

State of Demand Gen

2021



Key State of Demand Gen 2021 Survey Findings

- Although 2020 was a year of crisis, Demand Gen marketers delivered exceptional results over the past 12 months. Only 1 in 4 (26%) changed their levels of activity or KPIs in response to the pandemic — and of these, 86% met or exceeded their original or adjusted KPIs.
- In a vote of confidence for its effectiveness, three-quarters (73%) have increased their Demand Gen activity since the beginning of the year. When asked for reasons behind the increase, the proven ROI of Demand Gen featured as one of the top four responses, in addition to increased sales and marketing targets.
- As buyer behavior has changed, 8 in 10 (81%) have revised the way they evaluate lead quality. Most common is a change to lead scoring based on content and engagement. And for the first time, technology-driven processes (such as marketing automation) are the primary method of qualification, compared to SDR-based screening last year.
- Even though 70% used face-to-face events in 2019, almost 8 in 10 believe they were successful in replacing live events — and while online events were the most common replacement, marketers used a wide range of tactics to fill the gap.
- However, 90% of Demand Gen marketers believe that buyers are becoming fatigued with online events, and a growing share will be increasing high-quality lead programs over the next 12 months.



We can say with confidence that Demand Gen is up across the board.

73% of respondents say the level of their Demand-Gen activity has grown since the start of 2021, demonstrating confidence in its value.

Overview

In May 2021, Activate Marketing Services fielded its fifth “State of Demand Gen” survey to B2B tech marketing and Demand-Gen decision makers and influencers, in association with MarketingCharts. We received **179 responses**, of which 152 were qualified and used in the analysis.

The results uncovered the levels of success that B2B marketers achieved despite the challenges of 2020; the strategies and tactics they are using and changing; and their views of the future.

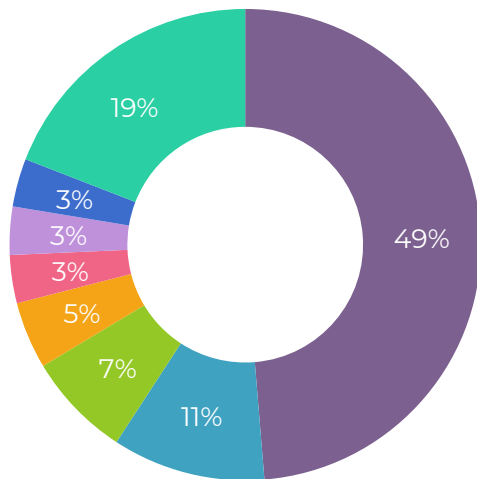
Marketers are telling us that Demand Gen has proven its value in a time of crisis, leading to significant increases in budgets and activity as sales and marketing targets bounce back.



Respondent Demographics

Department

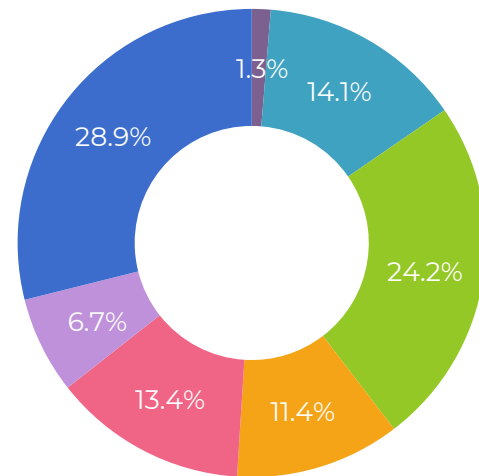
- Demand Generation Marketing
- Corporate Marketing
- Strategic Marketing
- Field Marketing
- Account-Based Marketing
- Product Marketing
- Marketing Operations
- Other



“Other” answers include:
Campaign Management
Search Marketing
Social Marketing

Company Size

- 1 - 25
- 26 - 99
- 100 - 499
- 500 - 999
- 1,000 - 4,999
- 5,000 - 9,999
- 10,000+

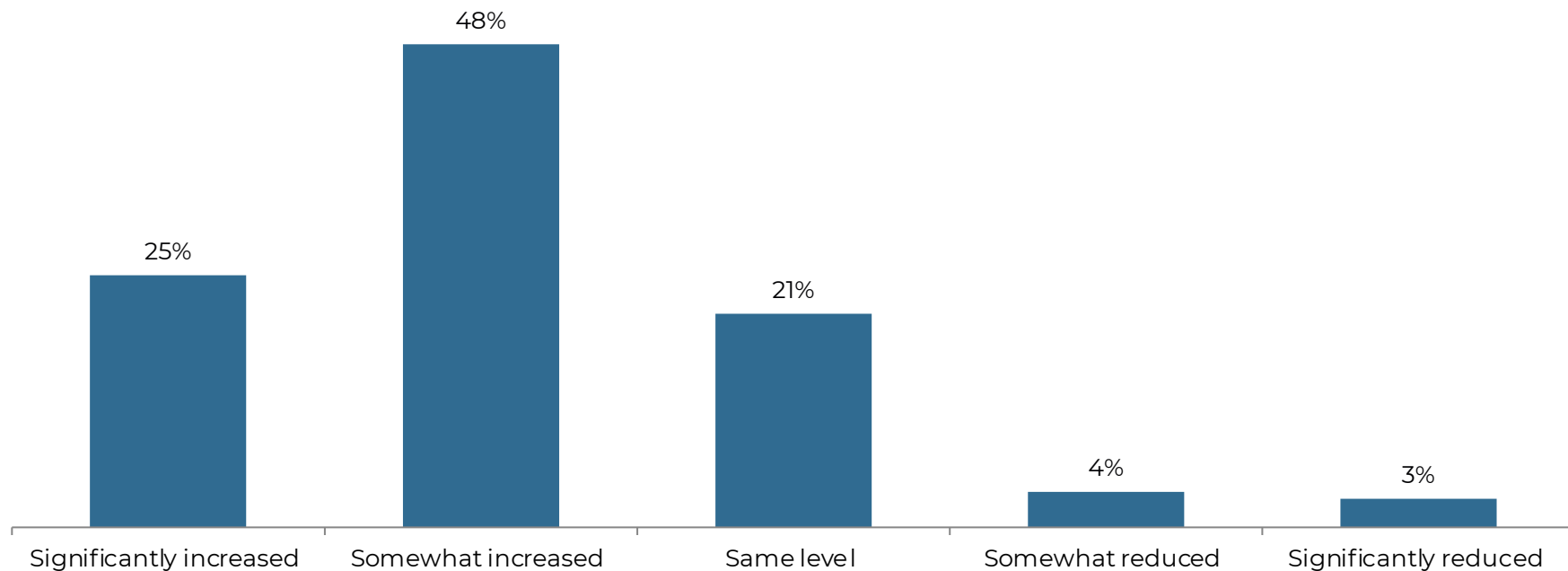


89% of respondents were from North America (US and Canada)

Demand Gen Activity Levels



Since the start of 2021, how has the level of your Demand Gen activity changed?



What are the primary reasons behind the increase in Demand Gen activity since the start of 2021? (choose up to 3)

Top 4 options out of 6

- Reallocation of budget from events
- An increase in sales targets
- An increase in marketing targets
- Strong ROI from Demand Gen activity



Armed with budgets and having proven their worth with strong ROI, Demand Gen marketers are being allocated growing spending power to tackle increases in sales and marketing targets.

Channels & Tactics



Thinking about 2020, which Demand Gen tactics/channels did you increase the most? (choose up to 3)



Not surprisingly, online events rose up the ranks compared to 2019, while ABM fell down the list.

In the coming 12 months, which Demand Gen tactics/channels do you expect to increase the most? (choose up to 3)

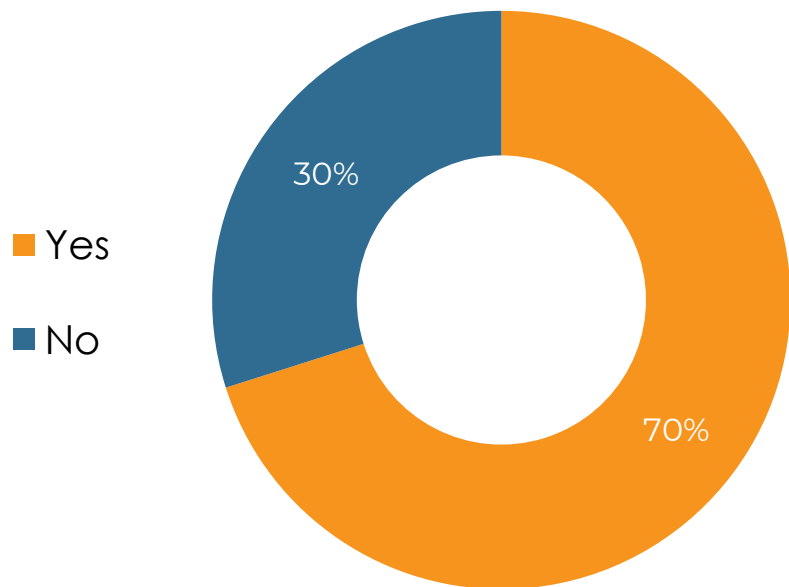
- #1 Account-based marketing (ABM) programs
- #2 High-quality lead programs (Late-funnel, HQL/SRL)
- #3 Online events (e.g., webcasts)
- #4 Content syndication
- #5 Paid search
- #6 Inbound marketing
- #7 Video marketing
- #8 Email marketing
- #9 Live events
- #10 (Tied) Social / Display or programmatic advertising



How has the situation changed?

Saturation with online events means they are no longer the tactic expected to grow the most. High-quality lead programs continue to gain favor.

Prior to 2020, did your company use face-to-face events for demand generation?



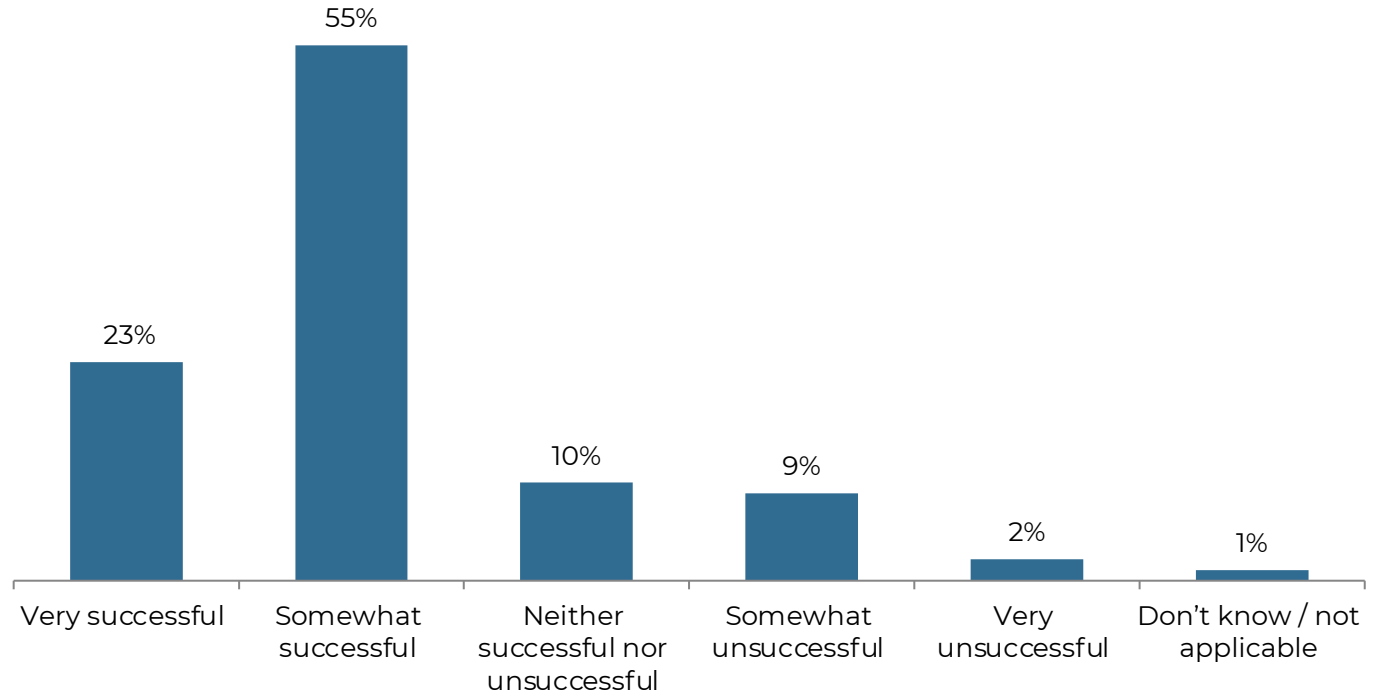
COVID forced changes for most Demand Gen marketers.

Of those who had previously run face-to-face events, 4 in 5 (78%) turned to online events as an alternative.

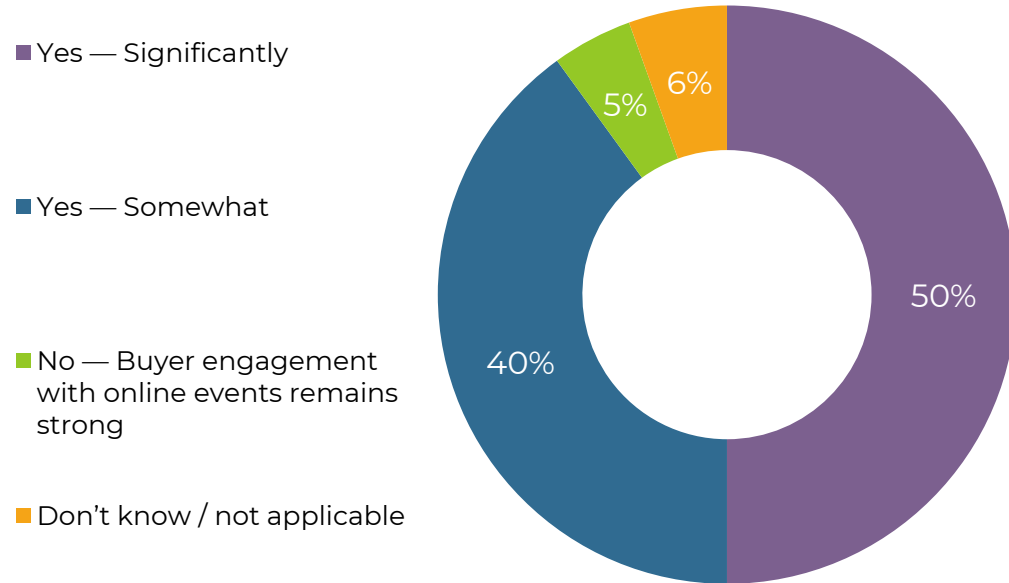
In your opinion, how successful has your company been in replacing face-to-face events with other Demand Gen tactics / channels?



Almost 8 in 10 believe they were successful in replacing live events, while 61% rated the performance of online events as “excellent” or “good.”



In your opinion, are buyers becoming fatigued with online events?



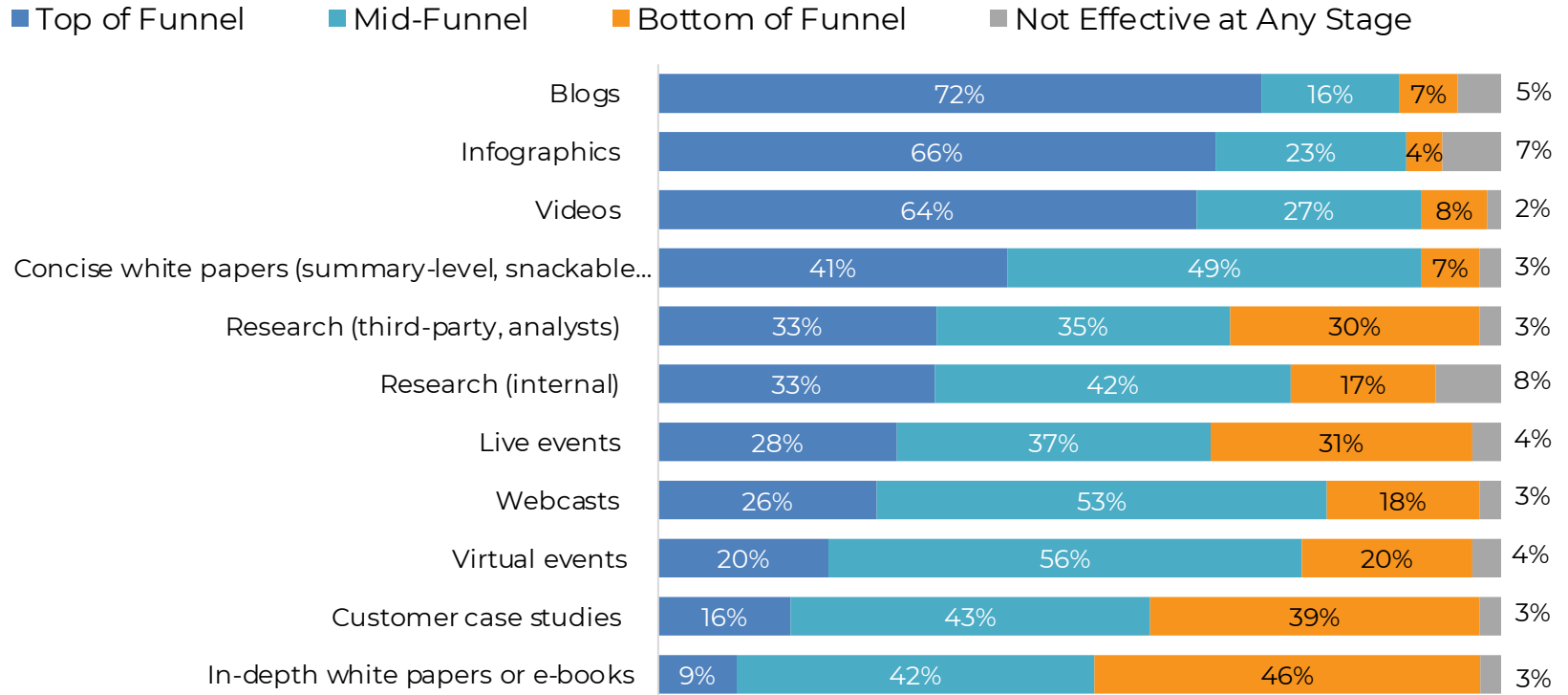
Online events performed admirably in 2020, but...

9 in 10 Demand Gen marketers believe buyers are becoming fatigued with them.

Strategy & Execution



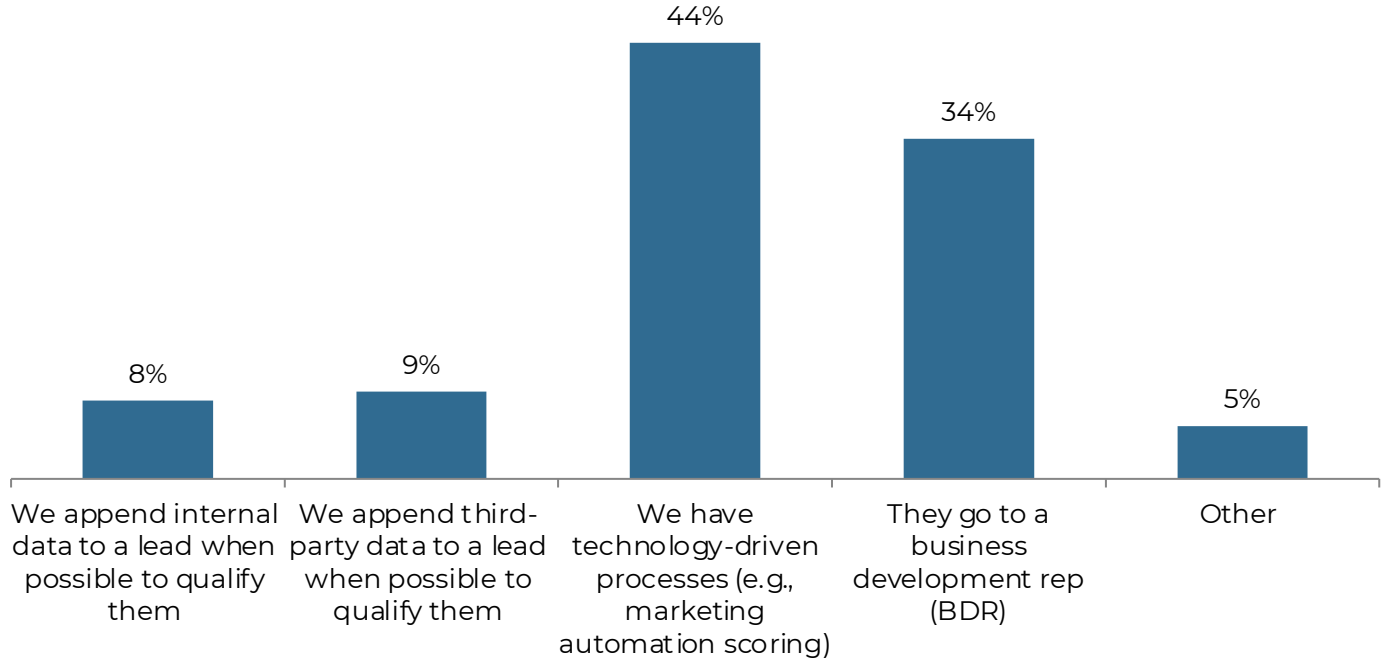
Please indicate the stage of the funnel for which you believe each of the following content types is most effective



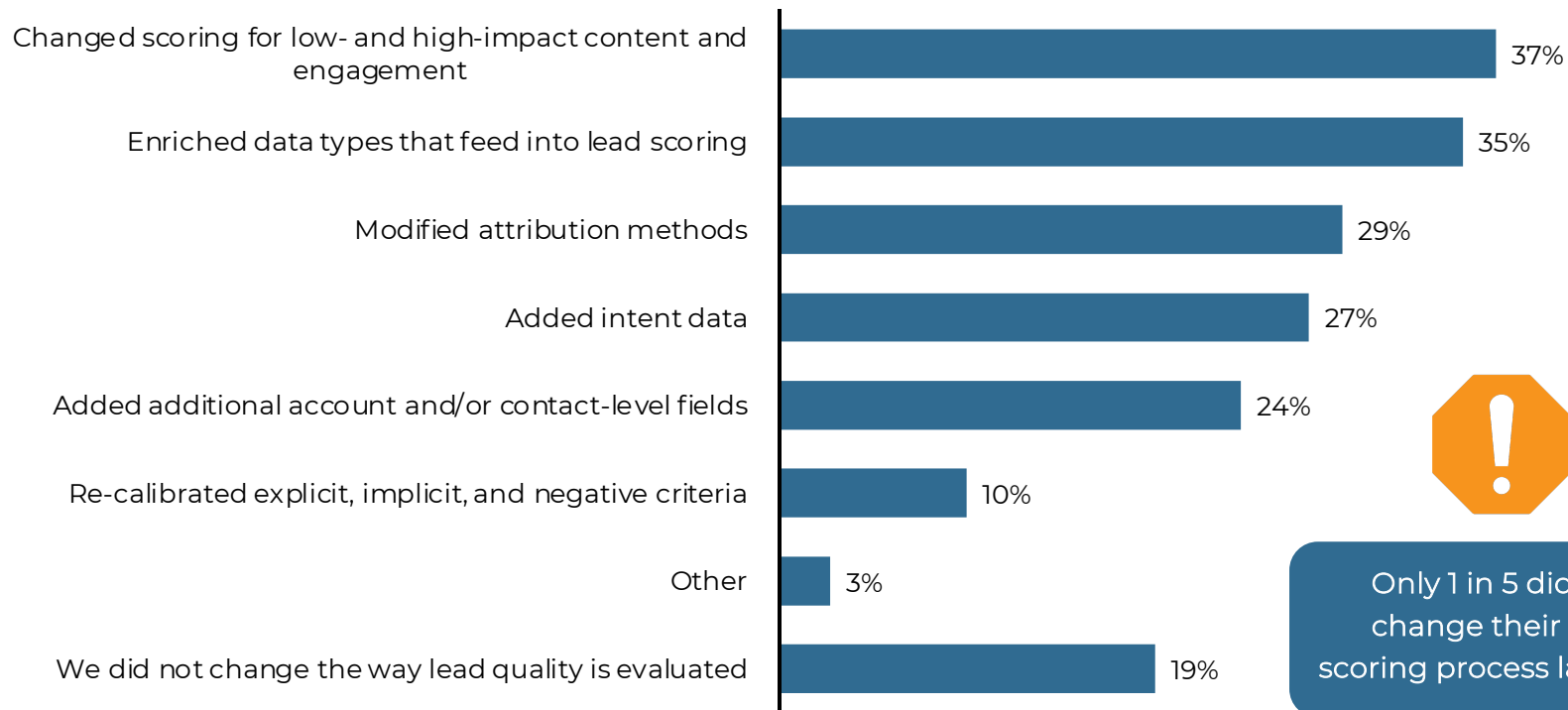
Which of the following best describes how your brand qualifies leads after they have been generated by marketing?



For the first time, more B2B marketers are using technology-driven processes than qualifying by BDR.



In the past 12 months, how did you change the way you evaluate lead quality? (choose all that apply)

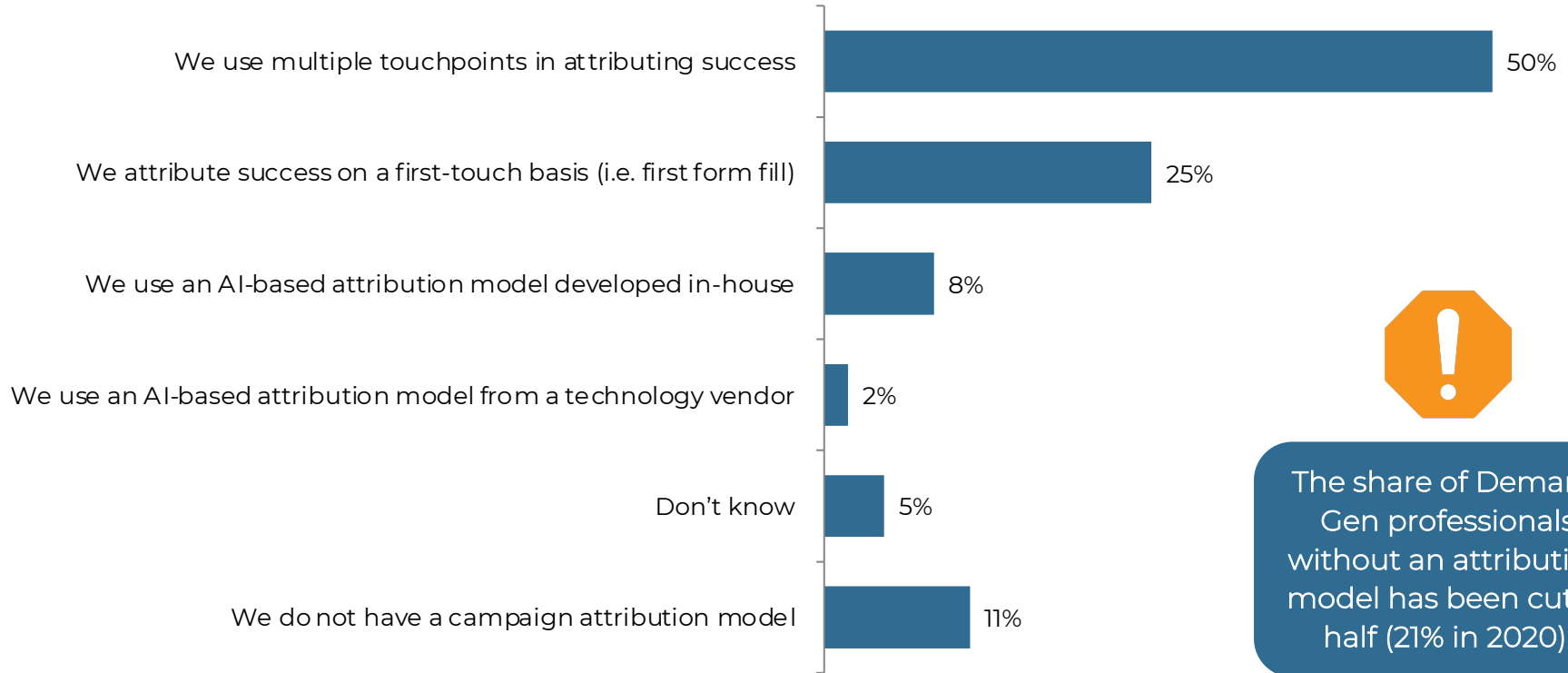


Only 1 in 5 did not change their lead scoring process last year.

Measurement & Challenges



Which of the following best describes your campaign attribution model?



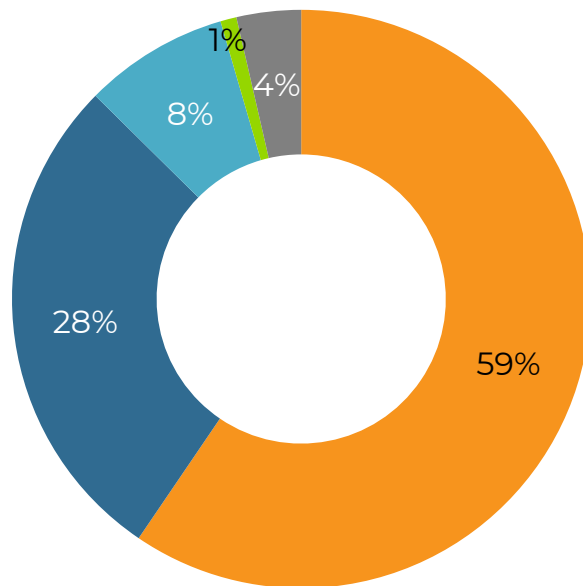
The share of Demand Gen professionals without an attribution model has been cut in half (21% in 2020).

Which of the following most accurately describes how you define Demand Gen campaign success?



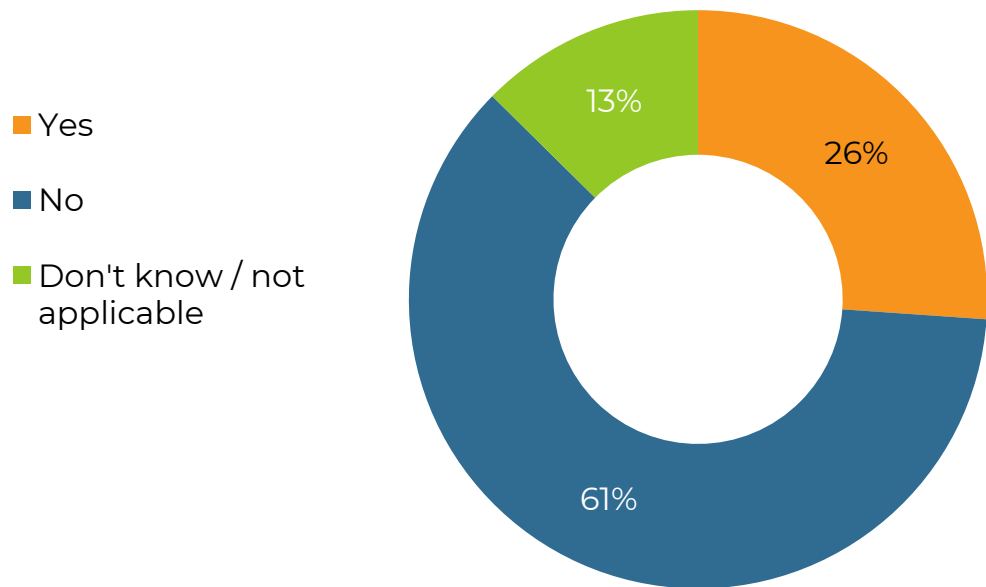
Demand Gen professionals remain focused on the bottom line.

Around 3 in 5 measure success through new pipeline opportunities / revenue.



- Source new pipeline opportunities / revenue
- Generate marketing-qualified leads (MQLs)
- Generate sales-qualified leads (SQLs)
- Quantity of raw (minimally qualified) leads
- Other

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, did you reduce your original KPIs / targets for Demand Gen activity in 2020?



Most marketers maintained their targets despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

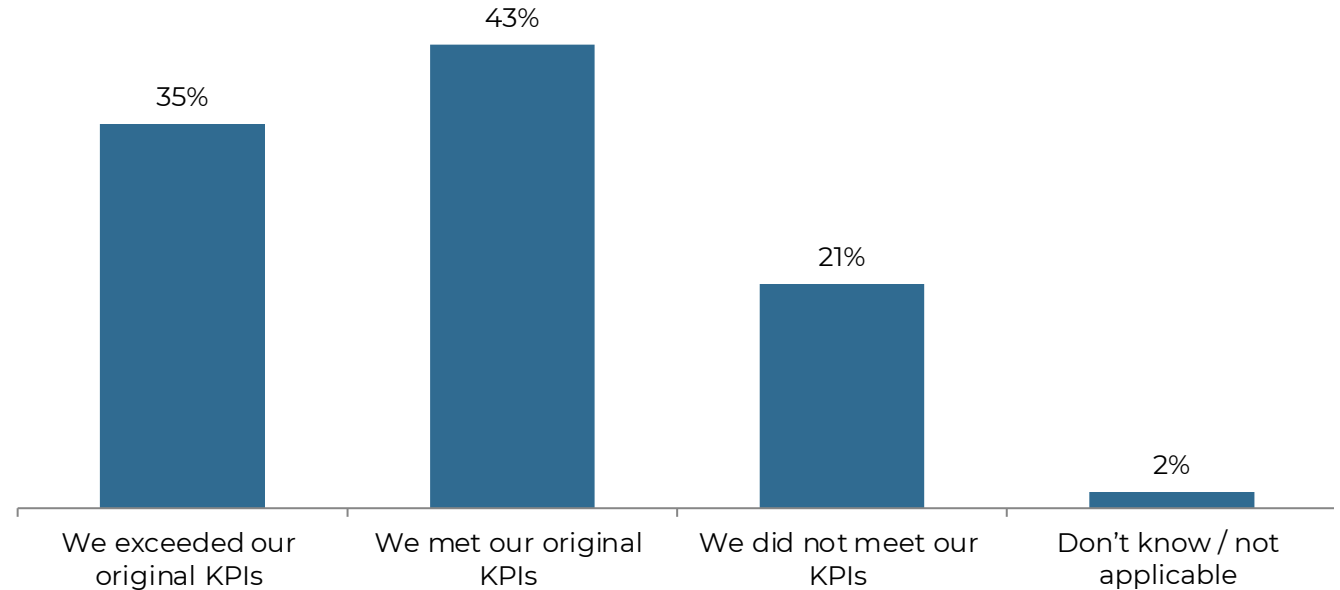
Only 1 in 4 say they reduced their original KPIs for 2020, suggesting a vote of confidence in Demand Gen's ability to adapt.

Thinking of KPIs in 2020, which of the following best describes your Demand Gen results?

Question only asked if original KPIs had been kept.



78% who kept their original KPIs met or exceeded them.

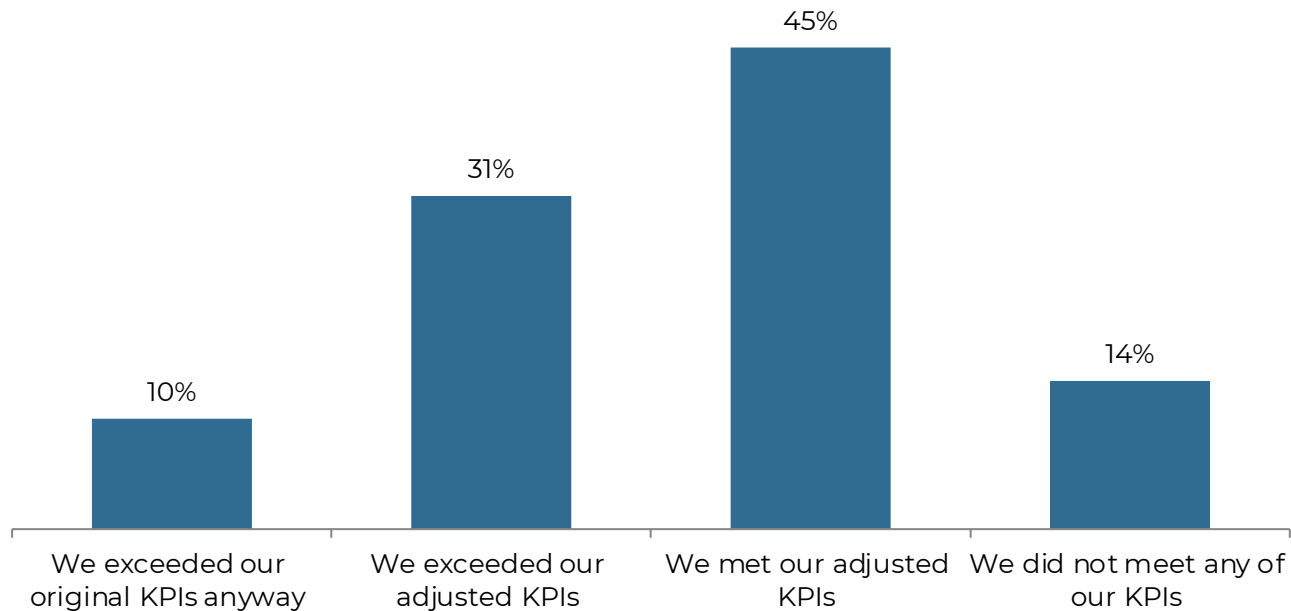


Following the adjustment of your 2020 KPIs, which of the following best describes your Demand Gen results?

Question only asked if KPIs had been reduced.

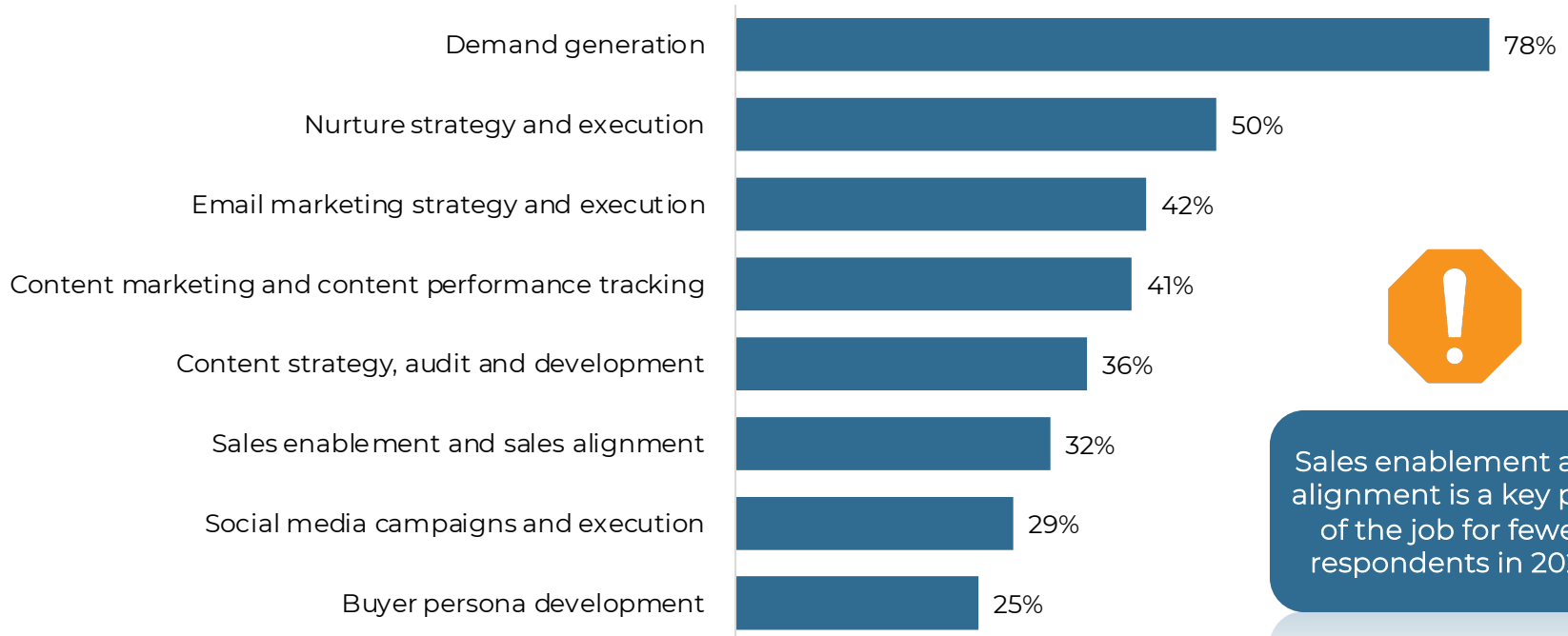


86% who reduced their KPIs met or exceeded either their original or reduced KPIs.



How important do you consider the following functions in your specific job?

Percentage rating 1 on a 5-point scale (1 = a key part of my job; 5 = not my job)



Which of the following are your biggest pitfalls or challenges when it comes to Demand Gen? (choose up to 3)



Finding sources for quality leads remains the most commonly cited issue.

Looking Forward

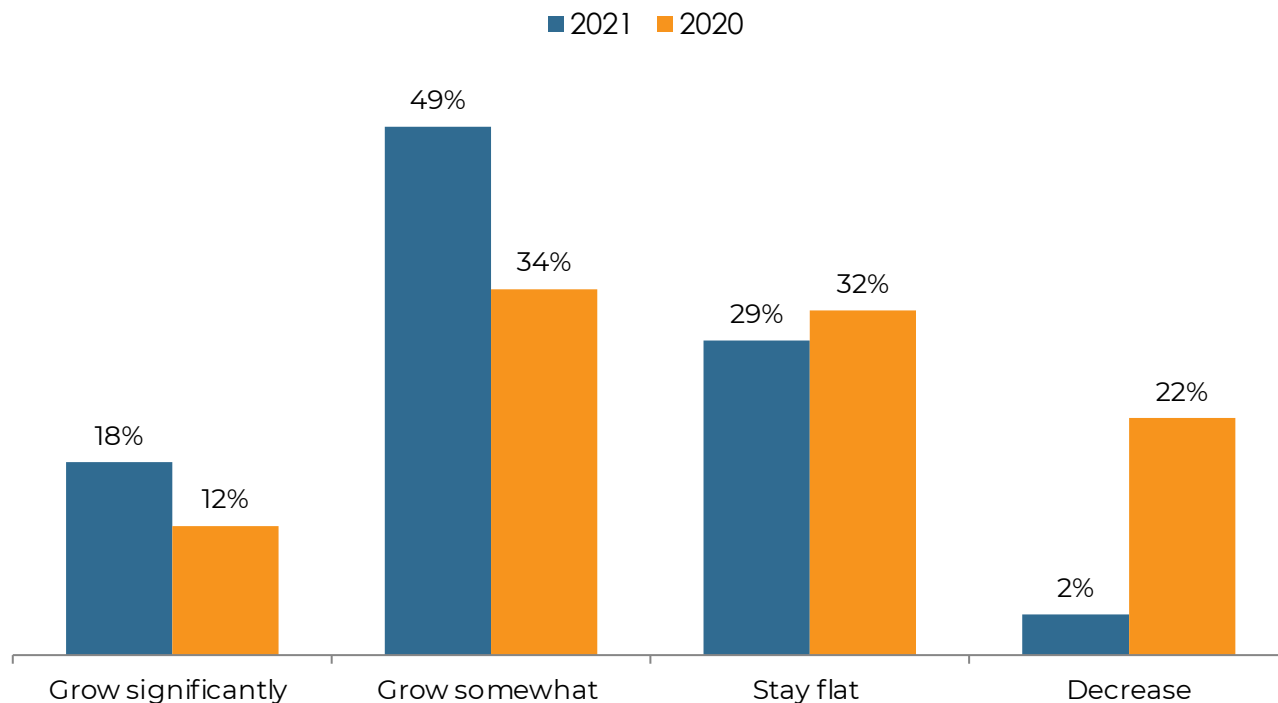


In the next 12 months, how do you expect your Demand Gen budgets to change?

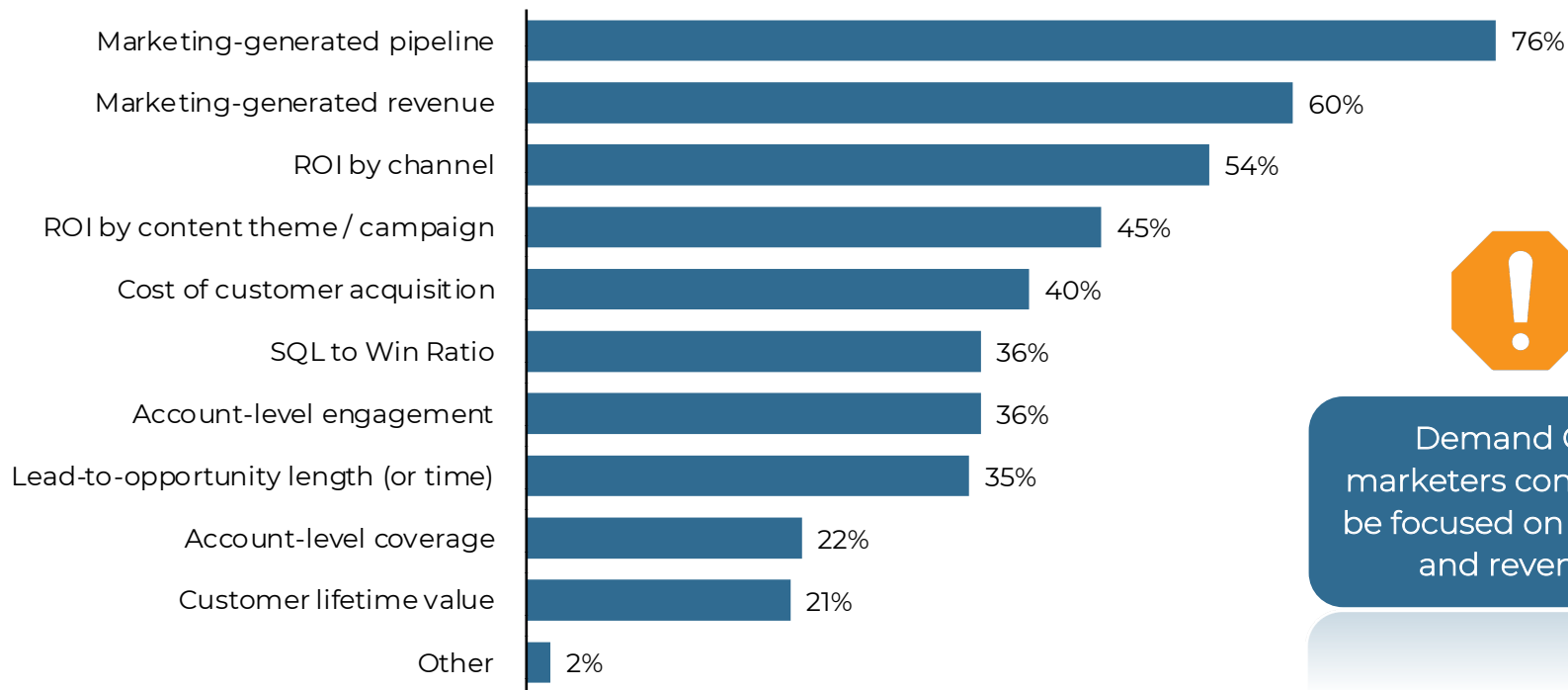


Two-thirds expect their Demand Gen budgets to increase.

This suggests widespread satisfaction with Demand Gen's performance in 2020.

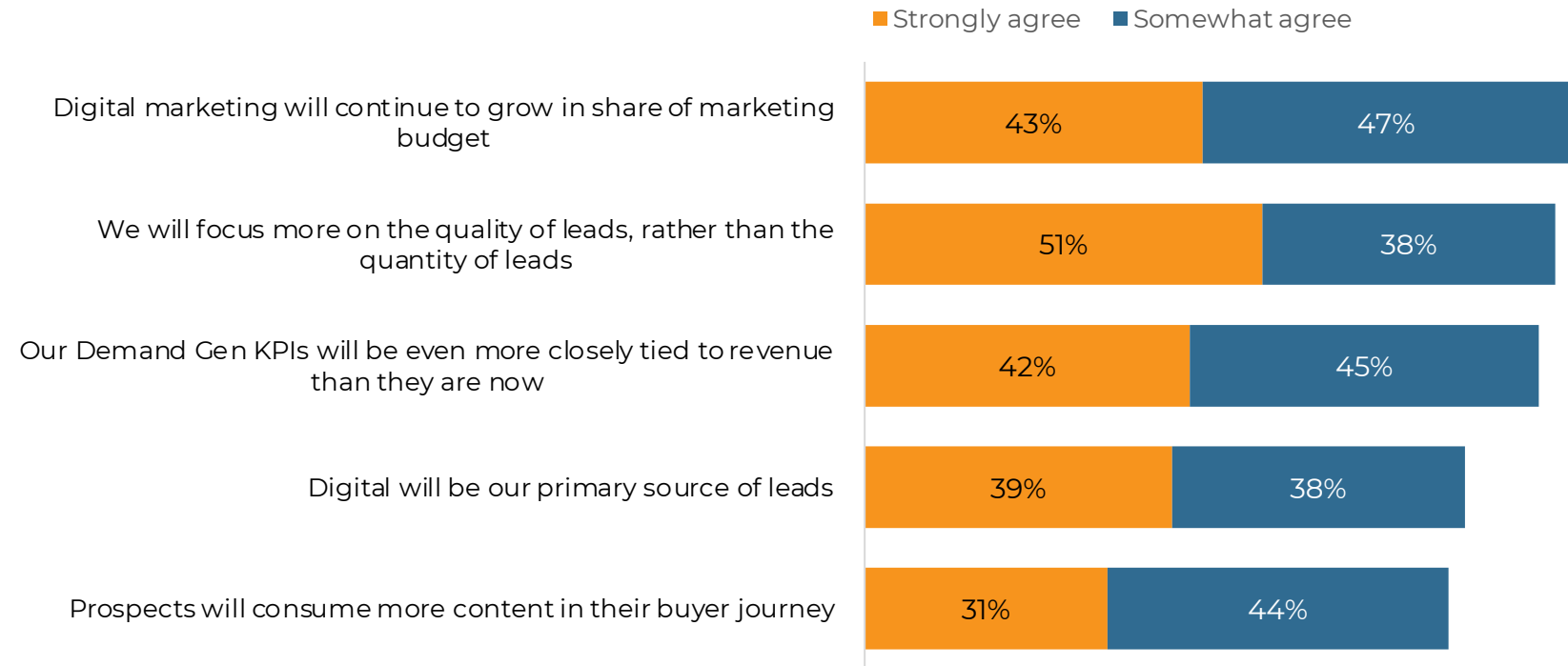


Which of the following metrics do you plan to use in the next 12 months? (select all that apply)



Demand Gen marketers continue to be focused on pipeline and revenue.

Thinking of the future, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?



Conclusion

Demand Gen proved its worth in 2020 and is becoming increasingly important as organizations increase sales and marketing tactics.

- Three-quarters (73%) have increased their Demand Gen activities since the start of the year and 67% expect their Demand Gen budgets to grow over the coming 12 months.
- A greater share of marketers are using technology as their primary means of qualification and those without an attribution model are becoming ever rarer.
- Revenue remains the most important area of focus. The majority measure success based on their ability to source new pipeline opportunities and revenue. Almost 9 in 10 (87%) see their KPIs being even more closely tied to revenue in the future.
- While 6 in 10 said online events were effective for demand generation, concern about buyer fatigue may limit continued rates of growth.
- Finding sources for quality leads remains the biggest challenge, even as prospects are expected to consume more content.

