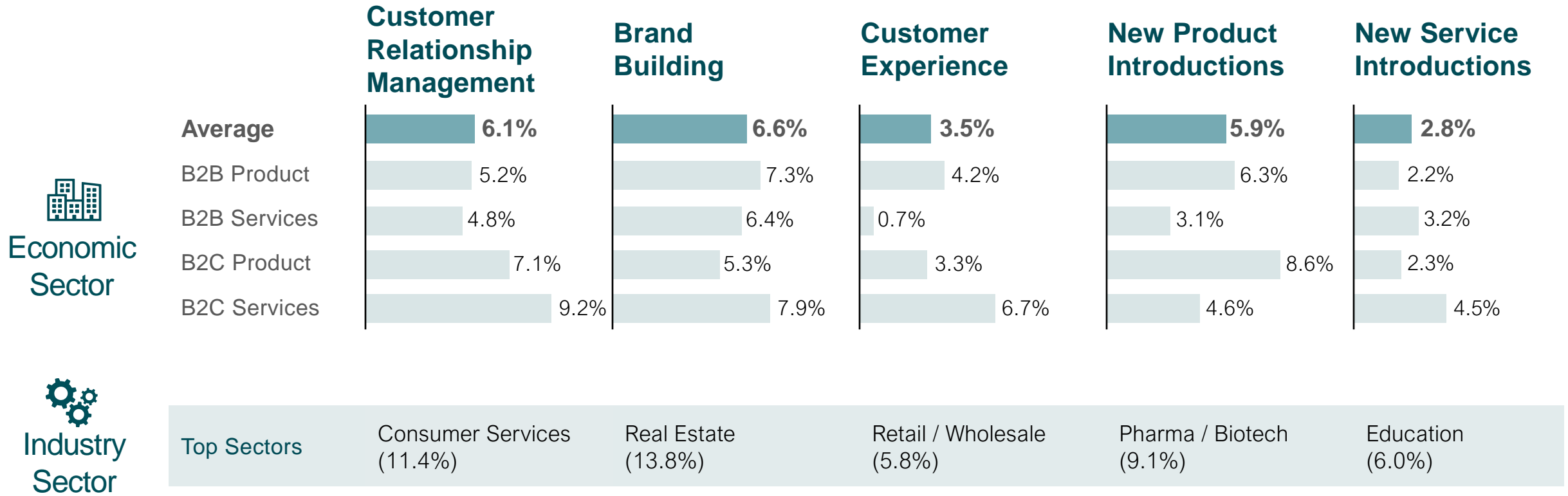
Marketing spending growth drops across all areas; customer experience has the largest decrease at 38%

Relative to the prior 12 months, by what percent do you expect your marketing budget to change in the next 12 months in each area?



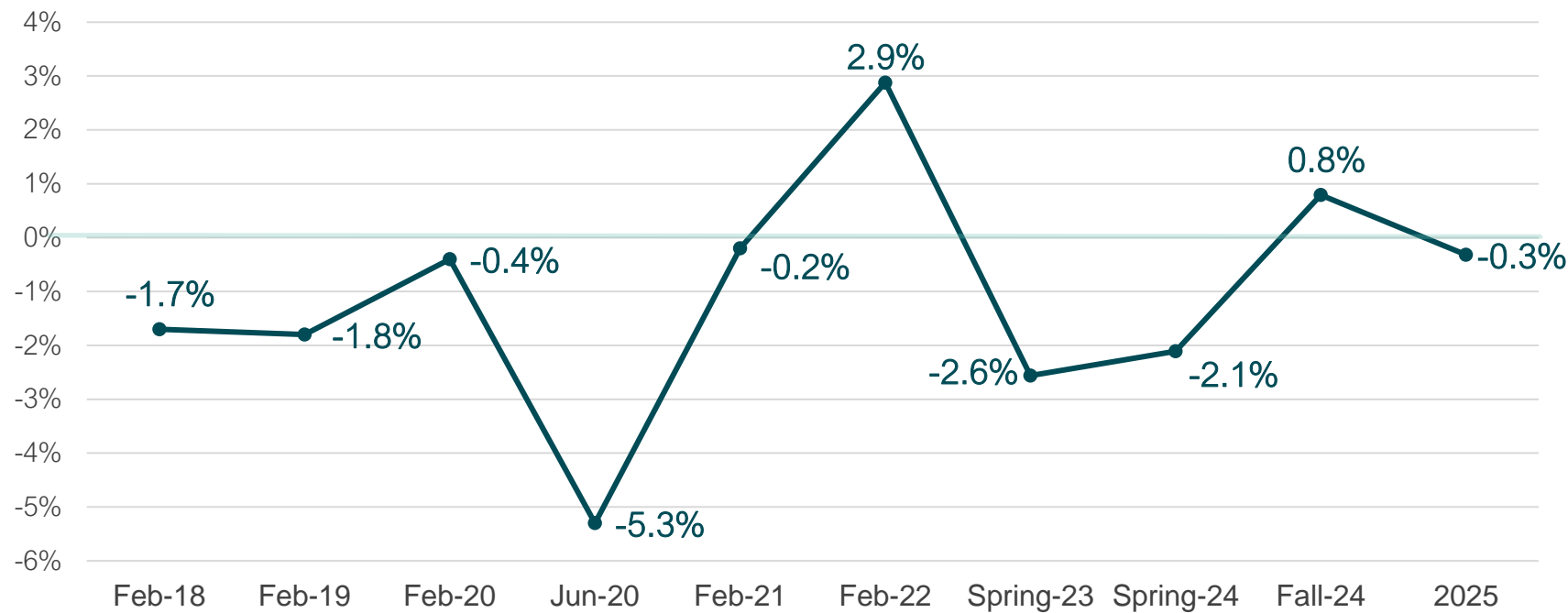
How projected marketing budgets vary by sector

Relative to the prior 12 months, by what percent do you expect your marketing budget to change in the next 12 months in each area?



Marketing leaders anticipate that marketing budget for traditional advertising will decline 0.3% in the next 12 months

Relative to the prior 12 months, by what percent do you expect your marketing budget to change in the next 12 months in traditional advertising?



Economic Sector

B2B Product	0.6%
B2B Services	0.4%
B2C Product	-2.7%
B2C Services	1.2%



Industry Sector

Increase in traditional advertising budget

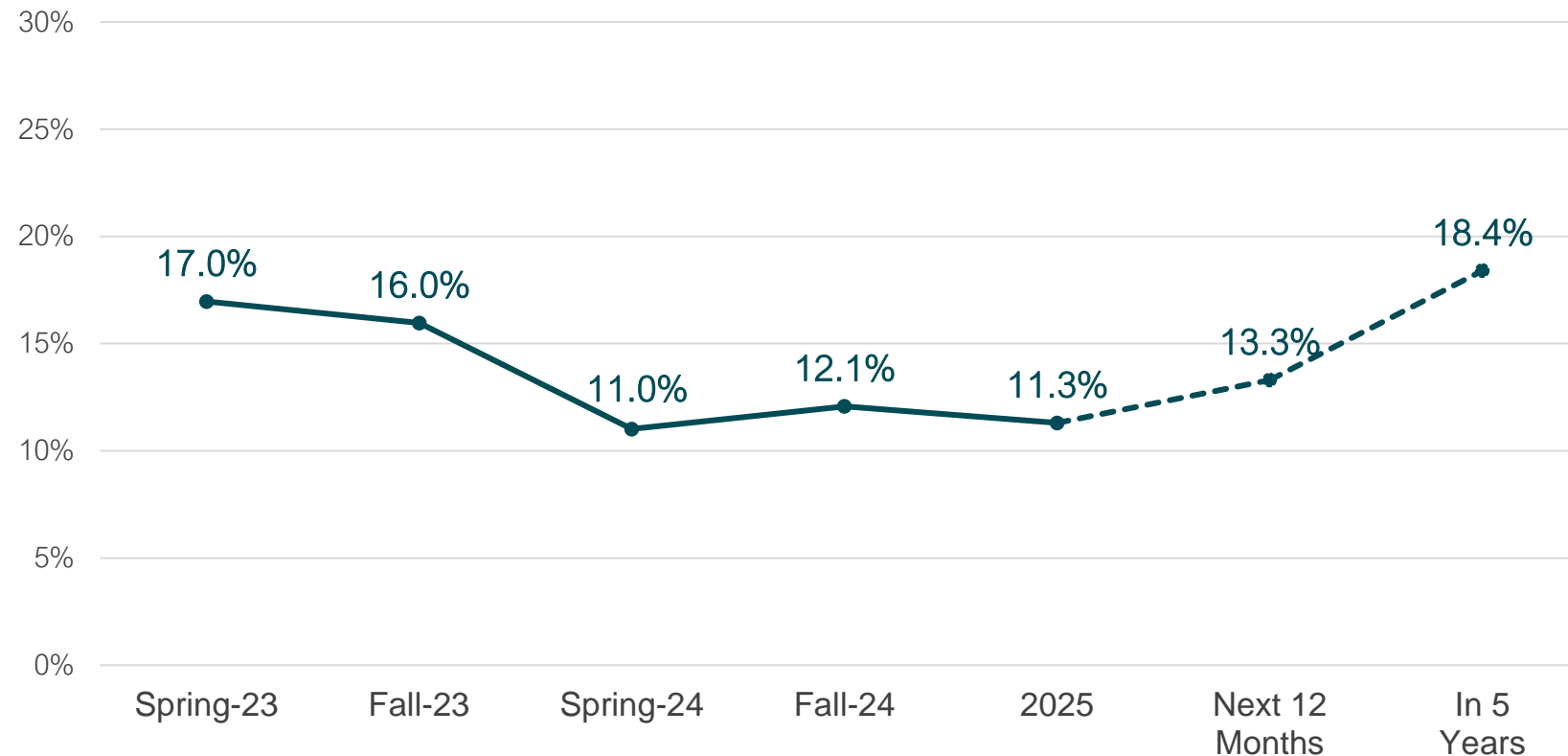
- Education (6.4%)
- Pharma / Biotech (4.7%)
- Banking / Finance / Insurance (2.5%)
- Real Estate (2.5%)

Decrease in traditional advertising budget

- Communications (-7.7%)
- Consumer Packaged Goods (-6.2%)
- Manufacturing (-3.4%)

Social media spending declines again—marketers expect future growth

What percent of your marketing budget are you currently spending on social media? What percent will you spend in the next 12 months? 5 years?



Insights

Marketing leaders continue to remain tepid regarding social media spend with the third decrease since 2023. Among the economic sectors, B2C Product companies are the most bullish on social spend with 19.2% of budgets currently spent on social media and 21.5% and 27.7% expected in 1 and 5 years, respectively. Despite this decline, marketers remain optimistic that this spend will increase in the future. Looking back at these expectations over the last few years, we find they were not met. In the Spring of 2024, marketers predicted spending would reach 12.2% in the next year, but the actual level remains lower at 11.3%. Similarly, in the Spring of 2023, leaders reported they would spend 20.3% in the next year, but actually experienced a decrease to 11%.



Marketing Leadership

“Demonstrating the impact of marketing actions on financial outcomes” (64.0%) remains the top challenge for marketing leaders, similar to 2023. This challenge is stronger for B2B companies than B2C companies. Consistent with that, marketers experience increased pressure to prove the value of marketing from the CEO (61%), Board (50%), and CFO (63%) compared to Fall 2023 when these levels were 51%, 33%, and 52%, respectively. Marketers report more optimism about a top marketing leader becoming CEO, with 43.4% rating it is “likely” or “very likely.”

Marketing and other company leaders agree on the importance of innovation, growth, and profitability as key objectives for the marketing function. They are not aligned on defending their companies market position and investing in talent/capabilities (which marketers value more) and attracting investors and business partners (which other company leaders value more).

Marketing’s role has broadened and its influence strengthened within organizations over the last five years. Marketing responsibilities increased in areas such as digital marketing, brand, and positioning, while some of the decreases include revenue growth, new product/service introductions, and market selection. Nearly 70% of marketers believe the title for a senior marketing leader will not be different in the next five years, with Chief Growth Officer and Chief Customer Officer rated as the most likely alternatives. The median number of indirect reports to marketing leaders has increased to 9, while direct reports remain stable at 5.

“Demonstrating the impact of marketing actions” remains the #1 top challenge while “focusing data and analytics on the most important marketing problems” has risen to #2

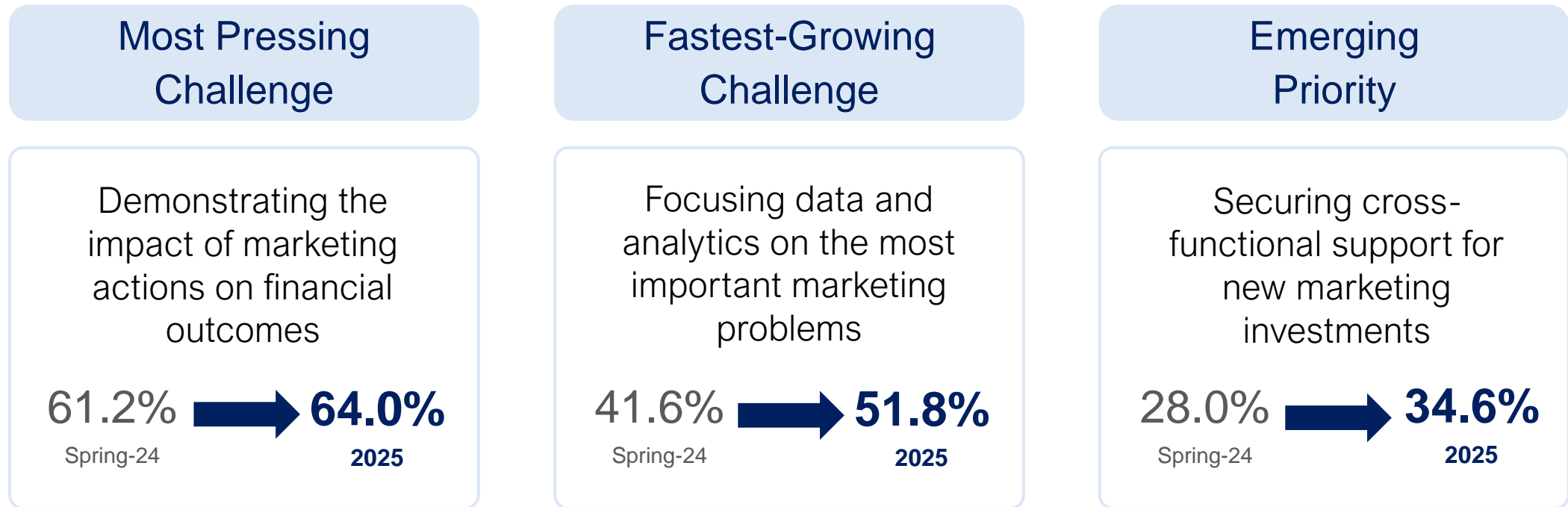
Which activities does your senior marketing leader find challenging to implement on a regular basis?

	Activity	2023	2025	% change
Most Pressing Challenge	Demonstrating the impact of marketing actions on financial outcomes	61.2%	64.0%	+4.6%
	Focusing data and analytics on the most important marketing problems	41.6%	51.8%	+24.5%
	Linking marketing investments to important business objectives	45.3%	41.2%	-9.1%
	Leveraging technology to improve customer value	40.7%	37.7%	-7.4%
Emerging Priority	Communicating the role of the brand in business decisions	36.9%	37.3%	+1.2%
	Securing cross-functional support for new marketing investments	28.0%	34.6%	+23.6%
	Infusing customer’s point of view in business decisions	26.2%	24.1%	-8.0%
	Using business terminology that resonates outside of the marketing function	15.4%	12.7%	-17.5%

Fastest-Growing Challenge

Top marketing challenges across sectors

Which activities does your senior marketing leader find challenging to implement on a regular basis?




Top Economic Sector: B2B Services (76.9%)
Top Industry Sector: Energy (83.3%)

B2C Services (62.5%)
 Banking / Finance / Insurance (72.0%)


B2B Product (42.0%)
 Mining / Construction (66.7%)

Marketing and company leaders align on innovation, growth & profitability—but key differences remain

This question asked marketing leaders to rank order the most important objective for the marketing function in 2025 (rank the top three, where 1 is the most important objective) and how they believe other company leaders would rank. Six categories showed remarkable consistency with innovation, growth and profitability as most important to both marketing and other company leaders. Differences emerged on the importance of “define and defend the company’s market position relative to competition” and “invest in talent and/or capabilities,” which marketing leaders believe are more important and “attract investors and/or partners,” which was prioritized by company leaders.



Agreement between marketing and company leaders



Disagreement between marketing and company leaders

Shared higher priorities		Shared lower priorities				Marketing priorities		Company priority
Innovate and grow the company	Maximize company profitability	Build, maintain, and/or repair brand reputation	Define and deliver value that customers want and consider fair	Maximize efficiency of marketing spending	Cut marketing costs; reduce budget	Invest in new talent and/or capabilities	Define and defend market position relative to competition	Attract investors and/or business partners
								

Marketing responsibilities mixed

What is marketing primarily responsible for in your company?

Red reflects a decrease and **Green** reflects an increase of more than 1% between Spring 2024 and Spring 2025.

Activity	Spring-24	2025
Digital Marketing	87.2%	91.9%
Brand	87.2%	89.8%
Advertising	83.1%	85.6%
Social Media	82.2%	80.1%
Marketing Analytics	76.3%	76.3%
Positioning	66.2%	75.0%
Promotion	69.4%	70.8%
Marketing Research	70.3%	69.1%
Marketing Technology	65.8%	68.6%
Lead Generation	70.8%	64.8%
Public Relations	60.3%	62.3%
Competitive Intelligence	47.0%	51.3%
Customer Insight	54.8%	47.9%
Customer Experience	43.8%	40.3%
Customer Relationship Management	36.1%	36.4%

Activity	Spring-24	2025
Market Entry Strategies	34.2%	33.9%
e-commerce	32.0%	32.6%
Revenue Growth	41.1%	32.2%
New Products or New Services	31.1%	28.8%
Innovation	28.3%	26.3%
Pricing	25.1%	25.8%
Sales	24.2%	19.5%
Market Selection	23.7%	16.9%
Talent Acquisition & Retention	19.2%	12.7%
Privacy	11.4%	11.9%
Customer Service	9.6%	11.4%
Sustainability	9.1%	8.9%
Distribution	4.1%	7.2%
Stock Market Performance*	1.4%	-

*No responses received in 2025

“Enjoys a challenge” is the top trait for senior marketing leaders while “managing marketing as a growth engine” is the weakest skill

Rate yourself/your senior marketing leader on the following traits and skills. (1=weak to 7=excellent)



Top Traits & Skills

Enjoys a challenge
Agile when change is required

Moderate Traits & Skills

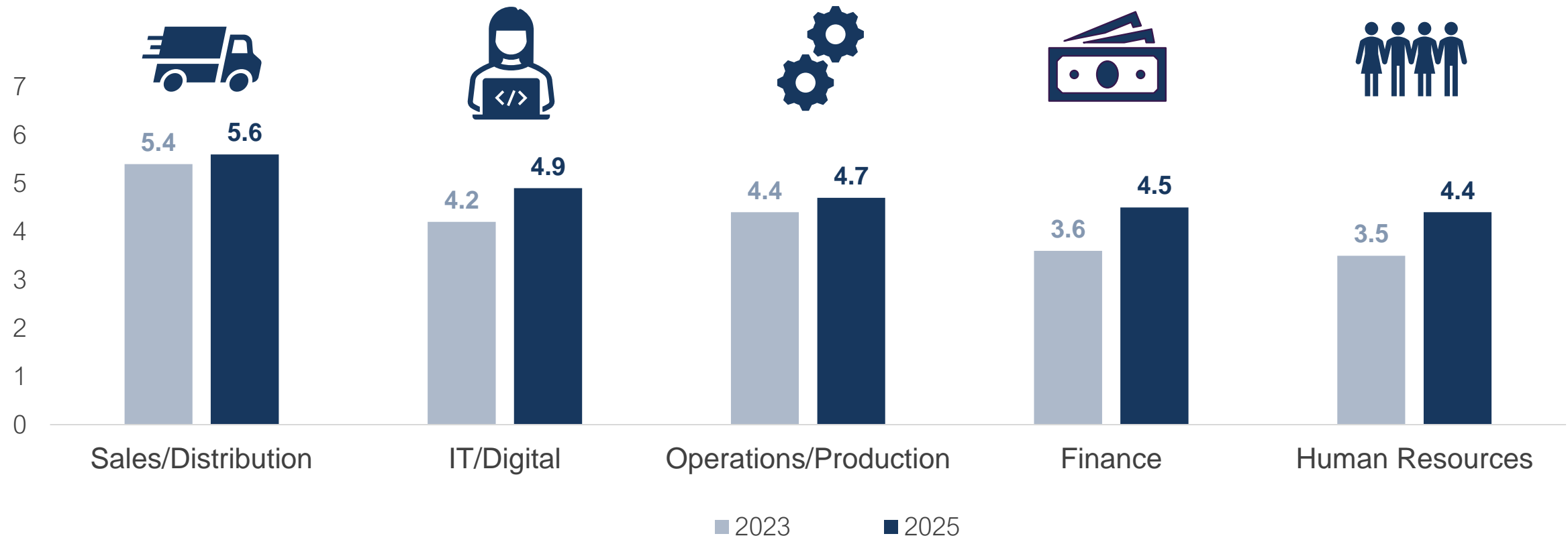
- Building relationships with members of C-suite
- Resilient when facing threats
- Curiosity
- Leading, not just executing
- Fostering a customer-first culture

Weaker Traits & Skills

- Enabling talent
- Developing marketing capabilities around key success factors from the company
- Able to balance the short-term and the long-run
- Able to resolve ambiguity
- Managing marketing as a growth engine

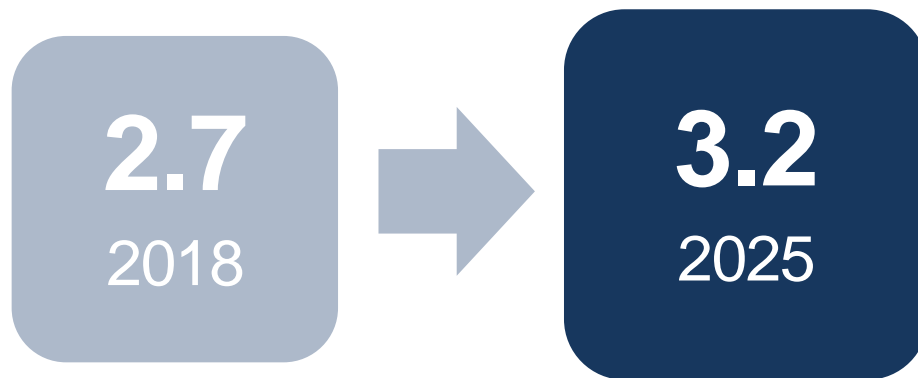
Marketers have improved cross-functional relationships to build brands

Rate how well marketing works with different functions to build your company's brand. (1=very little, 7=a great deal)



Marketing's role has broadened over the last five years

How has marketing's role within your organization changed in the last five years?
 (-7=Significantly narrowed, 7=Significantly broadened)



Change in marketing's role within the organization over the last 5 years

Economic Sector

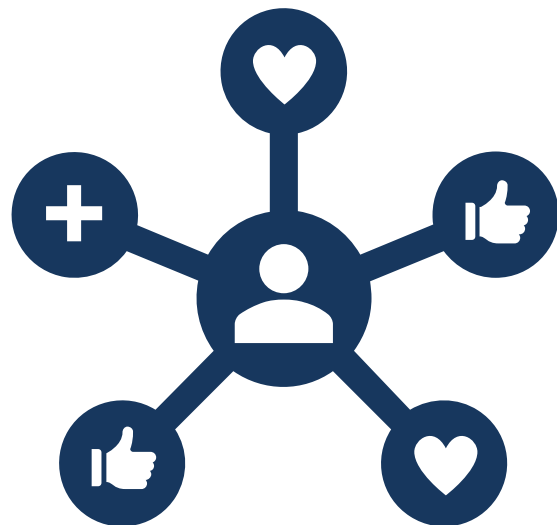
	2025	2018
B2B Product	3.1	2.2
B2B Services	3.4	2.9
B2C Product	3.1	2.7
B2C Services	3.6	2.4

Revenues

	2025	2018
<25M	1.8	1.9
\$26-99M	3.3	2.8
\$100-499M	3.6	2.9
\$500-900M	3.5	3.4
\$1-9.9B	4.0	3.3
>\$10B	2.9	2.7

Marketing's influence has slightly strengthened over the last five years

How has marketing's influence within your organization changed in the last five years?
 (-7=Significantly weakened, 0=No change, 7=Significantly strengthened)



2.9

Change in marketer's influence within the organization over the last 5 years

Economic Sector

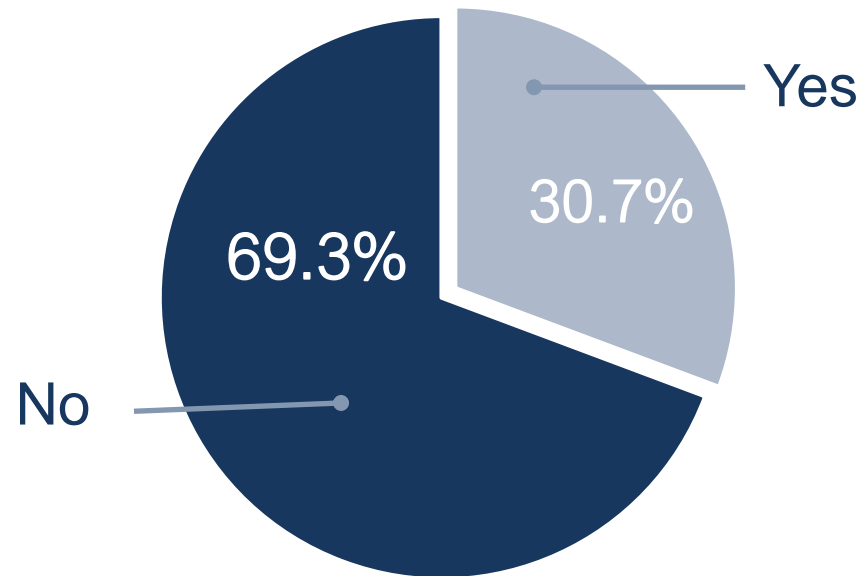
B2B Product	2.7
B2B Services	2.9
B2C Product	2.9
B2C Services	3.2

Number of Employees

<50	2.2
50 – 99	2.0
100 – 499	3.3
500 – 999	3.9
1,000 – 2,499	2.8
2,500 – 4,999	3.9
5,000 – 9,999	4.0
10,000+	2.3

In the next five years, senior marketing leader titles may include customer experience, growth, and strategy titles

Do you think the title for the senior marketing leader in your company will be different in 5 years?



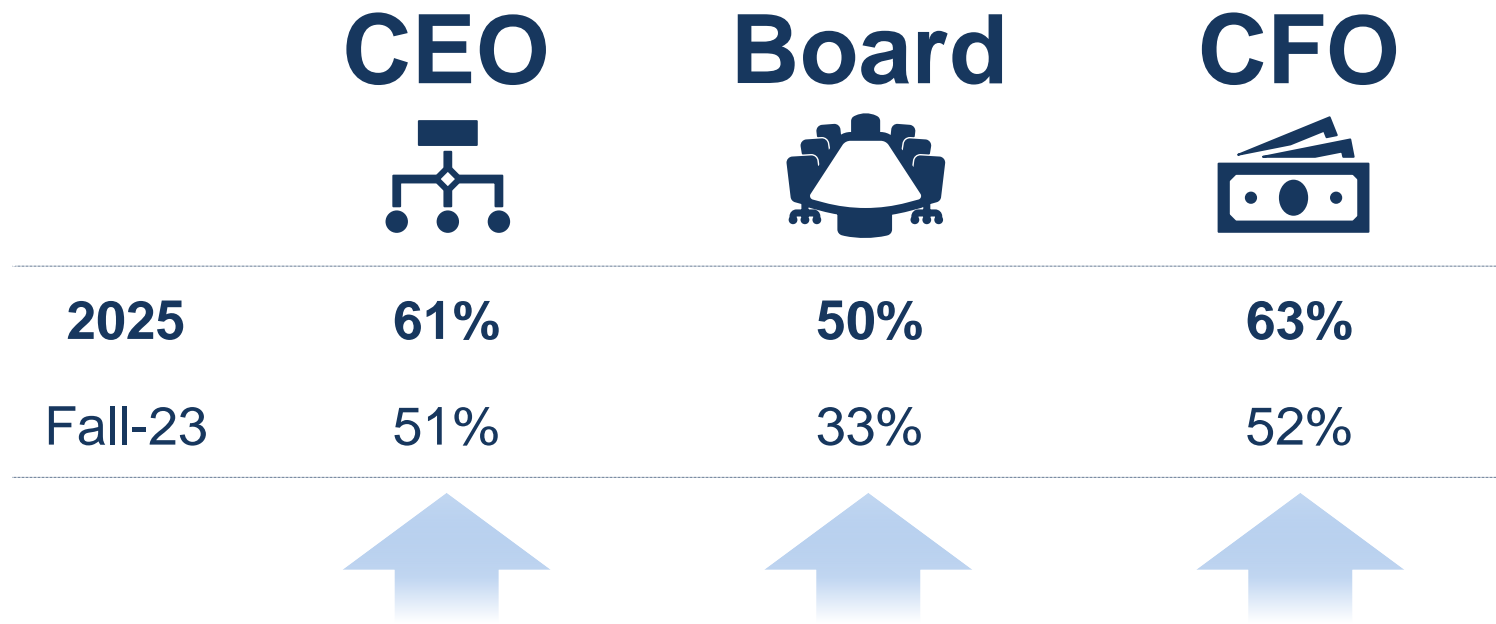
30.7% of marketers believe the title for the senior marketing leader will be different in 5 years

If yes, what will that title be?



Marketers experience increased pressure from the CEO, Board, and CFO

Rate whether marketing feels increasing pressure from the following leaders to prove the value of marketing (% reporting yes).



Economic Sector

	CEO	Board	CFO
B2B Products	63.9%	43.5%	55.6%
B2B Services	56.3%	28.6%	58.3%
B2C Products	65.6%	67.9%	77.0%
B2C Services	56.0%	44.4%	60.0%

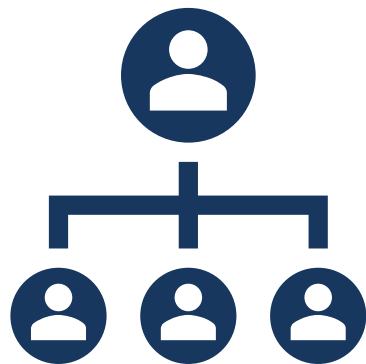


Insights

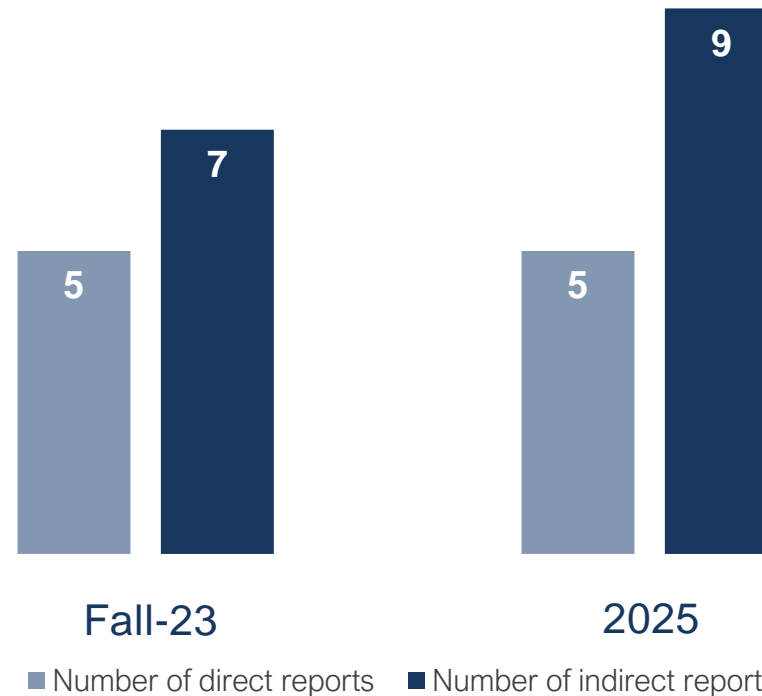
Marketing leaders are reporting more pressure from CEOs, CFOs, and Boards compared to 2023 reports. Since Fall 2023, pressure from the CEO has increased by 20%, the CFO by 52%, and the Board by 21%. B2C Product marketers have experienced an increase above this average as they face even higher pressures from CEOs (65.6%), Boards (67.9%), and CFOs (77%)

The median number of indirect reports for marketers increases while the number of direct reports remains the same

How many direct and indirect reports do you have?



The number of indirect reports increased by 29% since Fall-23



Economic Sector

	Direct Reports	Indirect Reports
B2B Products	5	9
B2B Services	5	5
B2C Products	6	9
B2C Services	6	13

Industry Sector

Top industries with most Direct Reports

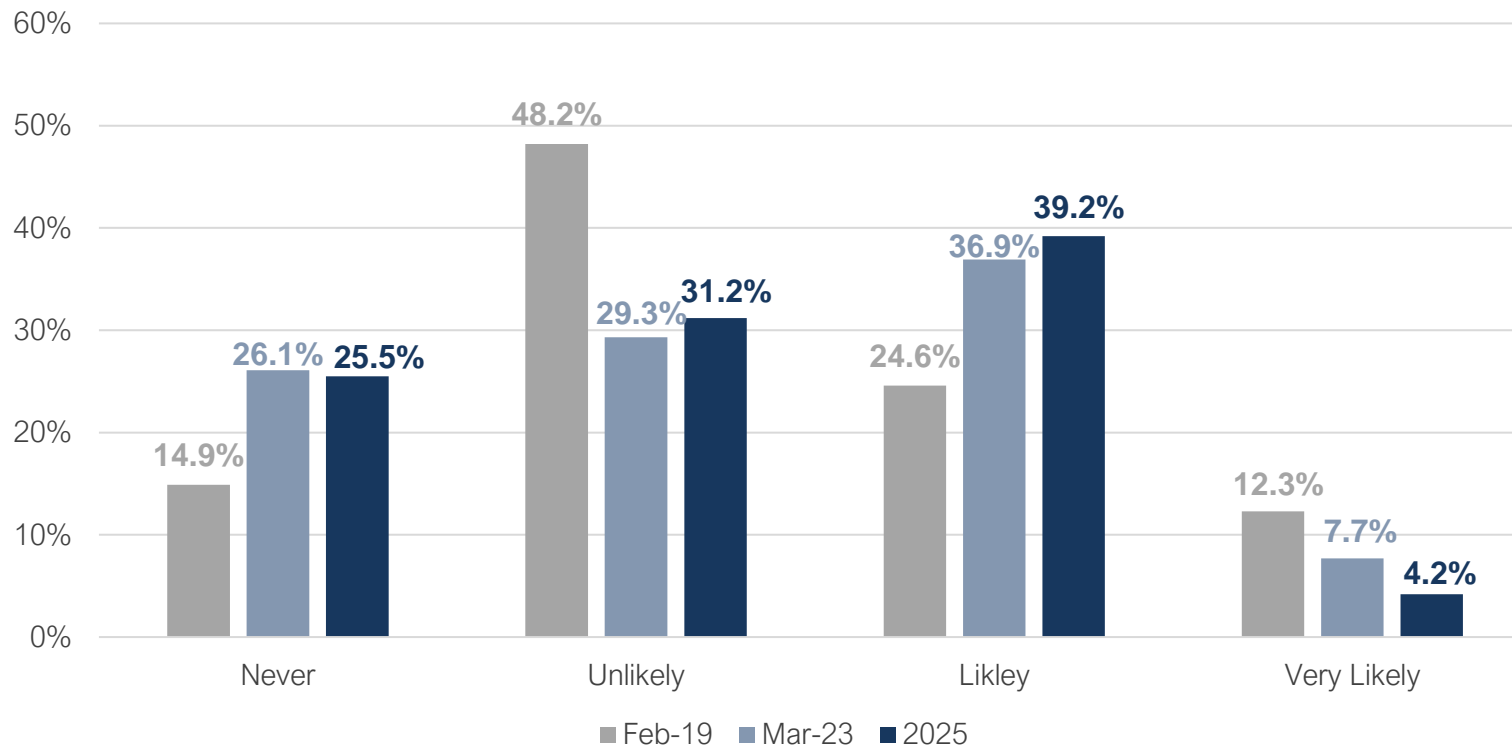
- Mining / Construction (24)
- Manufacturing (8)
- Real Estate (8)

Top industries with most Indirect Reports

- Energy (74)
- Consumer Services (26)
- Education (20)

Marketers report increase in likelihood of marketing leader becoming a CEO

How likely is the current top marketing leader in your company to become the CEO at your or another company?



Insights

Marketing leaders shift their view from “very likely” and “never” to “likely” and “unlikely” that they will become the CEO at their current company or another company since Mar-23. The view of “likely” has increased 6.2% since Mar-23 and 59.3% since Feb-19. While 6.5% of marketers have increased their view of being “unlikely” since March-23, this view is 35.3% lower than what was reported in Feb-19.

Industry Sector

Top industries reporting “Likely”

- Mining / Construction (66.7%)
- Consumer Packaged Goods (48.0%)

Top industries reporting “Never”

- Retail / Wholesale (52.2%)
- Manufacturing (40.0%)



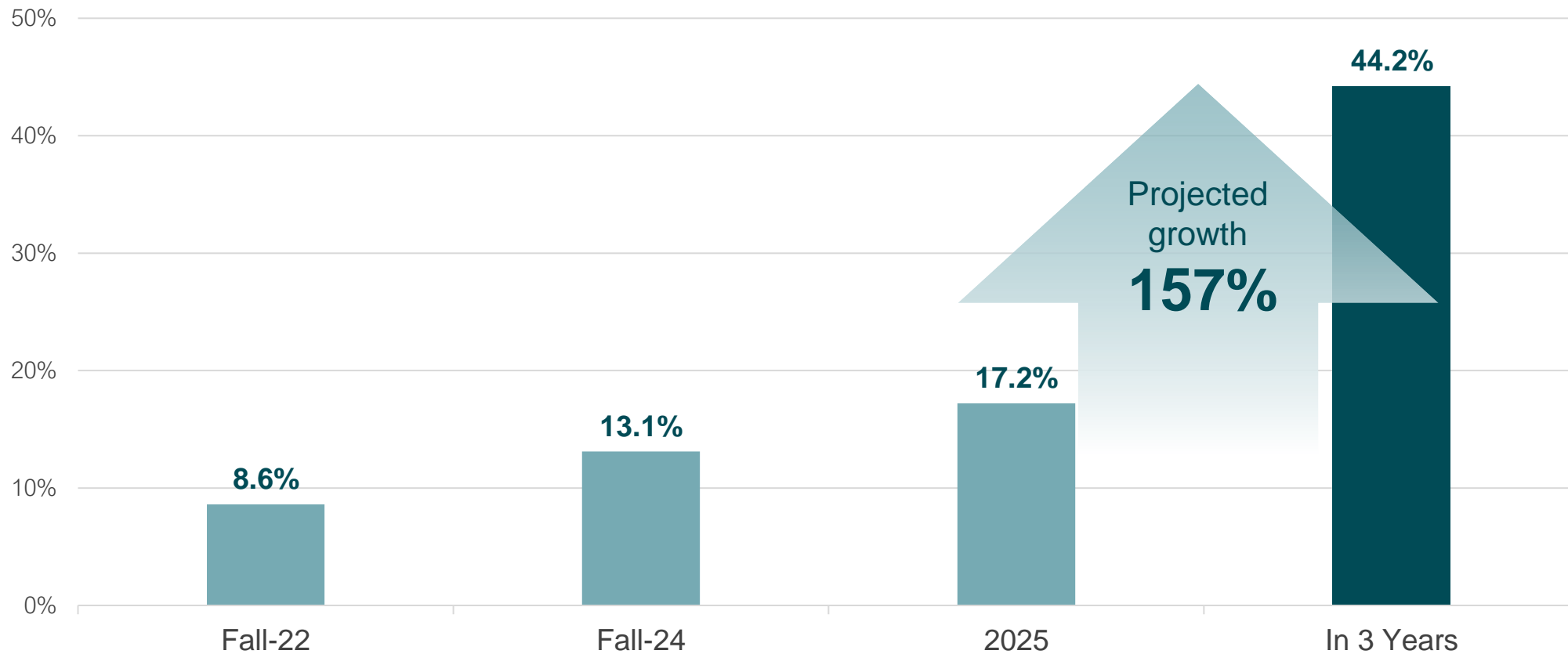
Use of AI in Marketing

Company use of artificial intelligence and machine learning continues to grow rapidly, now representing 17.2% of marketing efforts, up from 13.1% in Fall 2024 and a remarkable 100% increase since 2022. Marketers project this will reach 44.2% in three years, representing 157% growth.

Generative AI use has increased 116% over the last year, now being utilized in 15.1% of marketing activities compared to 7.0% one year ago. Companies are managing generative AI challenges more effectively, with notable improvements in minimizing bias and ensuring fairness (+42.3%), investing in hardware (+33.3%), and reducing susceptibility to attacks by malicious actors (+21.2%). AI implementation has delivered concrete business benefits including improved sales productivity (8.6%, up from 5.1% in Spring 2024), increased customer satisfaction (8.5%, up from 6.1%), and lower marketing overhead costs (10.8% reduction, compared to 7.0%).

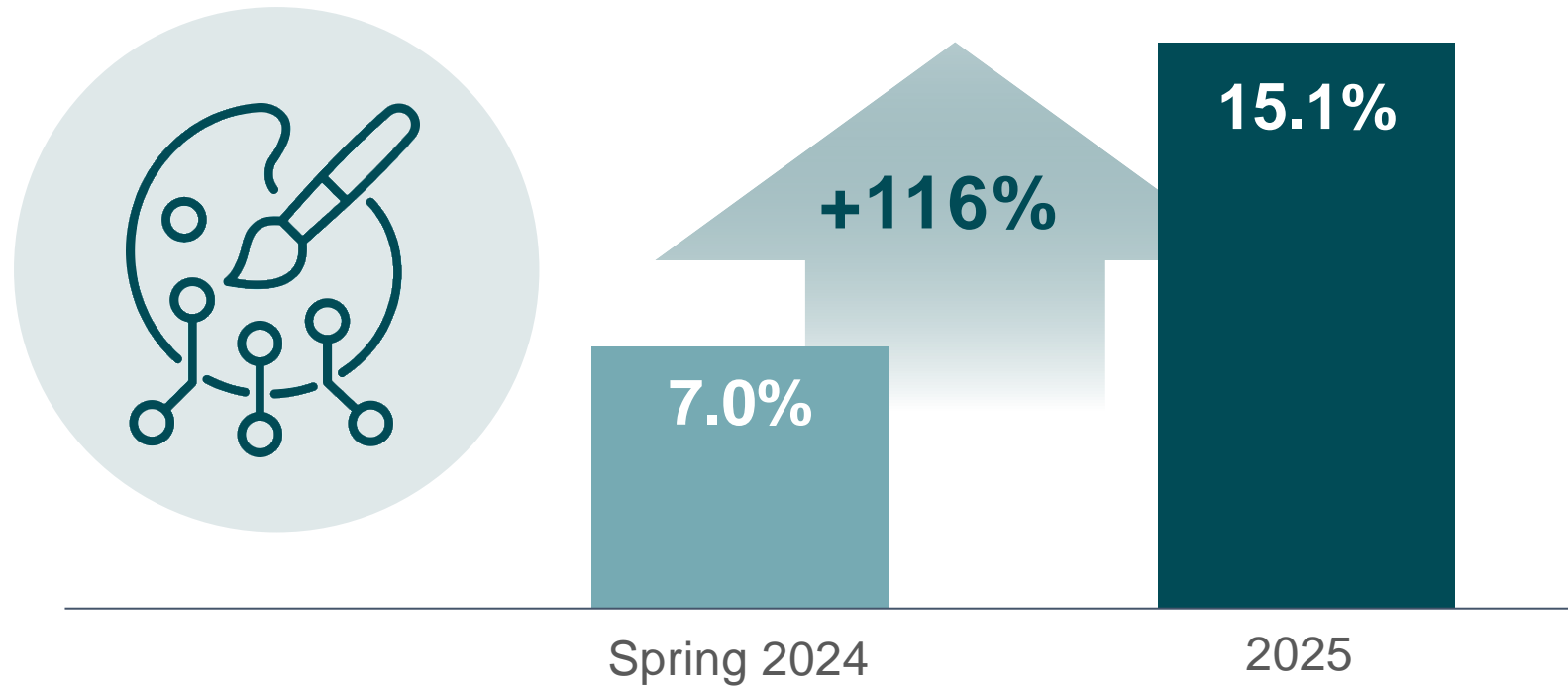
Company use of artificial intelligence and machine learning increases 100% since 2022; projected to grow another 157% in three years

To what extent is your company using artificial intelligence or machine learning in optimizing and automating marketing efforts? (0% of the time-100% of the time)



Use of generative AI in marketing increased by 116% over the last year

What percent of the time is your company using generative AI in its marketing activities?



Economic Sector

B2B Product	15.0%
B2B Services	17.1%
B2C Product	12.7%
B2C Services	17.2%

Industry Sector

Highest usage of AI in marketing

- Education (27.0%)
- Transportation (23.3%)
- Tech / Software / Platform (22.6%)

Lowest usage of AI in marketing

- Mining / Construction (3.3%)
- Pharma / Biotech (8.3 %)
- Communications / Media (9.5%)

Companies manage generative AI challenges more effectively

Rate the degree to which your company is managing the following challenges associated with using generative AI in marketing: (1=Not at All - 7=Very Effectively).

Challenge	2024	2025	% change
Implementing security measures to protect customer information	3.9	4.6	+17.9%
Ensuring that the marketing strategy that generative AI produces is a good fit for your brand	4.1	4.3	+4.9%
Ensuring that the marketing strategy that generative AI produces is a good fit for your target markets	4.0	4.2	+5.0%
Understanding how content or decisions are being made	3.6	4.1	+13.9%
Reducing susceptibility to attacks by malicious actors	3.3	4.0	+21.2%
Minimizing bias and ensuring fairness	2.6	3.7	+42.3%
Investing in hiring and building expertise necessary to use generative AI	3.0	3.4	+13.3%
Investing in hardware necessary for generative AI to work well	2.4	3.2	+33.3%

AI in marketing continues to bolster productivity and customer satisfaction while lowering overhead costs

Rate how the use of AI in marketing has affected the following outcomes. In each case, note the percentage improvement experienced in your company.

Improved Sales Productivity



+5.1%
Spring-24

+8.6%
2025

Increased Customer Satisfaction



+6.1%
Spring-24

+8.5%
2025

Lower Marketing Overhead Costs



-7.0%
Spring-24

-10.8%
2025

Top Economic Sector: B2B Services (13.8%)

Top Industry Sector: Education (21.0%)

B2C Services (13.1%)

Professional Services (15.5%)

B2B Services (-14.7%)

Professional Services (-17.5%)



Marketing Jobs

Marketing organizations grew headcount by 5.4% in 2024. B2C Services companies saw the highest growth (9.2%), while medium-sized companies, especially those with 2500-4999 employees (15.2%) and \$10-25M in revenue (10.0%), experienced greater expansion.

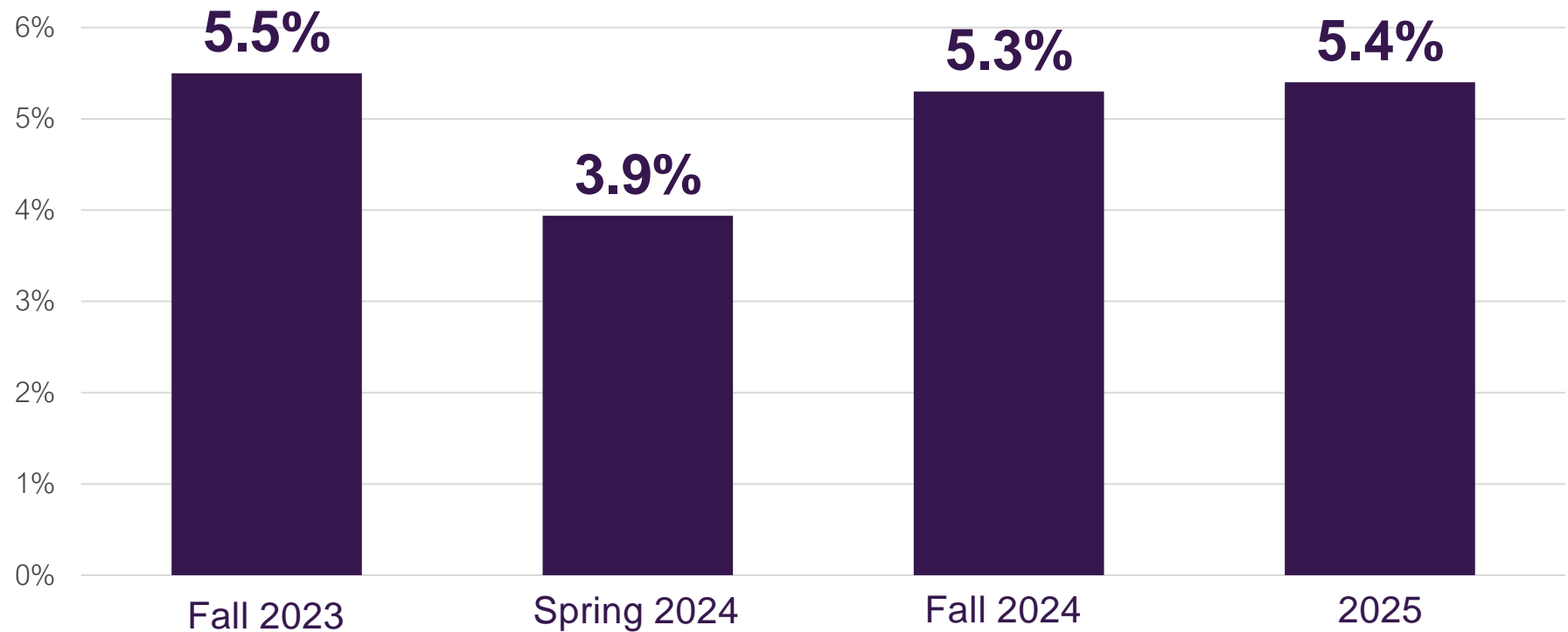
Companies predict continued growth in 2025, with marketing hires expected to increase by 5.0% in the next year. Hiring top talent (41.2%) represents the biggest people challenge for marketing leaders, followed by identifying the best people (21.3%), retaining top talent (19.4%), and training (18.0%). Low compensation (22.7%), difficulty finding expertise (16.7%) and scarcity of talent (16.7%) lead the hiring challenges, whereas talent identification challenges are driven by the difficulty of finding a skillset (39.4%), weak internal programs (24.2%) and screening challenges (21.2%).

Companies still prioritize hiring full-time marketing employees. However, the reported 77.9% of expected hires is lower than the 82.5% reported in 2019. Reflecting this change, companies plan to hire more full-time independent contractors (growing from 5.4% in 2019 to 7.8% in 2025), part-time contractors (from 9.0% to 9.9%), and part-time employees (from 3.1 to 4.4%). Results hold across industries and economic sectors. Only B2B Service companies deviated in their plans to hire more part-time employees (from 4.6% to 8.1%).

Marketing organization size continues to grow at robust rate

By what percent has the size of your marketing organization grown or shrunk over the last year?

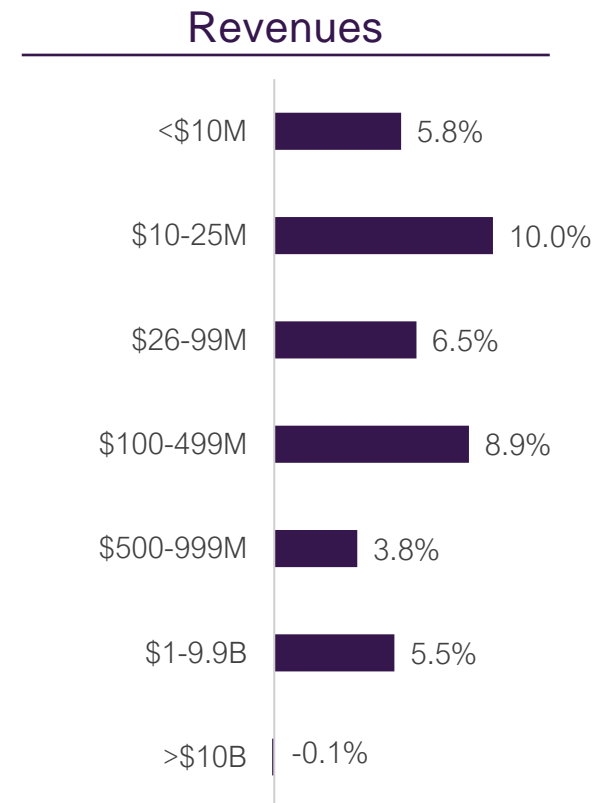
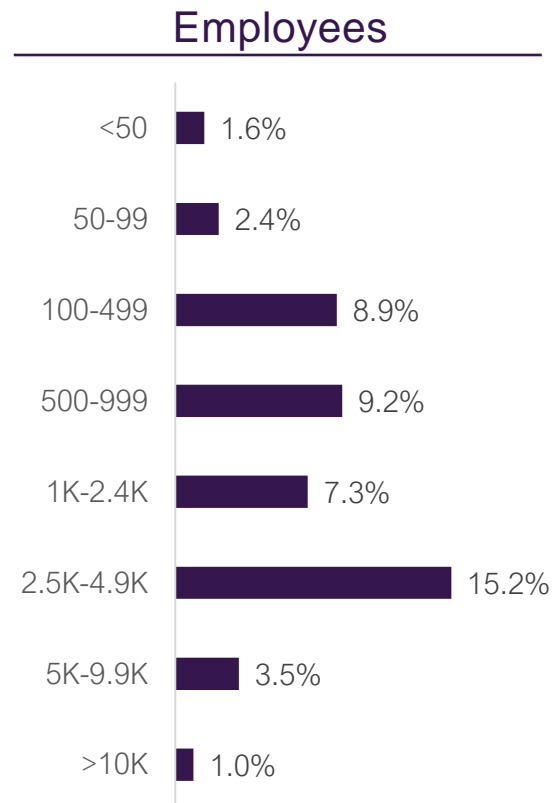
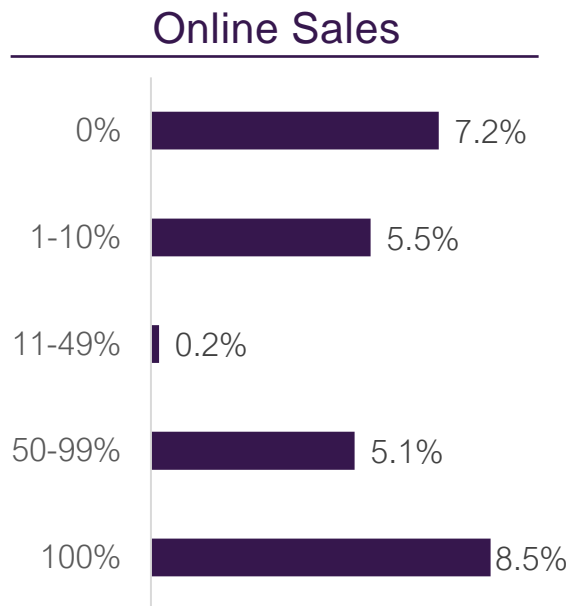
Company and industry breakouts on next slide



Medium-sized companies, B2C Services, Mining / Construction, Pharma / Biotech, and Healthcare fastest growing marketing organizations

By what percent has the size of your marketing organization grown or shrunk over the last year?

5.4% growth in size of marketing organizations



Economic Sector

B2B Product	5.0%
B2B Services	5.1%
B2C Product	5.1%
B2C Services	9.2%

Industry Sector

Largest growth

- Mining / Construction (25.0%)
- Pharma / Biotech (10.9%)
- Healthcare (8.3%)

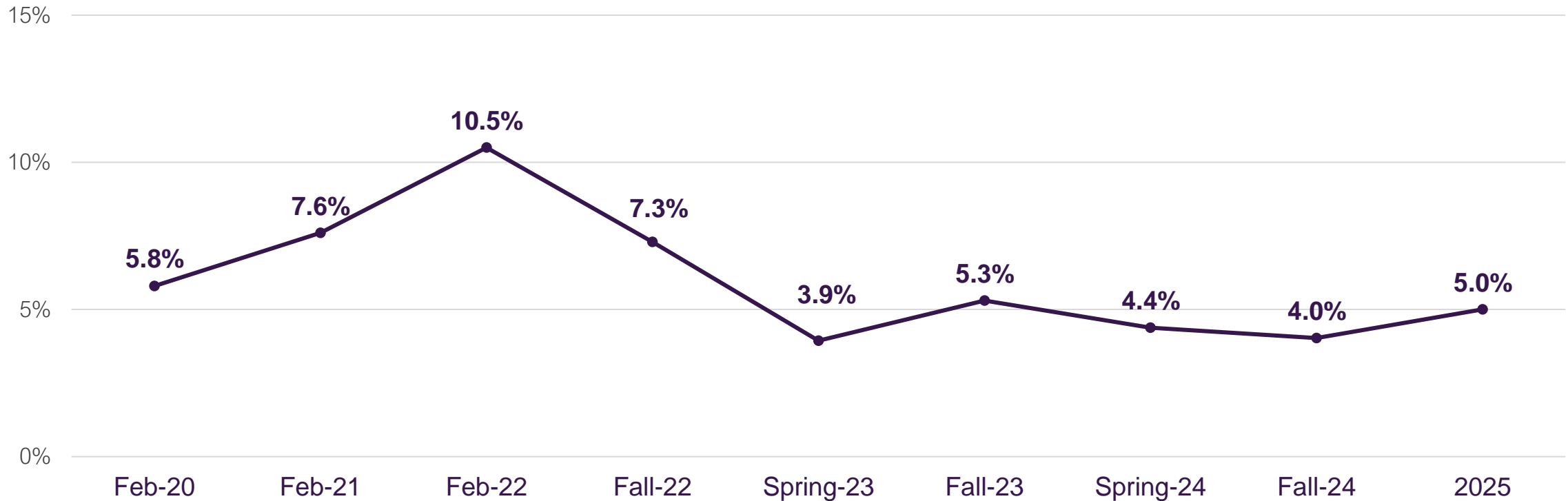
Largest shrinkage

- Energy (-5.0%)
- Manufacturing (-0.5%)
- Professional Services (-0.5%)

Marketing hires predicted to grow by 5% in next year

By what percentage will your company's marketing hires change in the next year?

Company and industry breakouts on next slide

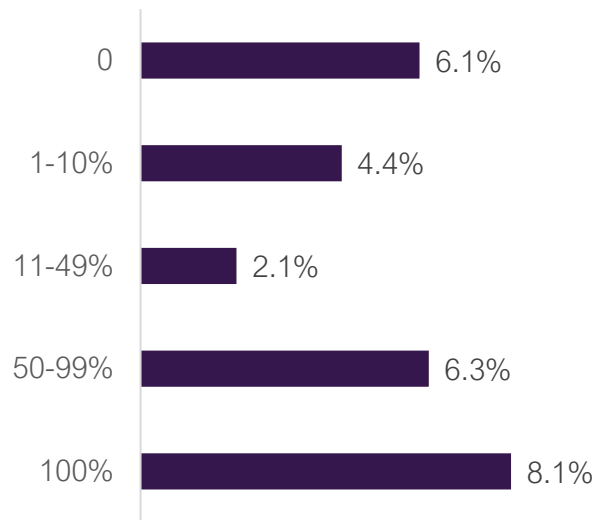


Medium-sized companies, and the Real Estate, Energy, and Tech industries are predicted to grow the most in the next year

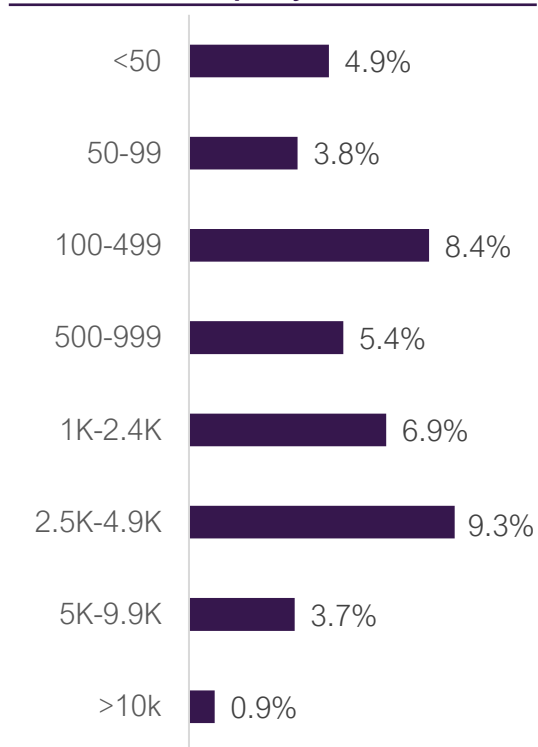
By what percentage will your company's marketing hires change in the next year?

5% predicted growth in marketing hires next year

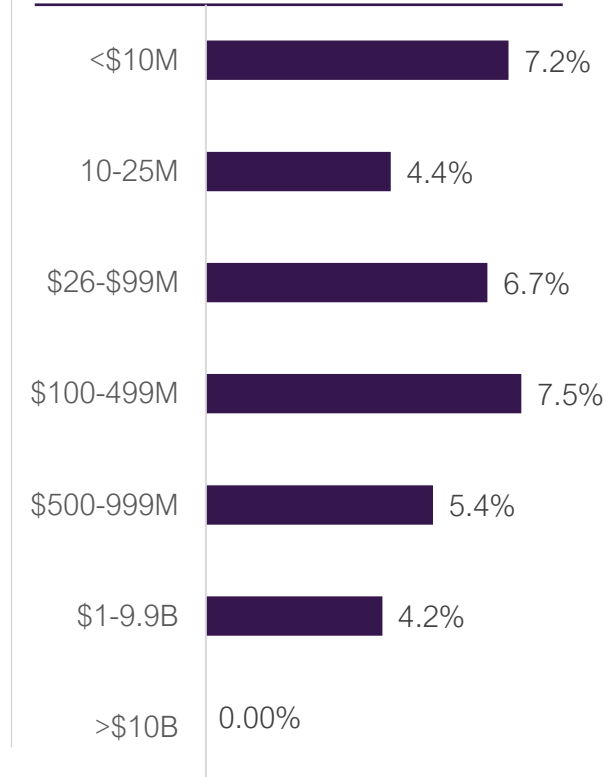
Online Sales



Employees



Revenues



Economic Sector

B2B Product	4.4%
B2B Services	4.1%
B2C Product	5.4%
B2C Services	7.1%



Industry Sector

Largest growth

- Real Estate (9.3%)
- Energy (8.3%)
- Tech / Software / Platforms (8.1%)

Largest growth and shrinkage

- Communications / Media (-0.8%)
- Mining / Construction (0%)
- Manufacturing (1.3%)

Hiring top talent is the biggest people challenge for marketing leaders

What is your biggest people challenge in your marketing organization?



Hiring
the best people
41.2%

Top Industry Sector:
Education: 80%

Top Economic Sector:
B2C Product: 50%



Identifying
the best people
21.3%

Top Industry Sector:
Communications / Media: 50.0%

Top Economic Sector:
B2B Services: 28.6%



Retaining
the best people
19.4%

Top Industry Sector:
Mining / Construction: 66.7%

Top Economic Sector:
B2C Services: 24.1%



Training
the best people
18%

Top Industry Sector:
Energy: 33.3%

Top Economic Sector:
B2B Product: 23%

Why marketing leaders are experiencing people challenges

Why is that your biggest people challenge?



Hiring the best people

Compensation too low:	22.7%
Difficult to find expertise:	16.7%
Scarcity of talent:	16.7%
Competitive offers:	12.1%
Failure to invest in hiring:	12.1%
Location disadvantage:	7.6%
Difficult to match culture:	6.1%
Return to office policy:	6.1%



Identifying the best people

Difficult to find skillset:	39.4%
Weak internal programs:	24.2%
Screening challenges:	21.2%
Location challenges:	9.1%
Leadership challenges:	6.1%



Retaining the best people

Limited career growth:	33.3%
Competitive offers:	24.2%
Compensation too low:	18.2%
Culture challenges:	9.1%
High level of company change:	9.1%
Return to office policy:	6.1%

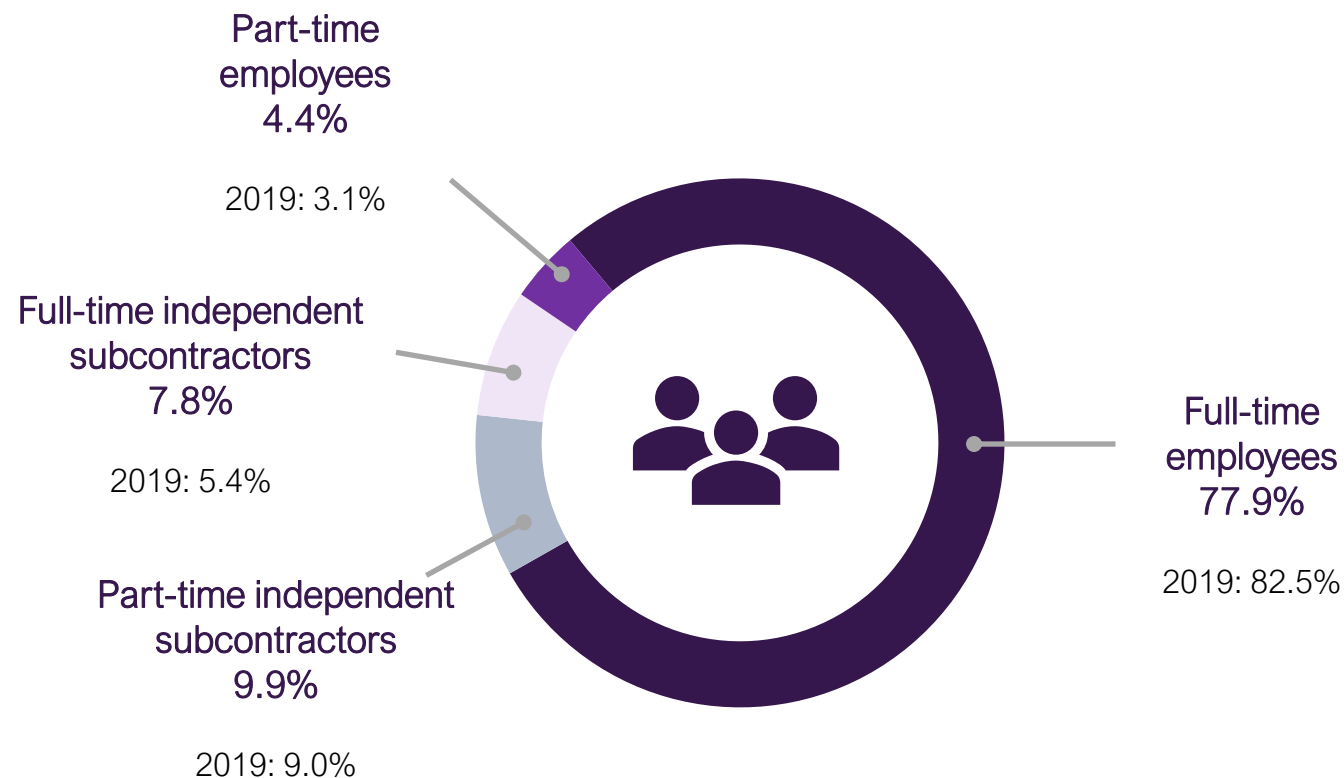


Training the best people

We lack training programs:	43.8%
Time and \$ resource constraints:	25.0%
Unable to keep up with change:	18.7%
Short-term focus:	9.4%
Change is difficult for employees:	3.1%

Companies continue to focus on full-time hires across industries

For marketing hiring, distribute 100 points across these different types of marketing employees you plan to hire in the next year.



Insights

This question was originally asked in the 2019 edition of The CMO Survey. The number of full-time employees decreased from 82.5% in 2019 to 77.9% in 2025. Reflecting this change, companies plan to hire more full-time independent contractors (growing from 5.4% in 2019 to 7.8% in 2025), part-time contractors (from 9.0% to 9.9%), and part-time employees (from 3.1 to 4.4%). Results hold across industries and economic sectors. Only B2B Service companies deviated in their plans to hire more part-time employees (from 4.6% to 8.1%).

In a key exception to these trends, online-only companies (100% of sales from the internet) plan to hire fewer full-time employees (66.7%) and more full-time (7.8%) and part-time (25.6%) subcontractors. This is in contrast to companies with 0% of sales from the internet who plan to hire 78.1% full-time employees and only 6.1% and 10.1% subcontractors.



Marketing Performance

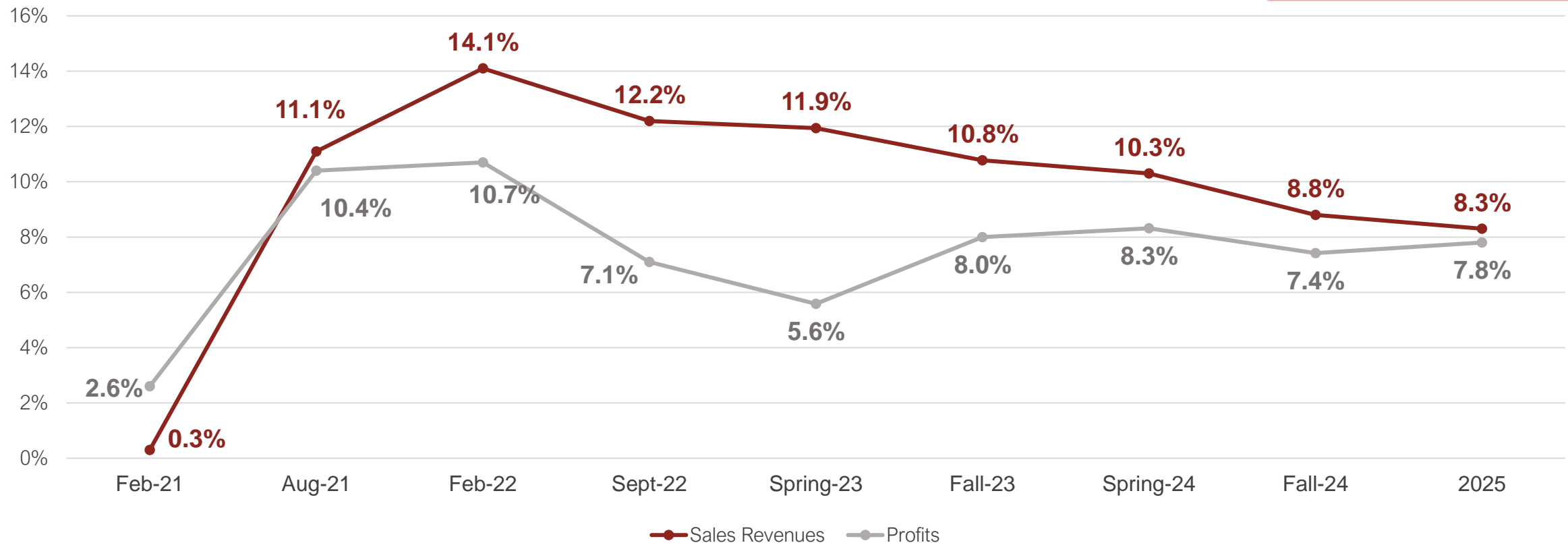
Corporate sales growth continued its two-year decline to 8.3% in 2025 from 8.8% in Fall 2024 and a high of 14.1% in 2022. Profit growth increased slightly to 7.8% from 7.4% in Fall 2024, but lower than a high of 10.7% in 2022. Companies with 100% of their sales occurring online had the highest sales (13.4%) and profit (15.0%) growth levels. Likewise, smaller companies (measured by sales revenues) had the highest sales growth (12.8%) while top profits were observed in mid-sized companies (\$100-\$499M) at 11.6%. Tech companies report highest sales (19.0%) and profit (16.7%) growth, while energy companies report the weakest (-11.7% sales and -14.3% profits).

Customer metrics showed concerning trends, with growth to customer retention dropping from 10.5% in Fall 2024 to 7.7%. Brand value saw a slight decrease to 8.4% from 8.9% in Fall 2024, continuing a drop from 9.5% performance in Spring 2024. Only customer acquisition showed overall improvement, increasing from 7.0% growth in Spring 2024 to 7.5%. The energy sector saw the weakest brand value performance with a loss in value of -12.7%, while education dominated the category with gains at 20%. B2B and B2C Services saw the largest economic sector brand value increases with 10.6% and 9.6% respectively. Customer acquisition improvements were stronger for smaller companies (<\$10M=13.5%, \$10-25M=11.2%) in B2B companies (B2B Services=8.1% and B2B Product=9.1%) and in companies that have 100% of their sales online (22.1%).

Company sales growth continues two-year slide while profit growth flutters upward

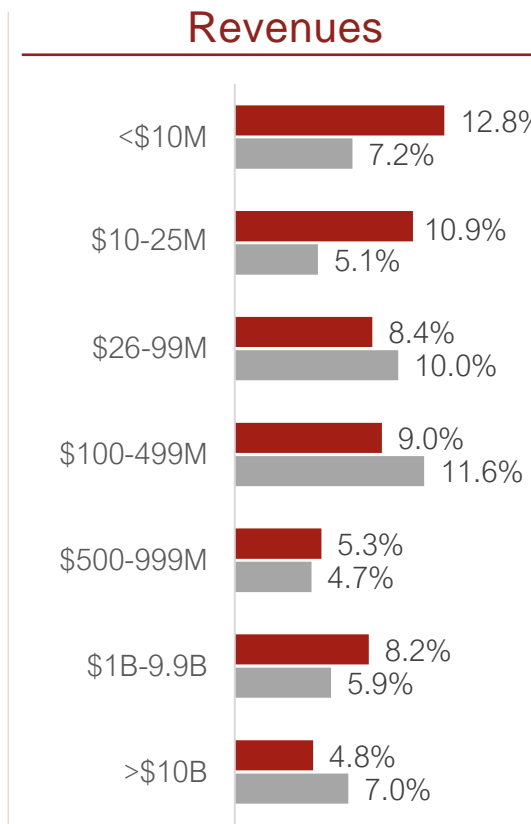
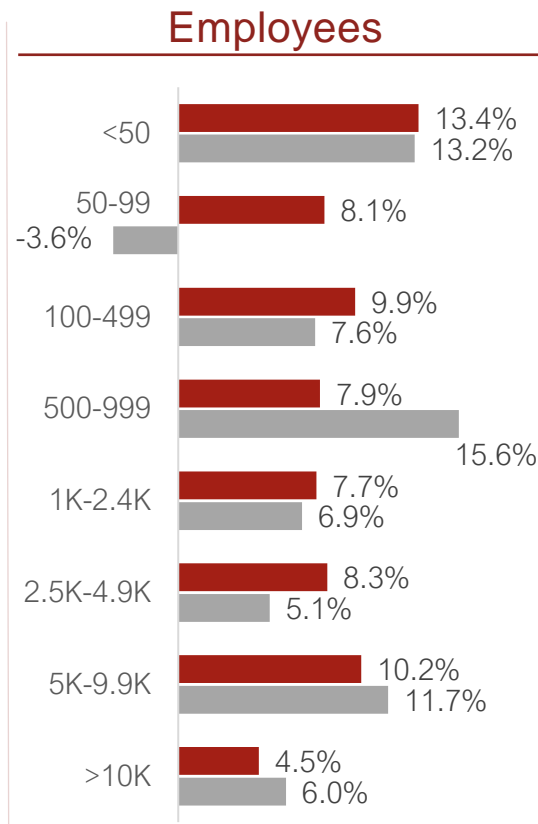
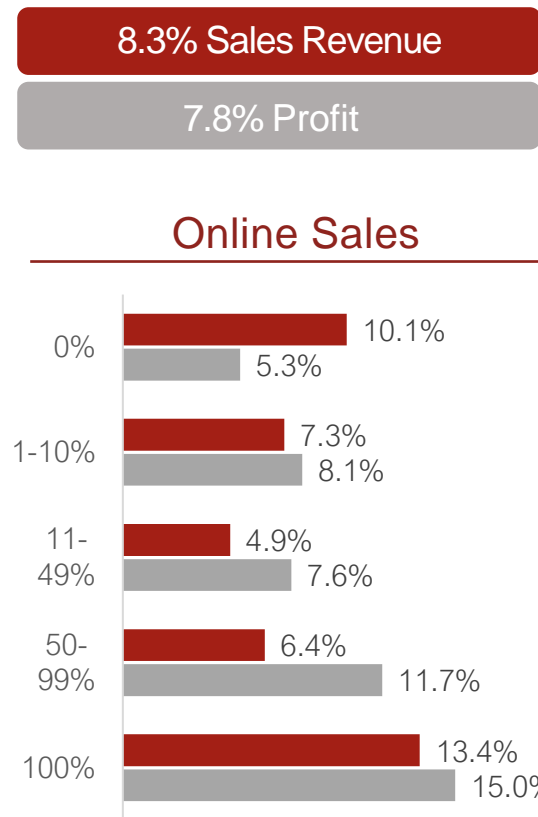
Rate your company's performance during the prior 12 months.

Company and industry breakouts on next slide



Smaller, Tech sector, and pure-play companies see greatest profit and revenue growth

Rate your company's performance during the prior 12 months.



Economic Sector

	Profit	Sales Rev
B2B Product	6.2%	9.1%
B2B Services	9.2%	8.1%
B2C Product	9.2%	7.9%
B2C Services	5.0%	5.2%

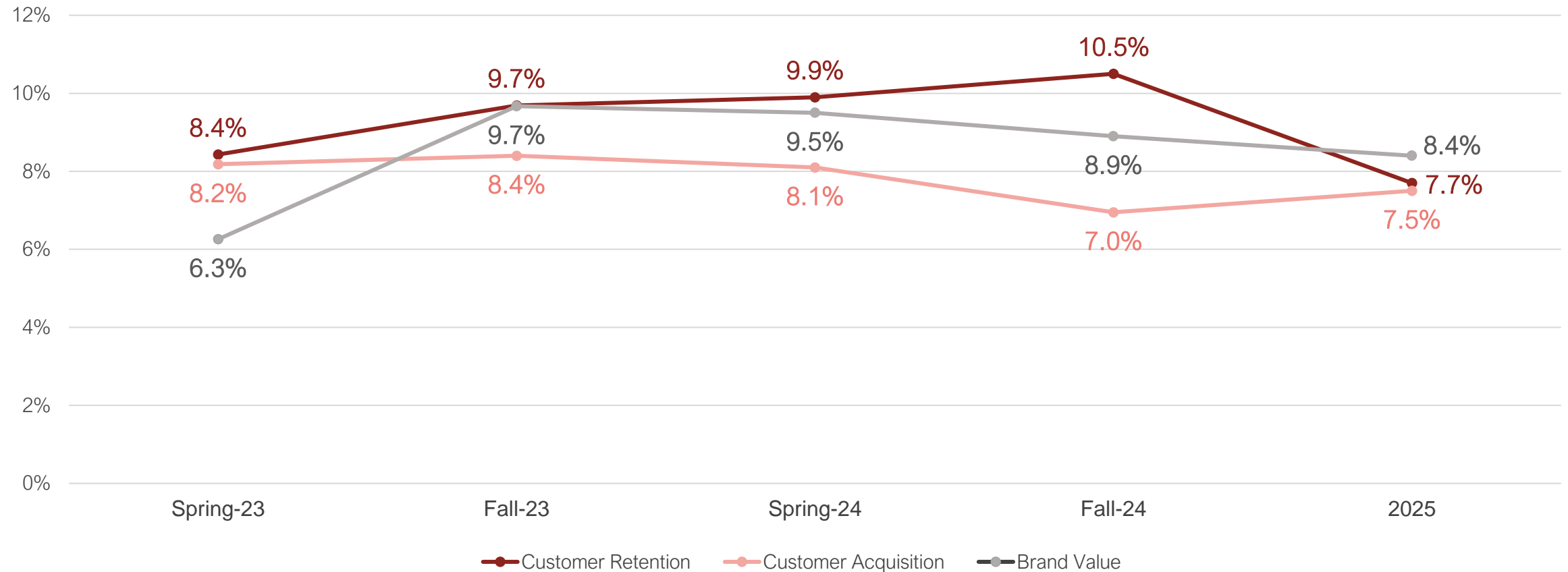
Industry Sector

	Profit	Sales Rev
Top Sectors	Tech / Software / Platform (16.7%)	Tech / Software / Platform (19.0%)
Bottom Sectors	Energy (-14.3%)	Energy (-11.7%)

Company customer retention level drop off in 2025

Rate your company's performance during the prior 12 months.

Company and industry breakouts on next slide

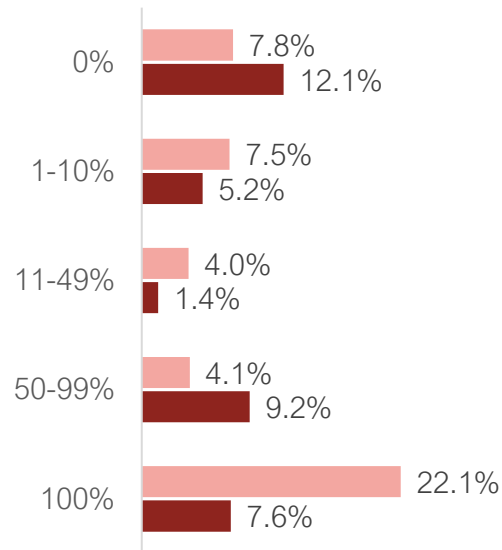


Smaller companies see stronger customer acquisition and retention

Rate your company's performance during the prior 12 months.

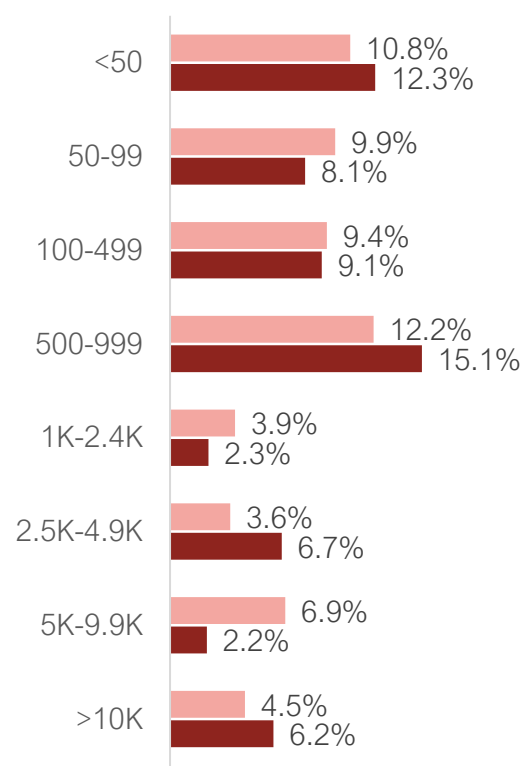
7.5% Customer Acquisition
7.7% Customer Retention

Online Sales

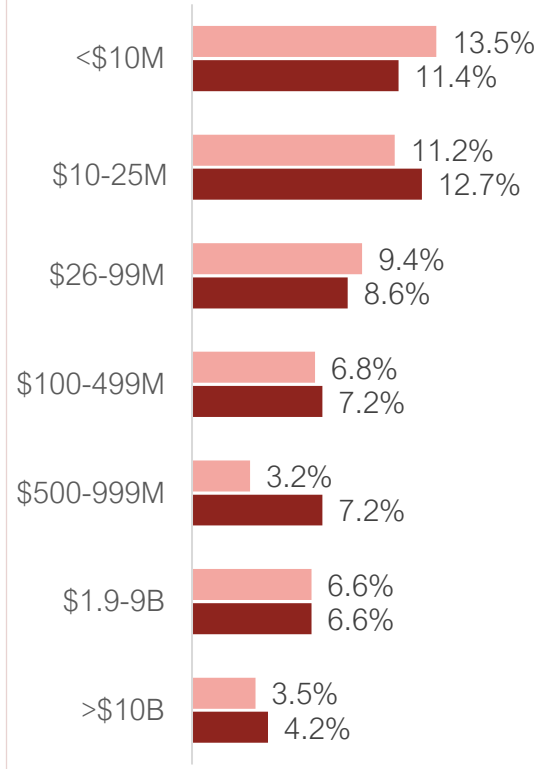


2025

Employees



Revenues



Customer Acquisition Customer Retention



Economic Sector

	Customer Retention	Customer Acquisition
B2B Product	5.3%	9.1%
B2B Services	13.1%	8.1%
B2C Product	6.3%	4.7%
B2C Services	7.6%	6.5%

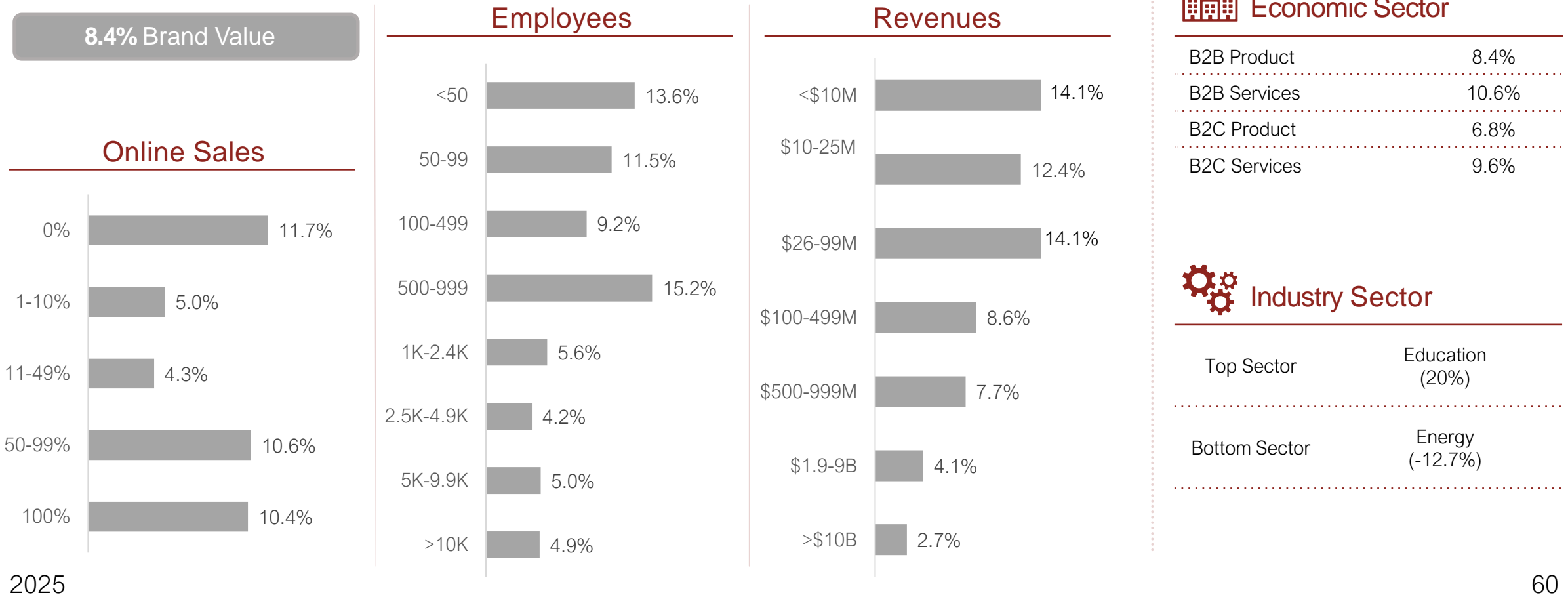


Industry Sector

	Customer Retention	Customer Acquisition
Top Sector	Banking / Finance / Insurance (13.1%)	Communications / Media (17.3%)
Bottom Sector	Mining / Construction (-3.5%)	Energy (-7%)

B2C Product companies exhibit weakest performance on brand value while smaller companies tend to show strongest performance

Rate your company's performance during the prior 12 months.





Award for Marketing Excellence

The CMO Survey Award for Marketing Excellence is selected by fellow marketers. It is given each year to one company that is judged to set the standard for excellence in marketing across all industries and the companies viewed as setting the standard in their respective industries. Apple Inc. is the overall winner for the seventeenth straight year. Industry winners include Amazon, Nike, the Proctor & Gamble Company, Salesforce, and Airbnb.

Which company across all industries sets the standard for excellence in marketing?



Apple Inc.

Apple has won this award for seventeen consecutive years. Christine Moorman discussed this accomplishment in [2012](#) and revisited Apple's success in [2018](#).

Which company in your industry sets the standard for excellence in marketing?

Industry-specific winners include:



Amazon, Inc.



Nike, Inc.



The Proctor & Gamble Company



Salesforce, Inc.



Airbnb, Inc.

Next Survey: 2026

- Sign up to participate: <https://cmosurvey.org/participate/>
- Review the full history of CMO Survey results from 2008-2025: <https://cmosurvey.org/results/>
- Read Professor Moorman's analysis: <https://cmosurvey.org/blog/>
- Read the media coverage: <https://cmosurvey.org/media-release/>
- Send comments and suggestions to Professor Christine Moorman: moorman@duke.edu
- Survey Sponsors: Deloitte, Duke University's Fuqua School of Business, and the American Marketing Association. Sponsors support The CMO Survey with intellectual and financial resources. Survey data and participant lists are held in strict confidence and not shared with survey sponsors or any other parties.

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