

MARKETERS, AGENCIES AND CORONAVIRUS

Survey Report of Marketing Outlooks



Pub. June 2020



*The Market Research Partner
for Marketers.*

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WHAT WE LEARNED (Quick Summary)



When it comes to marketing, the vast majority of in-house marketers are predominantly interested in reconnecting with existing customers, selling existing products and services, and increasing brand awareness over the next 6 to 12 months.



Nearly two fifths of marketing firms are still concerned about returning to 'normal life' at the current time. The same audience also predicted that a much higher share of their own clients were interested in returning to normal life than in-house marketing data actually suggests.



More than half of marketing agencies anticipate that demand for their services will increase over the next year. The majority, also, do not anticipate changes to the price of their services.



Nearly every respondent agreed, market research will be an invaluable tool in the marketing mix over the next 6 to 12 months. In-house marketers, however, felt less confident in their abilities to conduct that market research themselves compared to agency respondents.



ABOUT THIS STUDY

Hi, I'm Matt Seltzer, a market research partner who works with agencies and marketing teams. Last month, I wrote an article discussing an approach to developing buyer personas using survey data, and described how that methodology for marketing was so important during the Coronavirus period. [You can read that article here.](#)

Taking my own advice, I decided to create a survey and request responses from both marketing firm employees and in-house marketing team members, in order to create a full buyer persona for my own S2 Research brand, and to create an example for other marketers to follow.

While that example buyer persona is available on my website, I wanted to also share some of the data collected through this project.

On the following pages, the attitudes and opinions toward marketing and the world amidst the Coronavirus epidemic are detailed, broken out by in-house marketing team members and employees of marketing firms and agencies.

Note, you can review a detailed breakdown of the audience makeup for this study beginning on p. 22 of this report.

Thank you for reviewing the results of this survey. I hope you enjoy!

Learn more about market research
and marketing at

S2Research.com

METHODOLOGY

The S2 Research **Marketers, Agencies and Coronavirus Survey** was administered through an online outreach program that included email, communication on social channels and direct messaging through LinkedIn. Professional marketers from a variety of geographies and industries were contacted, and their responses aggregated and included in this study.

From the period of May 13 through June 15, 2020, a total of 250 usable survey responses were collected. Based on a total est. 286k individuals working in advertising, promotions and marketing management roles ([according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)), at the 95% confidence level this study has a margin of error of $\pm 7\%$. That means, if the survey were to be replicated again exactly the same with different respondents, 95 times out of 100 the responses would be within 7 percentage points of these results.

The study was originally designed to better understand the marketing community, both in-house marketers and agency marketers, to develop a better buyer persona for S2 Research, as well as an example marketers could follow to build their own buyer personas from survey data.

To read more about that buyer persona project, [be sure to click here](#).

If you have any additional questions about this or any other survey project from S2 Research, please email me at matt@s2research.com.



PART I IN-HOUSE MARKETING TEAMS

Highlights



Thinking about the Coronavirus pandemic, about half of in-house marketers are ready to return to normal slowly, while a similar-sized share are not ready to return to normal life at all.



The majority of in-house marketers are most interested in selling existing products and services over the next 6 to 12 months, compared to a smaller share that are interested in pivoting toward new products and services.



Nearly half of in-house marketers anticipated demand for their services to grow over the next 6 to 12 months, while another third expected demand would decrease in the same time period.



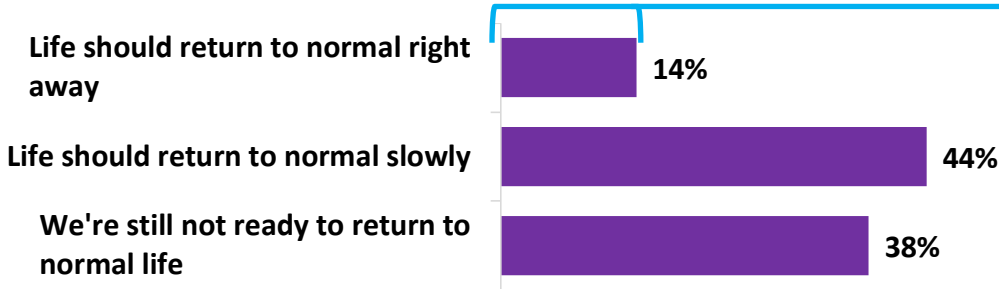
In-house marketers are most interested in using market research in their marketing over the next 6 to 12 months to better understand their audiences and navigate the changing business landscape.



PART I

IN-HOUSE MARKETING TEAMS

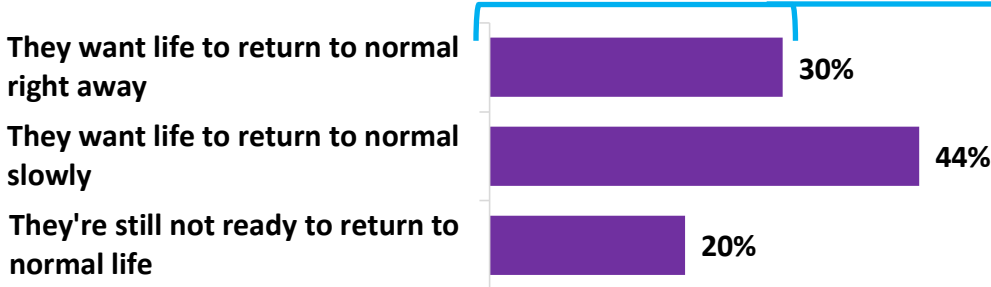
How do you feel about life and the Coronavirus?



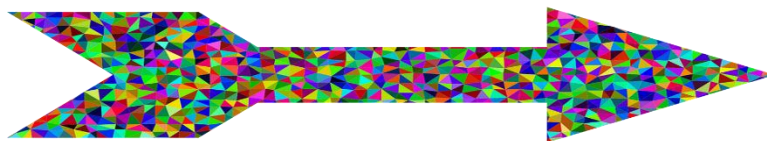
The survey asked in-house marketers their opinions of the Coronavirus and its impacts on life, namely how they currently feel about proceeding with something 'normal'. A large share of respondents were ready for a return to normal, but slowly over a period of time, while a similarly-sized share were still not ready to return to normal life at all.

Only 14% of in-house marketers were ready for life to return to normal now, while nearly a third felt their own customers were ready for normal life now!

How do you think *your customers* feel about life and the Coronavirus?



We also asked respondents how they *believed* their own customers were feeling about the world returning to normal. While this dataset covered a variety of industries, overall about the same share agreed their customers felt the same way about returning to normal slowly as they did themselves, while a disproportionate shared felt their customers wanted life to return to normal now than they themselves felt.

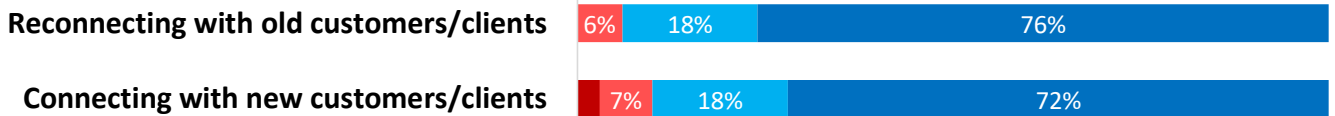


PART I

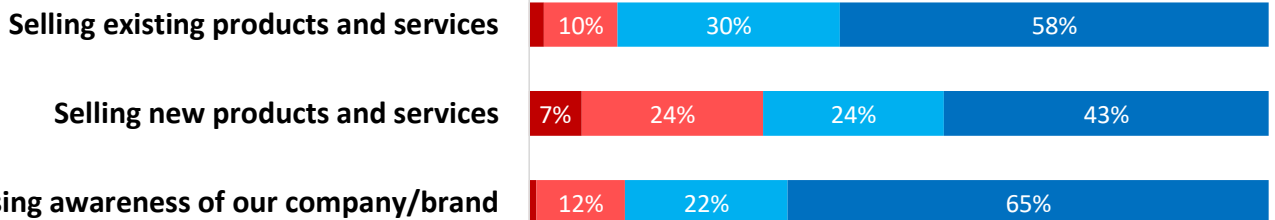
IN-HOUSE MARKETING TEAMS

How valuable are each of the following to your marketing over the next 6 to 12 months?

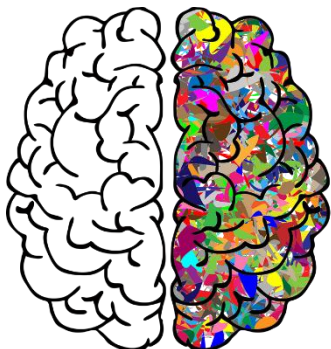
■ 1 (Not Important) ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 (Extremely Important)



Overall, in-house marketers were about equally interested in reconnecting with older customers and clients as they were in connecting with new customers.



Despite extreme changes to the marketing landscape over the past few months, in-house marketers are vastly more interested in selling existing products and services than pivoting into selling new products and services. About the same share interested in existing products are also focused on increasing awareness for their brand as well.



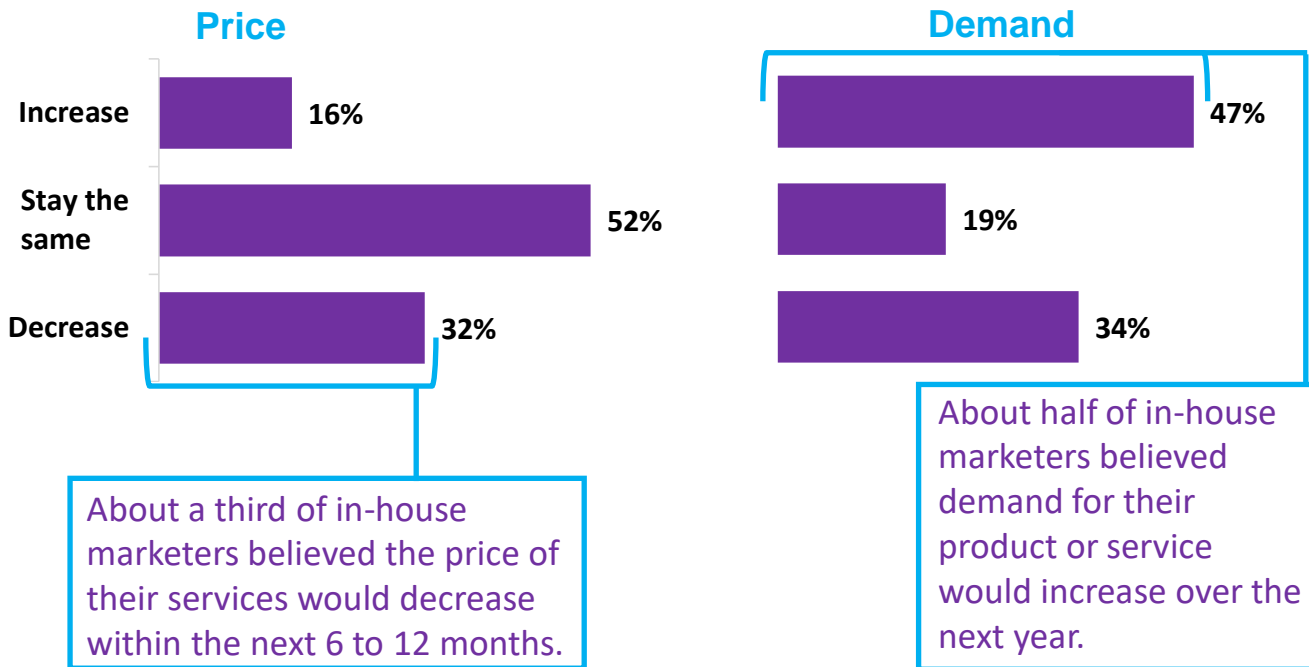
As uncertainty and a changing economic landscape prevail, staying afloat was a primary concern for about 9 in 10 in-house marketers.



PART I

IN-HOUSE MARKETING TEAMS

When it comes to your company's products or services, what do you think will happen to price and demand over the next 6 to 12 months?



While about half of all in-house marketers expected the prices within their industry to stay the same, another half anticipated fluctuation, with the majority of those anticipating a decrease to price.

Demand, meanwhile, was expected to increase over the next 6 to 12 months according to nearly 1 in 2 respondents. Another third of respondents, however, expressed concern that demand for their products would decrease over the same period.

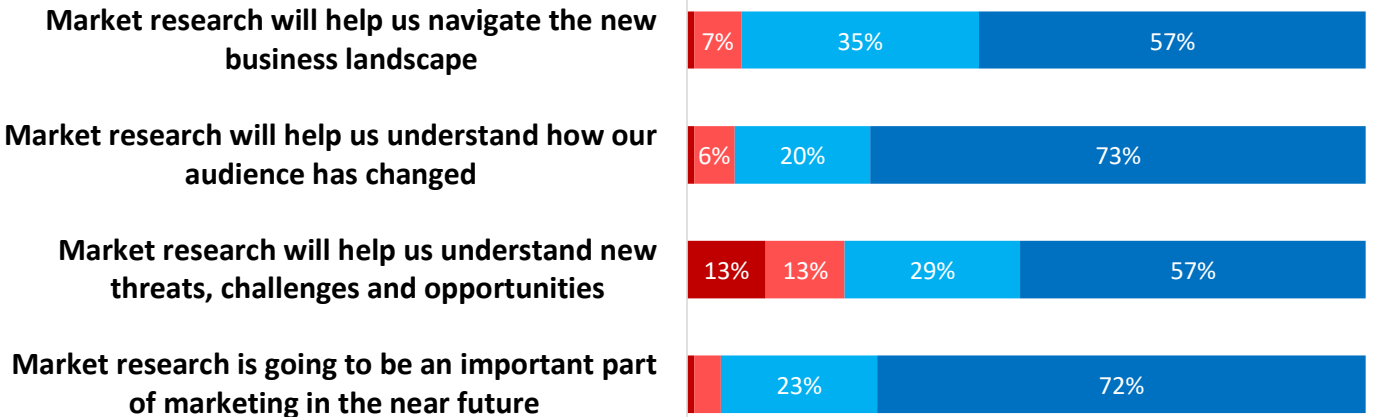


PART I

IN-HOUSE MARKETING TEAMS

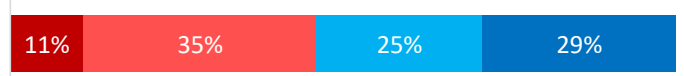
When it comes to market research, what are your thoughts on the following?

■ 1 (Disagree) ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 (Agree)

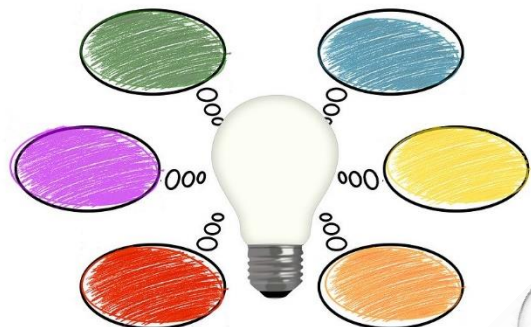


When it comes to the topic of market research, the vast majority of in-house marketers believe research will be an important part of the future of new normal marketing navigation. Nearly all respondents agreed market research would be beneficial in helping understand changing audience attitudes and behaviors, and about the same share also felt that research would be vital in navigating the new business landscape.

I'm familiar with market research and can conduct it myself



Despite the positive beliefs in the near-future impacts of market research for marketers, only about half of the professional in-house marketers surveyed felt they were familiar enough with market research to conduct it themselves.



PART II MARKETING FIRMS AND AGENCIES

Highlights



Nearly three in five marketing firm respondents believe their clients are currently interested in returning to normal life slowly, while another quarter believe their clients want to return to normal life immediately.



Marketing firms are slightly more interested in connecting with new clients than reconnecting with existing clients over the next year. They're also very interested in increasing brand awareness for their own companies moving forward.



About one in five marketing firms is concerned that demand for their services will decrease over the next year.



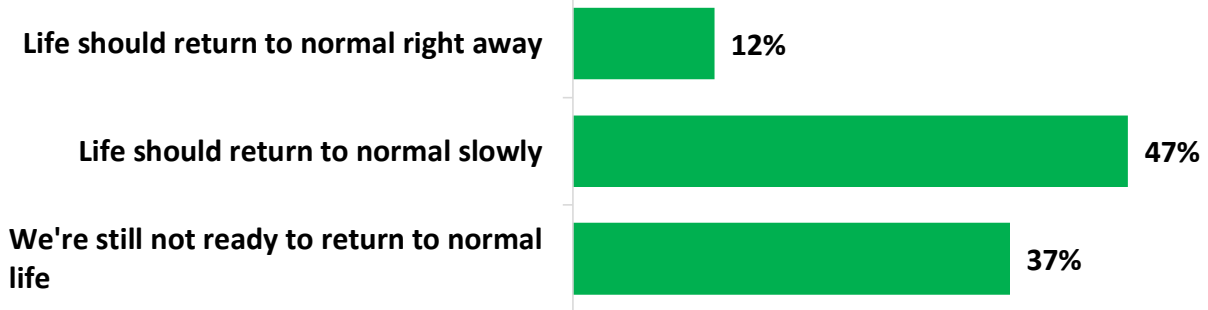
While nearly all marketing firms believe that market research will be important to marketers over the next 6 to 12 months, only about three in five of those firms felt confident enough in their market research capabilities to conduct that research.



PART II

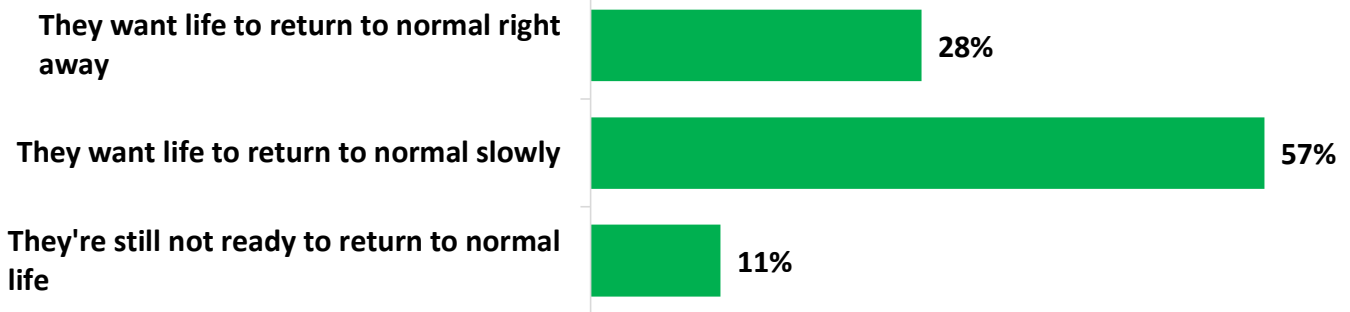
MARKETING FIRMS AND AGENCIES

How do you feel about life and the Coronavirus?



Among marketing firms and agencies, about half of respondents were ready to return to normal life slowly. More than a third, however, were not ready to return to normal life just yet at all.

How do you think your clients feel about life and the Coronavirus?



Among agencies, only about a quarter believed their clients wanted to return to normal life right now, while the majority felt their clients were ready to return to normal life slowly.

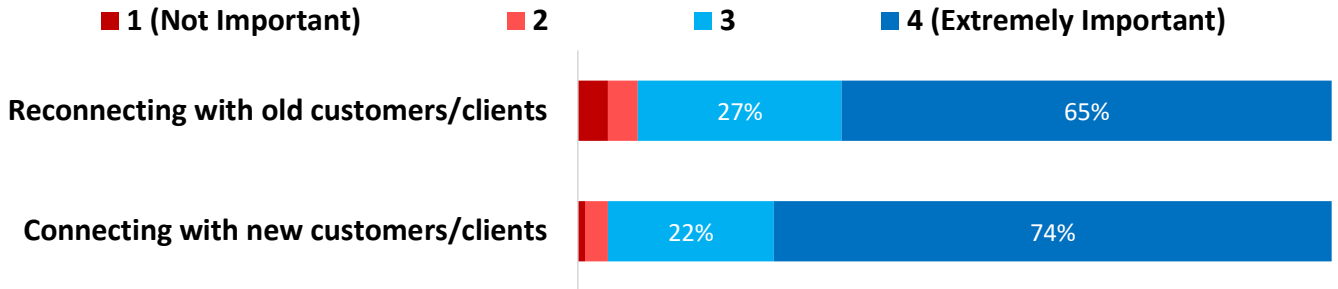
Marketing firm respondents felt extremely different overall about returning to normal life than they expected their clients to feel, with every single category differing by at least 10 percentage points. However, if in-house marketing firms *are* those clients, agency perceptions might be off! **Jump to p.18 for more insights!**



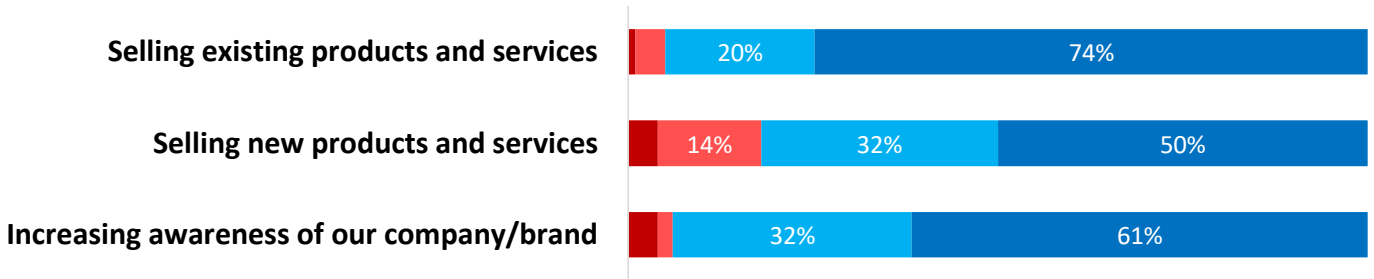
PART II

MARKETING FIRMS AND AGENCIES

What is most valuable to your marketing over the next 6 to 12 months?



Overall, a slightly larger share of marketing firms and agencies are interested in connecting with new customers and clients over the next 6 to 12 months than reconnecting with old customers and clients. Both, however, are a priority.



Looking forward, marketing firms are most interested in increasing awareness for their companies and selling existing products and services. Despite an emphasis on pivoting across several industries right now, a slightly smaller share were interested in selling new products and services moving forward as well.



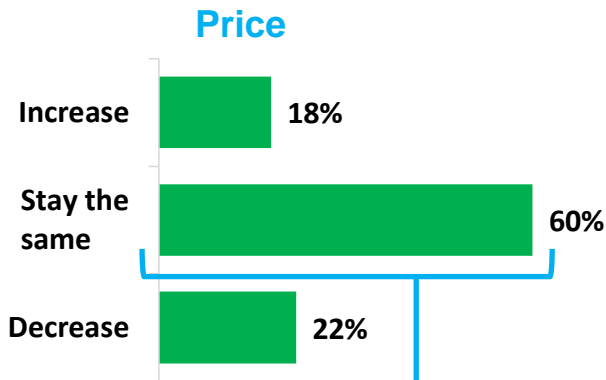
The vast majority of agencies emphasized the importance of staying afloat over the next year to weather the storm.



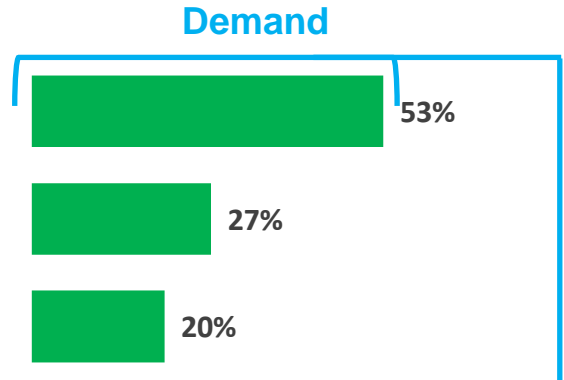
PART II

MARKETING FIRMS AND AGENCIES

When it comes to the marketing services your company provides, what do you think will happen to price and demand over the next 6 to 12 months?



Three in five marketing firms expected the price of their services to stay the same over the next year.



Half of agencies and marketing firms surveyed anticipated demand for their services would increase over the next year.

The majority of marketing firms and agencies felt that the price of their services over the next year would stay the same, while another 1 in 5 each thought price would either increase or decrease.

Separately, demand for agency services was expected to increase over the next year according to 1 in every 2 marketing firm respondents, demonstrating an optimism for the importance of outsourced marketing services in the changing Coronavirus marketplace.



PART II

MARKETING FIRMS AND AGENCIES

When it comes to market research, what are your thoughts on each of the following?

■ 1 (Disagree) ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 (Agree)

Market research is going to be an important part of marketing in the near future



Nearly every marketing firm and agency respondent in this study agreed that market research will be important to marketing in the near future, demonstrating huge opportunity for research and agency relationships.

Market research will help us navigate the new business landscape



Market research will help us understand how our audience has changed

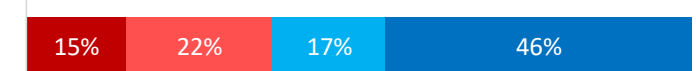


Market research will help us understand new threats, challenges and opportunities



Professional marketers overall had a very positive outlook on the benefits of market research moving forward in the new normal economy. In every category discussed – including understanding changing audiences, understanding challenges and opportunities, and navigating the new landscape – more than 90% of respondents believed that market research would be beneficial to their marketing.

I'm familiar with market research and can conduct it myself



Despite the emphasis on the importance of market research moving forward by virtually all marketing firm and agency respondents, more than a third of professional marketers surveyed did not believe they were familiar enough with market research to conduct it themselves.



PART III AUDIENCE COMPARISON

Highlights



On the whole, in-house marketers and agency marketers feel relatively similar about returning to normal life amidst the current Coronavirus epidemic. Agencies, however, have a skewed view of how their clients view the desire to return to normal life compared to actual results from in-house marketing teams.



Agencies, overall, are much more interested than in-house marketing teams in exploring various marketing opportunities over the next year, such as branding, building relationships with new clients and reconnecting with previous clients. In-house, meanwhile, is more interested than agencies in 'just surviving' over the same time period.



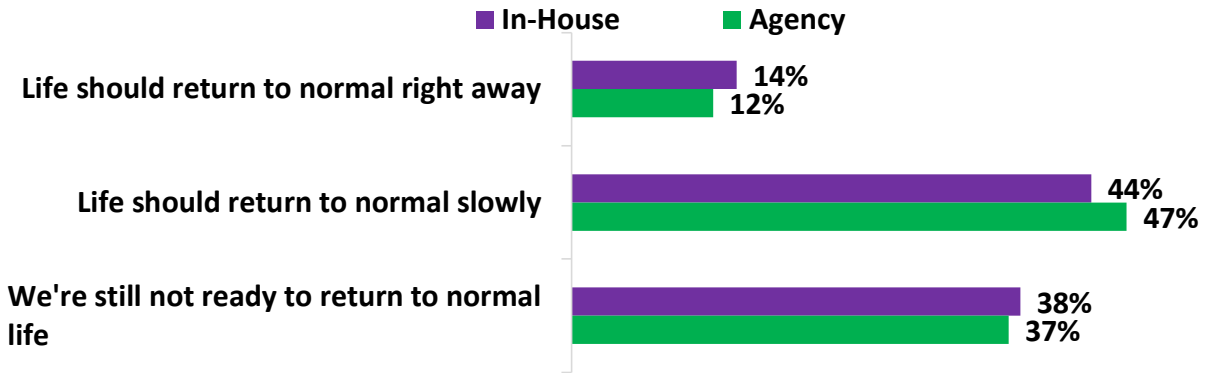
Both agencies and marketing teams agree, market research will be valuable in navigating the new normal for the purpose of marketing. This is especially true for better understanding audiences and identifying new challenges and opportunities.



PART III

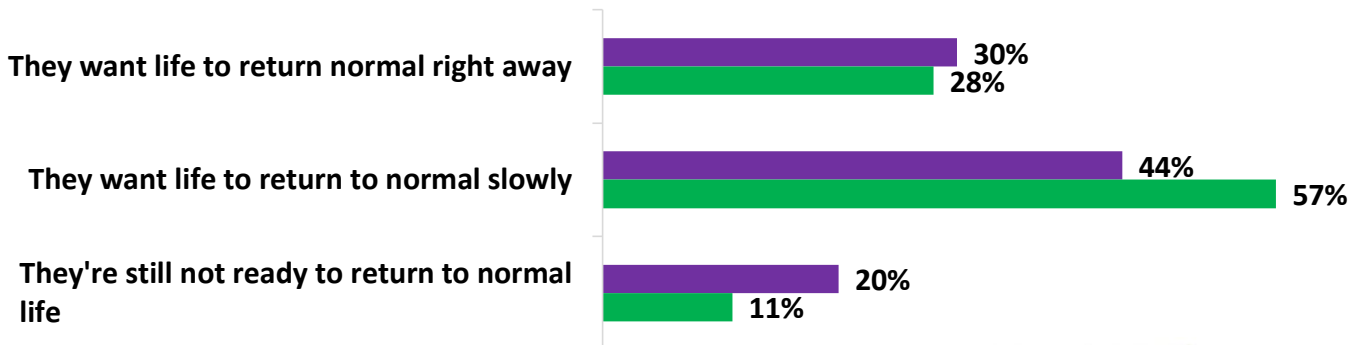
AUDIENCE COMPARISON

How do you feel about life and the Coronavirus?

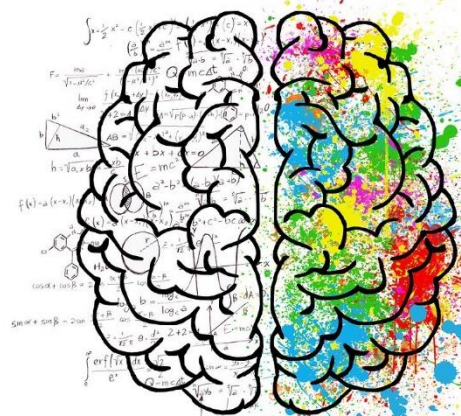


Overall, in-house marketing teams and marketing firms felt about the same overall about the world moving forward amidst the Coronavirus.

How do you think your customers feel about life and the Coronavirus?



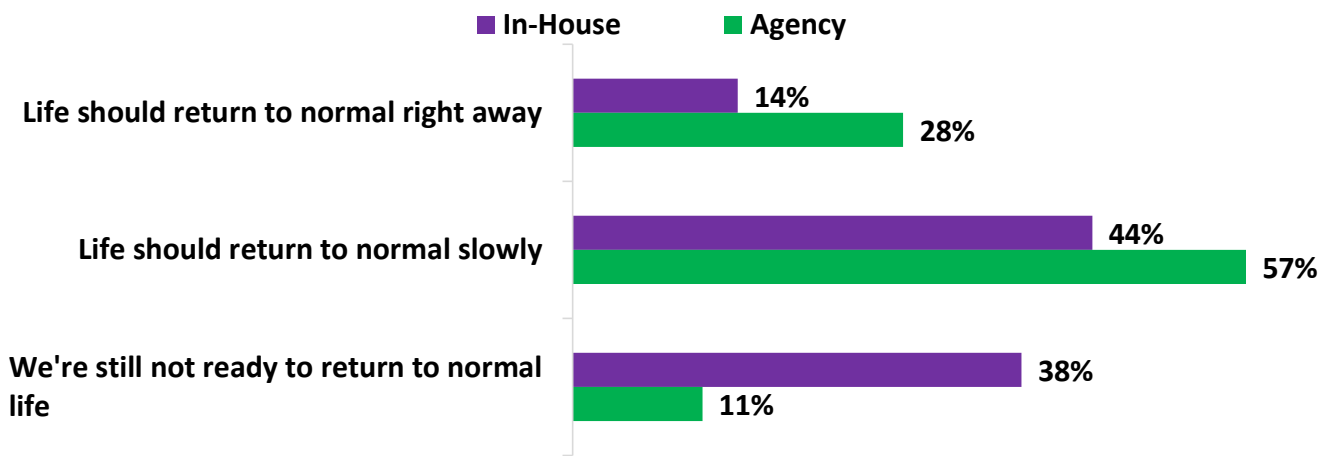
While agencies and in-house teams felt about the same for their own businesses, they viewed their customers and clients differently. Well more than half of agencies believed their clients wanted to return to normal life slowly, compared to just 44% of in-house marketing teams, while only about a tenth of agencies believed their clients weren't ready to return to normal life, compared to a fifth of in-house marketing teams.



PART III

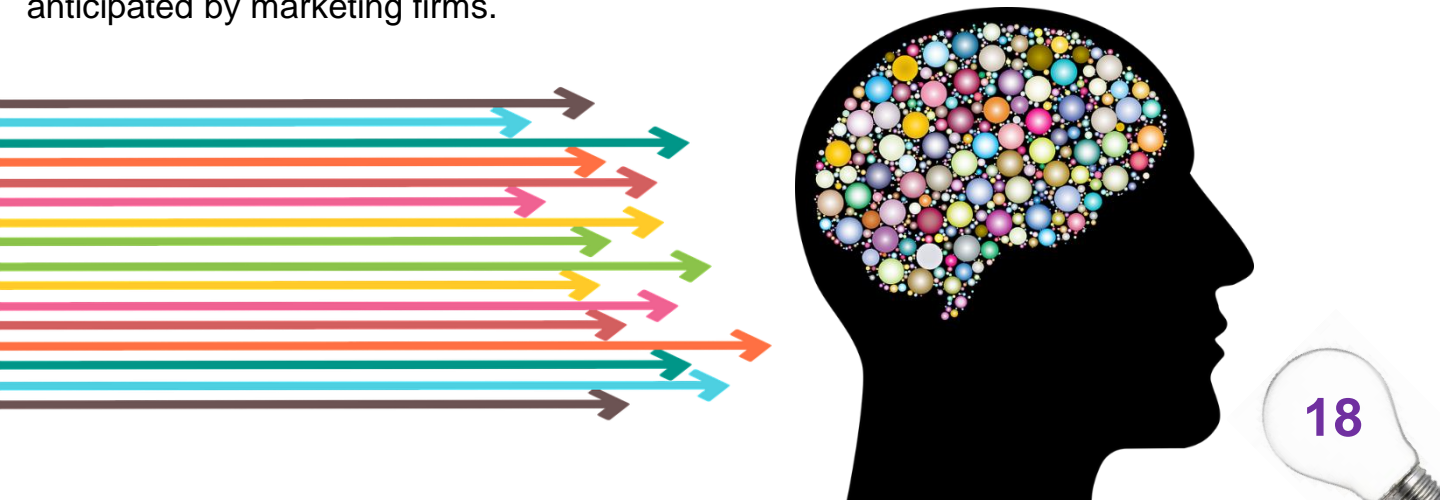
AUDIENCE COMPARISON

Agency Client Perceptions v. Reality



Taking the assumption that the majority of marketing firm clients *are* in-house marketing teams, the above chart compares the 'client expectation' question from the agency respondents with the 'personal preference' question from the in-house marketing team respondents.

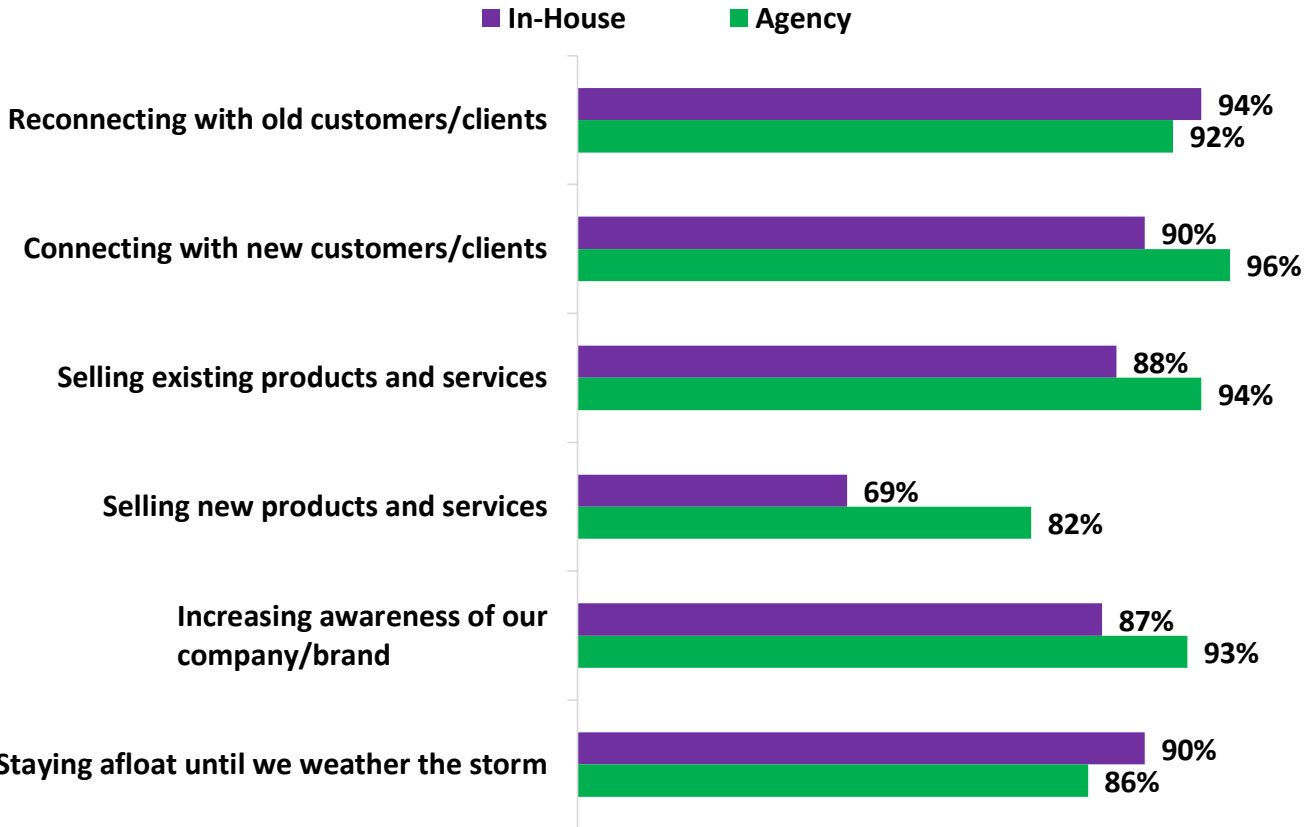
Based on this comparison, overall, agencies were extremely poor at predicting how their clients preferred life move forward amidst the Coronavirus. Nearly two fifths of in-house marketing teams were not ready to return to normal life, compared to just a tenth as expected by agencies. Meanwhile, only 14% of in-house marketing teams were ready to move forward with normal life right away, compared to more than a quarter as anticipated by marketing firms.



PART III

AUDIENCE COMPARISON

What is most valuable to your marketing over the next 6 to 12 months?
Cumulative of “3” and “4” scores.



While in-house marketing teams and agencies are about equally interested in reconnecting with old customers and clients, a much higher share of agencies were interested in connecting with new customers compared to in-house marketing team respondents.

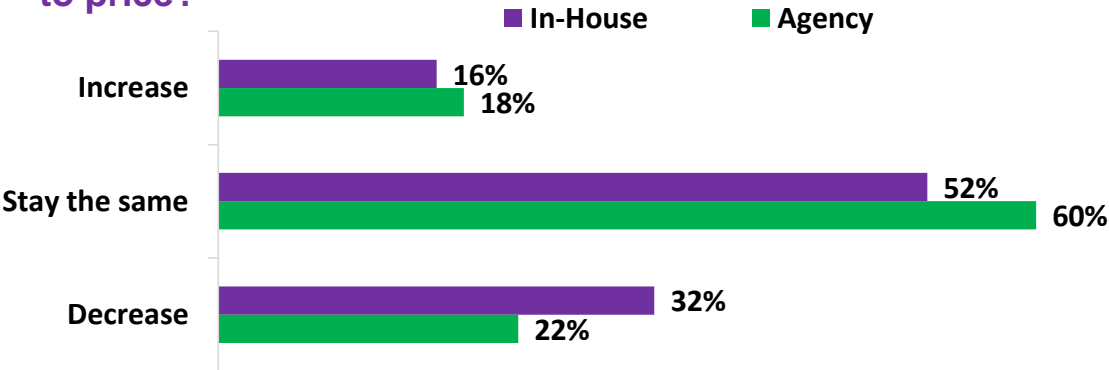
Looking at the near future, agencies are also more interested in selling both new and existing services, and in increasing brand awareness for their companies than in-house marketing teams. By comparison, in-house teams are more interested in just ‘staying afloat and weathering the storm’ than marketing firms.



PART III

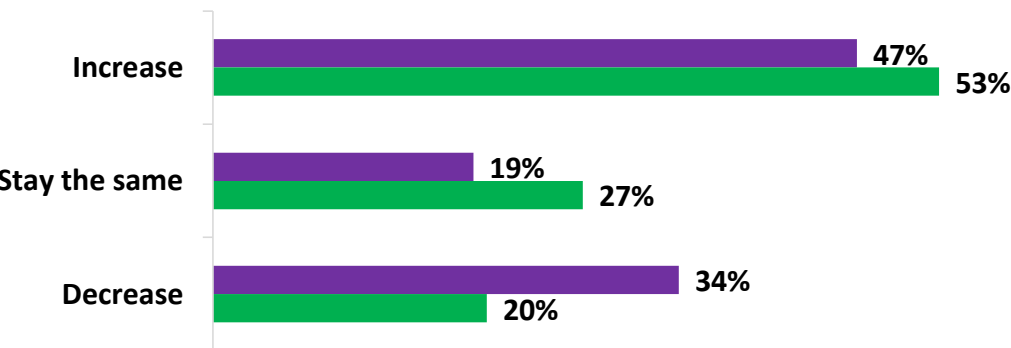
AUDIENCE COMPARISON

When it comes to your company's services, what do you think will happen to price?



Far more in-house marketing teams expected the price of their services to decrease compared to agencies and marketing firms, calling into question whether or not in-house marketing teams will have the ability to maintain budget for outsourcing marketing firm services.

When it comes to your company's services, what do you think will happen to demand?



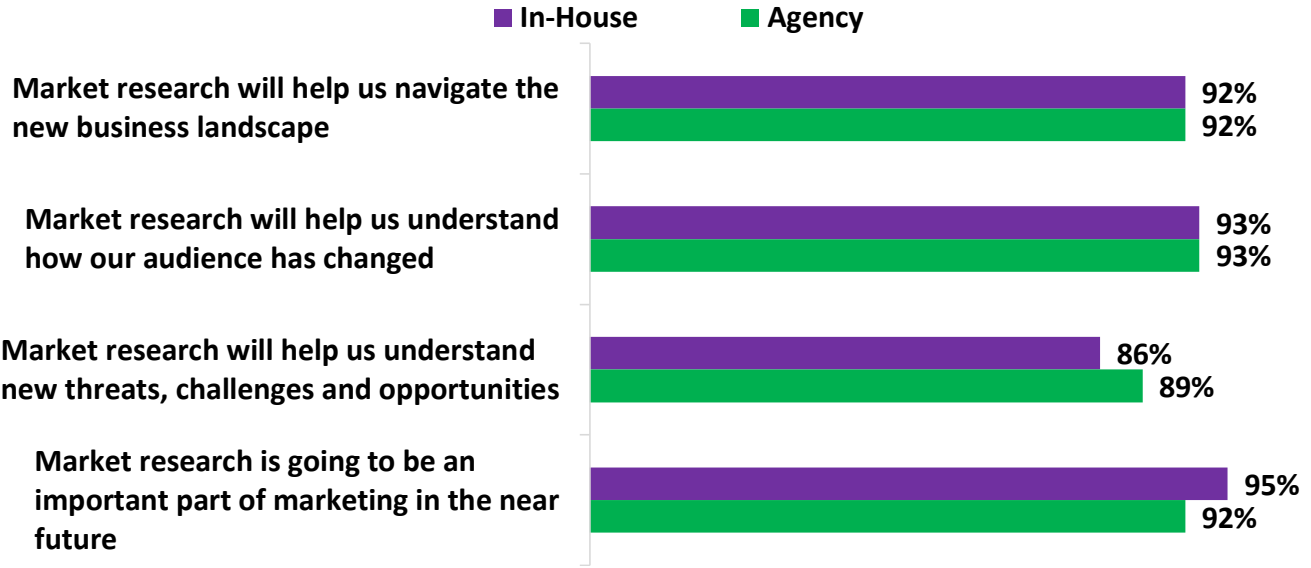
In-house marketing teams were extremely more likely to anticipate that demand for their own industries would decrease over the next year, compared to just a fifth of marketing firms who expected their own services would decrease in demand over the same time period. About half of both audiences, meanwhile, expected that demand would increase, demonstrating an opportunity of alignment based on optimism for both groups in about 1 in 4 cases.



PART III

AUDIENCE COMPARISON

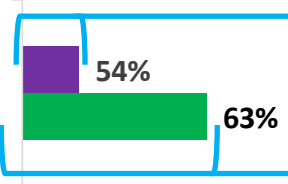
When it comes to market research, what are your thoughts on each of the following?
 Cumulative of “3” and “4” scores.



Overall, both in-house marketing teams and marketing firms each see extreme value in the importance of market research in the coming marketplace. The audiences equally agree that research will help navigate the marketing landscape and understand changed audience behaviors, and feel almost as similarly in the ability for market research to help identify major threats, challenges and opportunities as well.

Where marketing firms and agencies differ greatly is in their perceived abilities and familiarity with market research themselves. While more than 3 in 5 marketing firms felt confident in their abilities, only about half of in-house marketers felt the same way, demonstrating a potential service opportunity for marketing firms to capitalize upon.

I'm familiar with market research and can conduct it myself



With so many in-house marketers feeling unsure about doing market research themselves, marketing firms have a huge opportunity!

ABOUT OUR AUDIENCE

Below is a quick overview of who participated in this study and when it took place. For additional questions, please contact me at matt@s2research.com.



Collection Dates

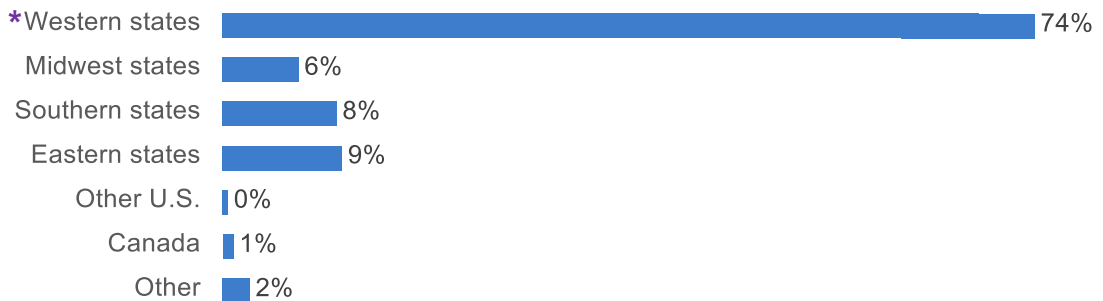
May 13, 2020 through June 15, 2020



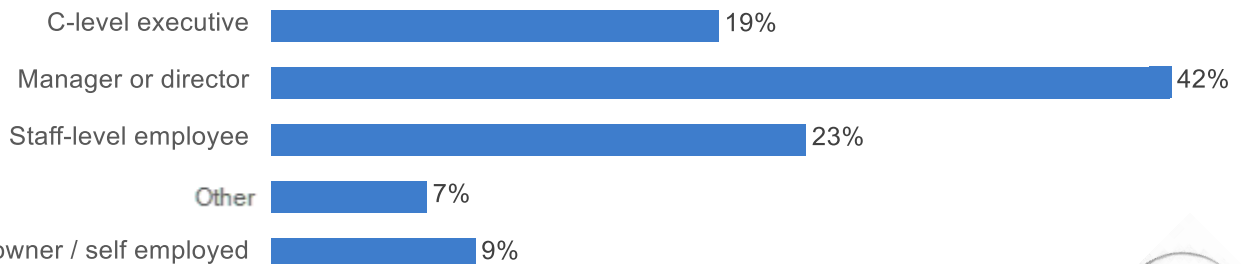
Response Count

n=250

Where They're From



Their Roles



* Note, this project was originally designed as a 'buyer persona survey example project' for S2 Research. As such, a disproportionate share of the audience is located in my 'Western States' home region.

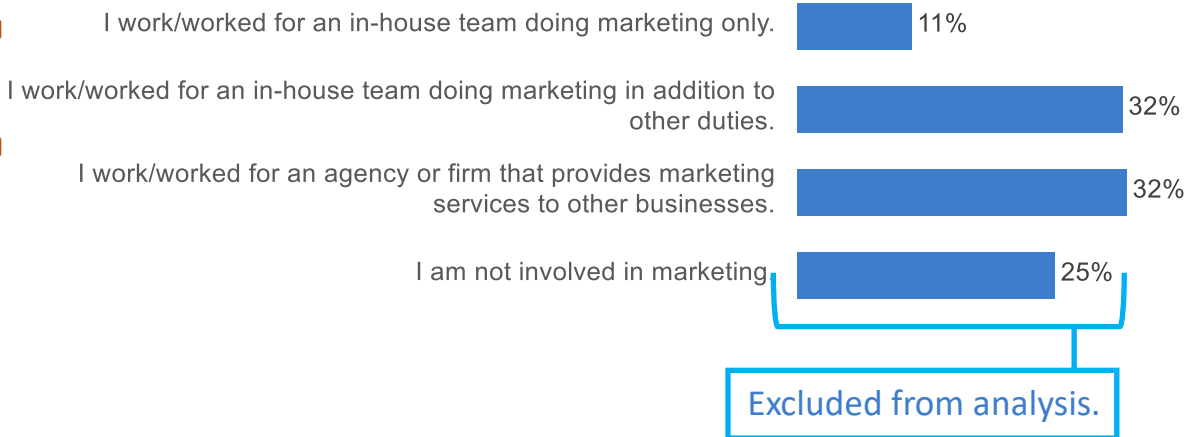
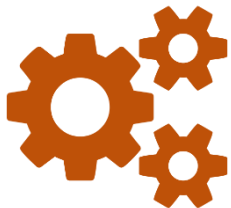
ABOUT OUR AUDIENCE

This study aimed to better understand professionals involved in the marketing industry, either as a service provider or conducting marketing for their employer.

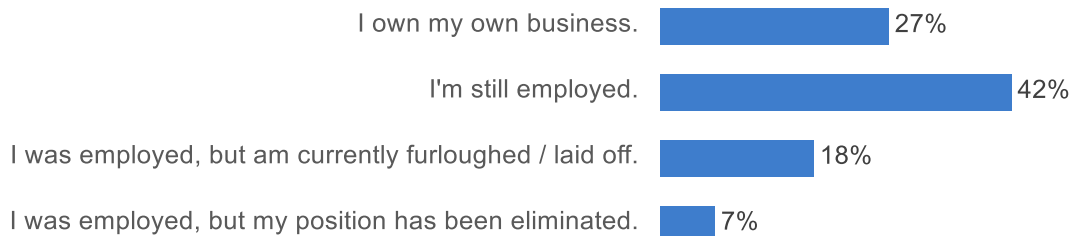
Based on that, as well as changes to employment as a result of the global pandemic, several questions were asked pertaining to marketing roles and current employment status.

Below is an overview of how those respondents shook out.

Marketing Roles



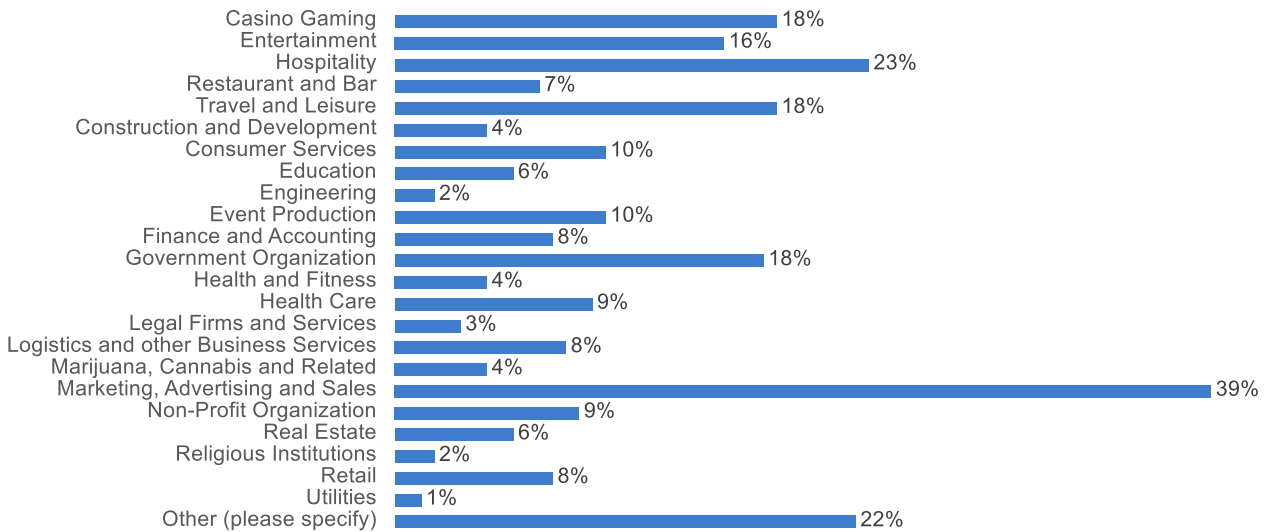
Employment Status



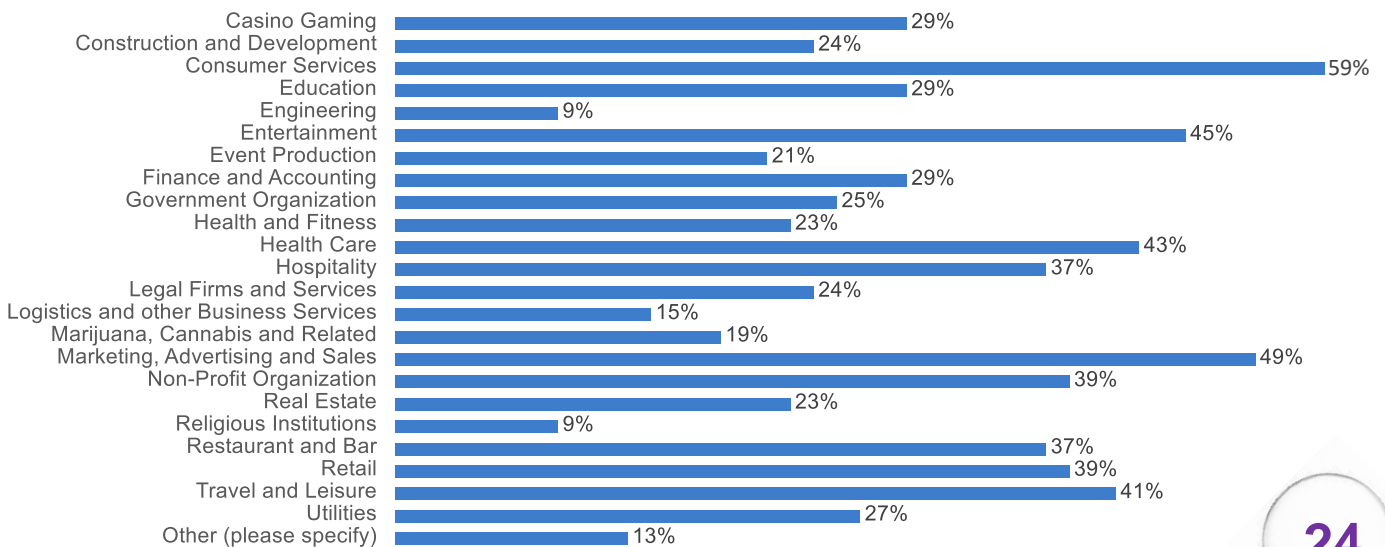
ABOUT OUR AUDIENCE

I also wanted to make sure I covered a wide variety of industries, across both client-side and in areas agencies specialized. Below is a breakdown of how each audience group shook out in terms of industries worked.

In-House Marketing Industries



Agency Industries



LEARN MORE ABOUT S2 RESEARCH

Hi, I'm Matt Seltzer, a Market Research Partner for marketers like you.

Right now, more brand and agency marketers are tapping into market research insights than ever before. But, if your team doesn't yet have access to an in-house research team, incorporating those insights might seem more perilous than profitable.

That's why I started S2 Research - to help more marketers add research back into their marketing.

I've spent my career conducting great market research and managing incredible marketing strategies. In that time, I've come to recognize that marketers and market researchers struggle to communicate with each other. Fluent in both languages, I'm now serving as an effective translator between the two worlds.

[Let's connect on LinkedIn!](#)

**Interested in exploring what a Market Research Partner can bring to your marketing team?
Reach out to me today!**



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