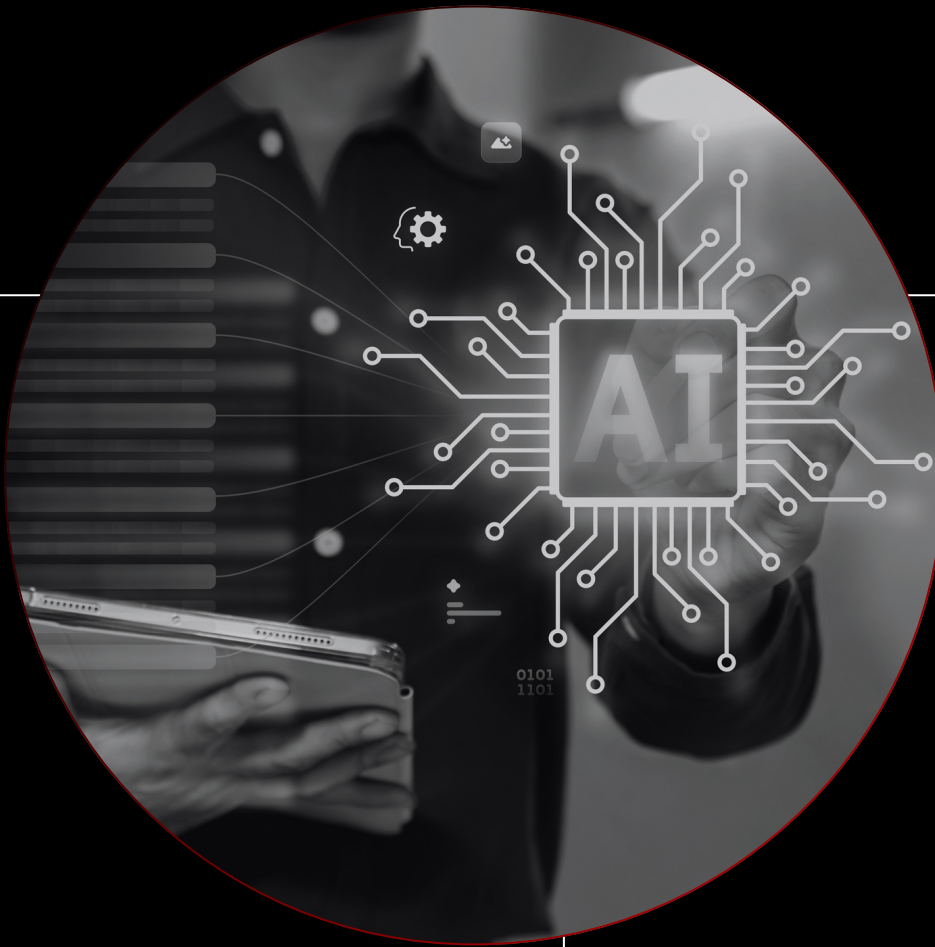


10Fold

The Visibility Reset: How AI Search Is Changing B2B Content Strategy



May 2026

Helping Innovators Change the World

Trends Taking Center Stage

B2B content marketing is entering a new phase. For years, marketing teams optimized content for traditional search rankings and website traffic, but buyers are increasingly turning to AI-powered search and answer engines and the path to discovery is changing quickly.

This report explores how B2B tech marketers are adapting content strategies for an AI-driven discovery environment and what it means for visibility, traffic, staffing, governance and lead quality.



Research Methodology

10Fold commissioned Sapio to survey 400 B2B technology marketing decision makers in the United States and Europe to better understand how AI is changing content marketing strategy, execution, distribution and measurement. More details are in the appendix.

Key Findings



AI search is now the top content distribution channel.

52% said AI-generated search and answer engines was the most effective distribution channel, compared to organic search (29%)



Visibility has become a strategic priority.

More than half of respondents, 52%, said visibility in AI-generated search is very important, and 15% said it is a top strategic priority.



Most content is not yet ready for AI discovery.

The majority, (41%), said only 25% to 49% of their content has been created or updated for AI discovery, suggesting a significant readiness gap.



Credibility is now one of content marketing's biggest challenges.

Most, 31%, said their top content challenge is securing visibility in AI-driven discovery. Differentiating and producing enough high quality content were also listed.



AI is increasing content investment, not replacing it.

78% received more content marketing budget and more resources.



Lead quality is improving.

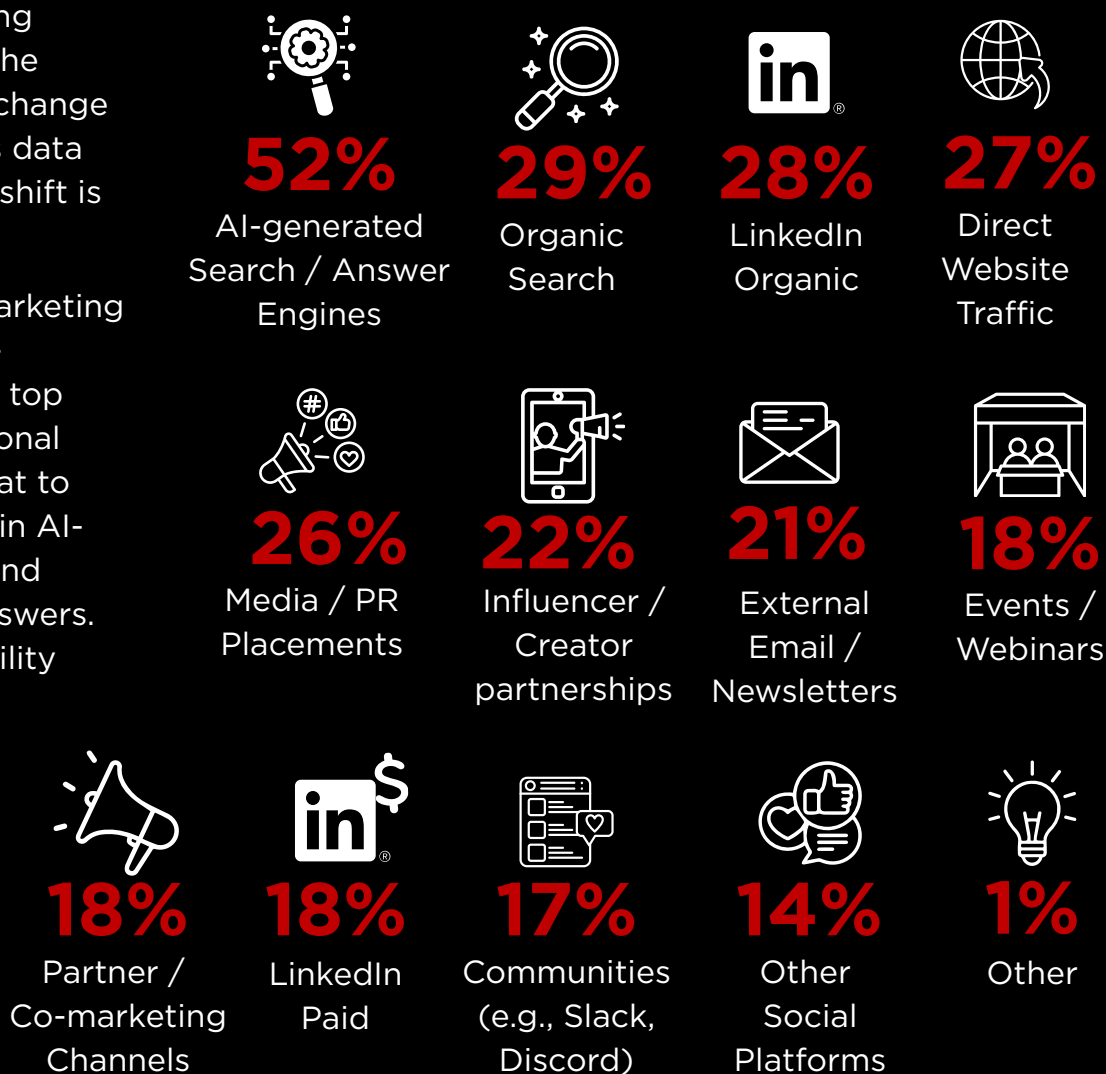
85% claimed lead quality had improved over the past 12 months, with 32% citing significant improvements.

AI Search Becomes the New Front Door

For B2B marketers, finding prospects is the battle. The Channels to find buyers change over time, and this year's data suggests the next major shift is underway.

With 52% of B2B tech marketing leaders agreeing that AI-generated search is their top channel, we know traditional SEO has taken a back seat to buyers asking questions in AI-powered environments and receiving synthesized answers. This means content visibility may depend less on owning the top search result and more on getting content recognized and cited by credible sources.

Distribution Channels Ranked by Effectiveness



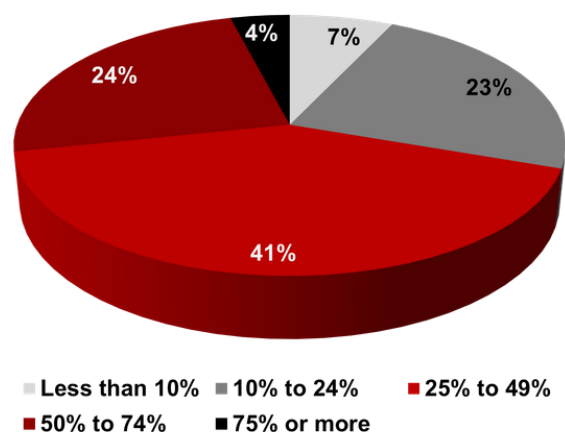
AI-generated search is not just another channel. It is becoming a discovery layer that can influence whether buyers see, trust or engage with a brand's content.

The AI Readiness Gap

B2B marketers understand that AI visibility matters. More than half of respondents said visibility in AI-generated search is very important, and another 15% said it is a top strategic priority.

But the study also shows a gap between importance and readiness. Forty one percent have only 25% to 49% of their marketing content optimized.

Share of Content Created or Updated for AI-Driven Search



Many B2B Tech Companies are still in the early phases of adapting their content for AI-powered search.

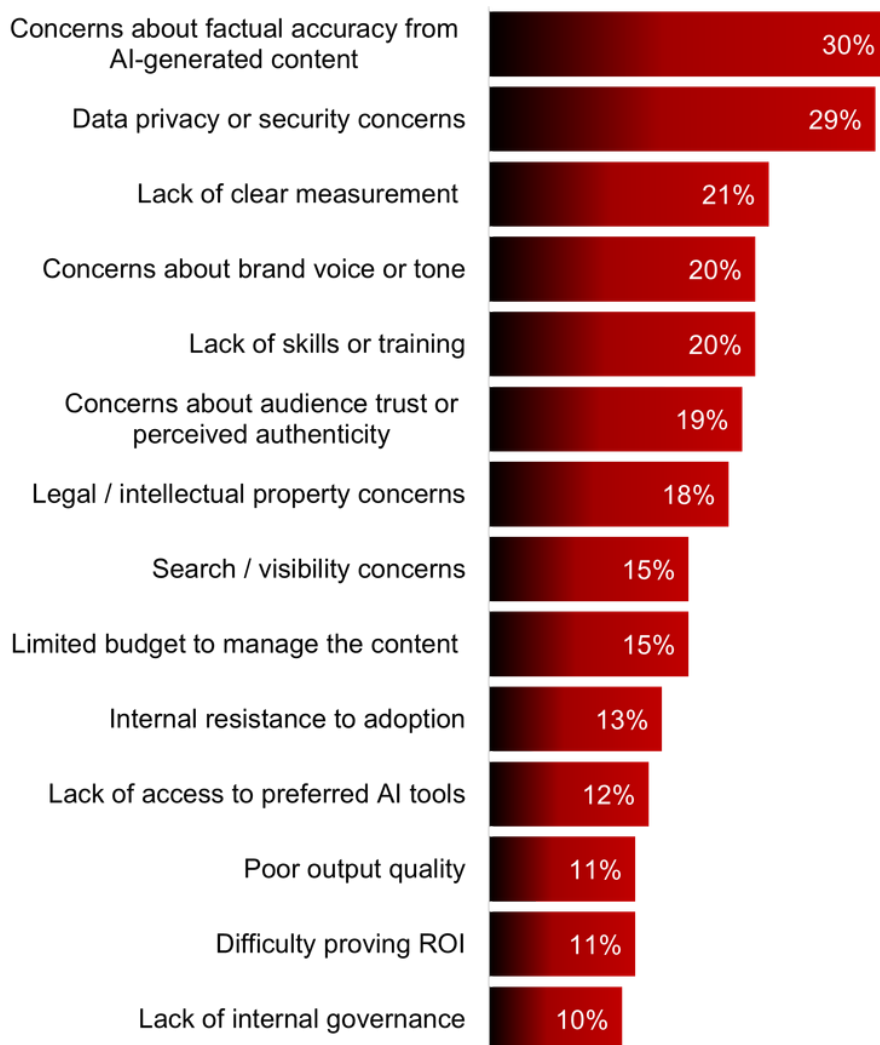
The work is not simply technical. Structured data, FAQ-style content and internal linking can help, but B2B brands also need content that directly answers buyer questions, demonstrates expertise, includes credible support, and reinforces a differentiated point of view.

The Credibility Challenge

AI has made it easier to create more content, but not necessarily better content. That may explain why marketers are most concerned about visibility, differentiation and quality. The AI content race is not only about speed or volume. If every company can publish more quickly, volume alone is less valuable.

Credibility depends on differentiation, clear expertise, credible third-party validation, and content that answers buyer questions better than alternatives. This also explains why media coverage, expert bylines, proprietary data, influencers, analyst validation and peer review sites are increasingly important in the AI search era based on the authority and credibility they lend to content.

Top Content Marketing Challenges in an AI-Driven Environment



The AI content race is not just about speed. It is about credibility, differentiation and proof of impact.

Traffic Is Changing, But the Story Is More Nuanced

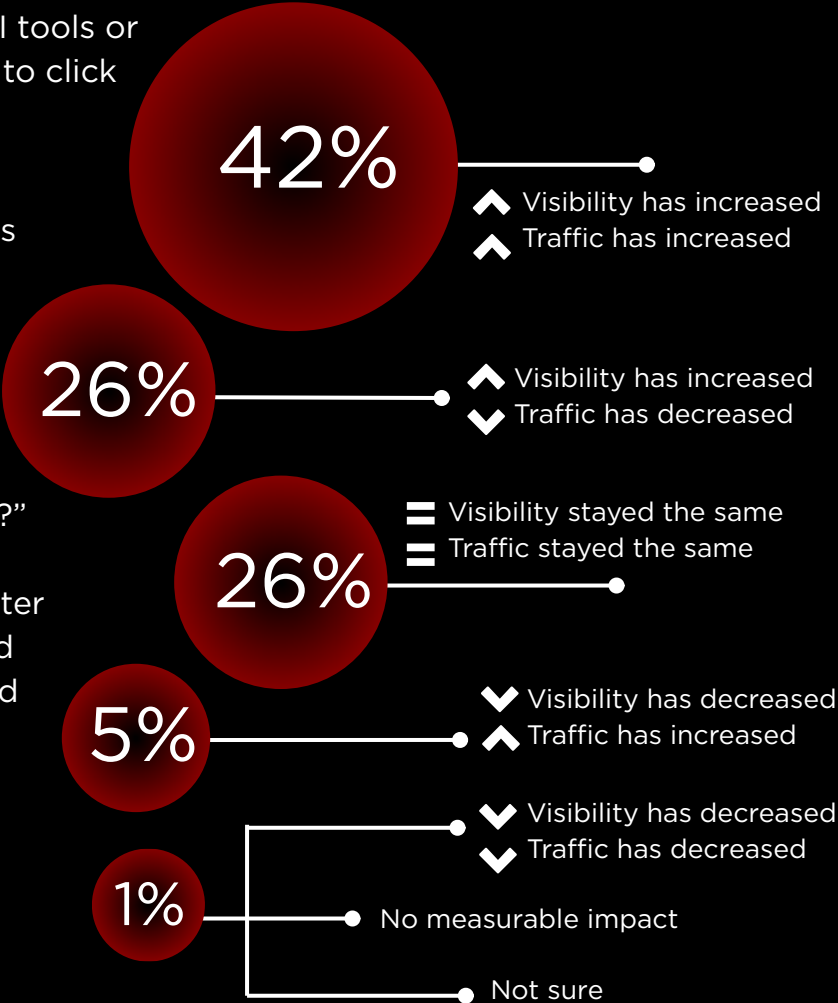
One of the most common concerns about AI-generated search is that it could reduce website traffic. If buyers get answers directly from AI tools or AI summaries, they may have fewer reasons to click through to a company’s website.

42% of respondents said both visibility and traffic increased over the last 12 months. This likely means content is more closely aligned with buyer questions, AI search behavior and credible discovery signals.

This creates a new measurement wrinkle; because the question is no longer only, “How much traffic did this content generate?” It is also, “Was our brand visible in the right discovery environments? Did buyers encounter our expertise? Did content influence our lead quality, sales conversations, pipeline or brand preference?”

Visibility may become as important as clicks.

Impact of AI-Generated Search on Visibility and Traffic



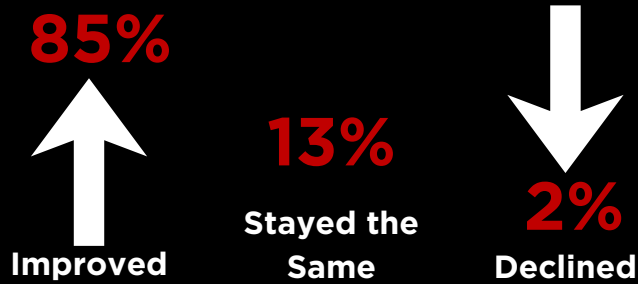
Metrics Move Toward Visibility and Lead Quality

B2B marketers are already redefining content success, the metric most cited is AI / search visibility. However, traditional demand generation metrics remain important, and unsurprisingly, marketing-qualified leads ranked second, followed by brand awareness and audience growth.

How B2B Marketers Define Content Success



Change in Lead Quality Over the Past 12 Months



Lead quality is improving even as website traffic declines. This finding may seem contradictory, but it isn't. AI-powered discovery now helps buyers self-educate before they ever reach your site, meaning fewer visits can still yield more informed, higher-quality leads. Traffic is no longer a reliable proxy for content performance.

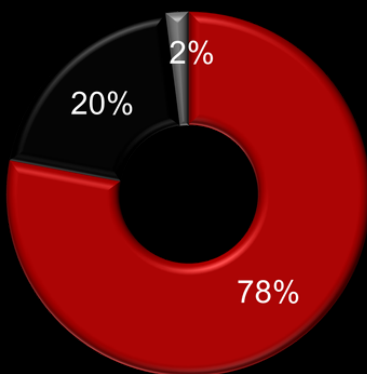
AI / search visibility now outranks MQLs as a content success metric, but marketers still need to connect visibility to business outcomes.

AI IS INCREASING THE NEED FOR CONTENT RESOURCES

Despite predictions that AI would reduce the need for content teams; this year's study points in the opposite direction as content budgets and teams (internal and agency) grew.

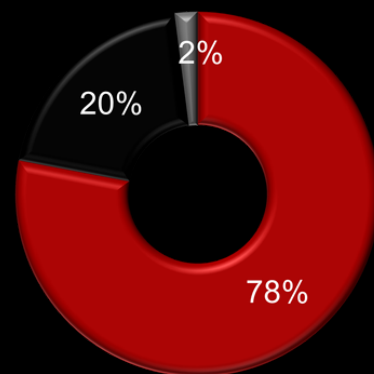
AI is changing the work, but not eliminating the need for skilled marketers. AI accelerates ideation, production and repurposing, but B2B content still requires subject matter expertise, messaging discipline, editorial judgment, brand voice, legal awareness, privacy controls and distribution strategy.

Content Budget Changes



■ Increased □ Stayed the same ■ Decreased

Content Team Changes Due to AI



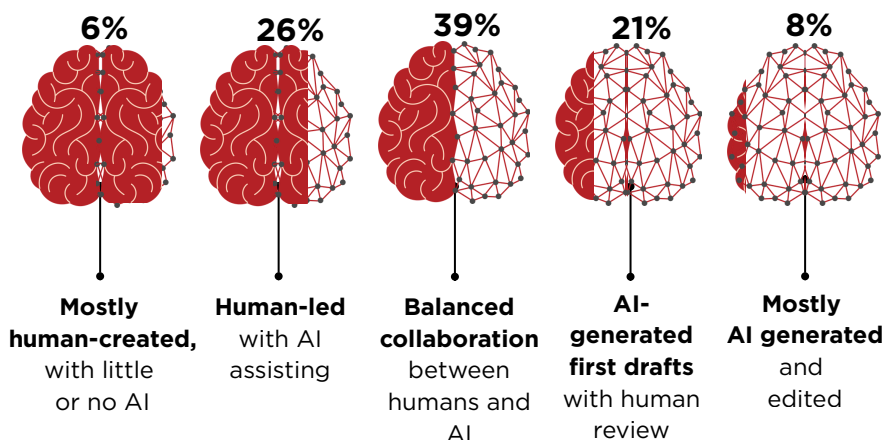
■ More resources □ Same ■ Less resources

AI has not reduced the need for content investment or team, for many B2B tech companies, it has increased it.

AI Content Needs Human Guardrails

Most B2B marketers are not choosing between humans and AI, they are combining both. Most respondents said they use a balanced collaboration between AI and humans to develop content. Less than 10% said content is mostly AI-generated.

How Organizations Use AI and Humans to Create Content



How AI-Developed Content Is Reviewed



The majority of review practices fall into one of four groups: 1) every piece of AI-developed content is reviewed by both a subject matter expert and an editor; 2) every piece is reviewed by a marketing editor; and 3) Review requirements depend on content type. 4) Only 9% said they do not review AI-developed content or they only spot check it.

That review gap matters because accuracy and data privacy are the top barriers to AI adoption, cited by 30% and 29% of respondents, respectively. Only 38% of companies have a formal enterprise-wide AI usage policy, and 36% have a marketing-specific AI policy.

The lesson is clear: AI content risk does not come only from using AI. It comes from using AI without strong editorial, expert and governance controls.

AI governance is becoming a content marketing requirement, not just an IT or legal concern.

How Marketers Are Improving AI Visibility

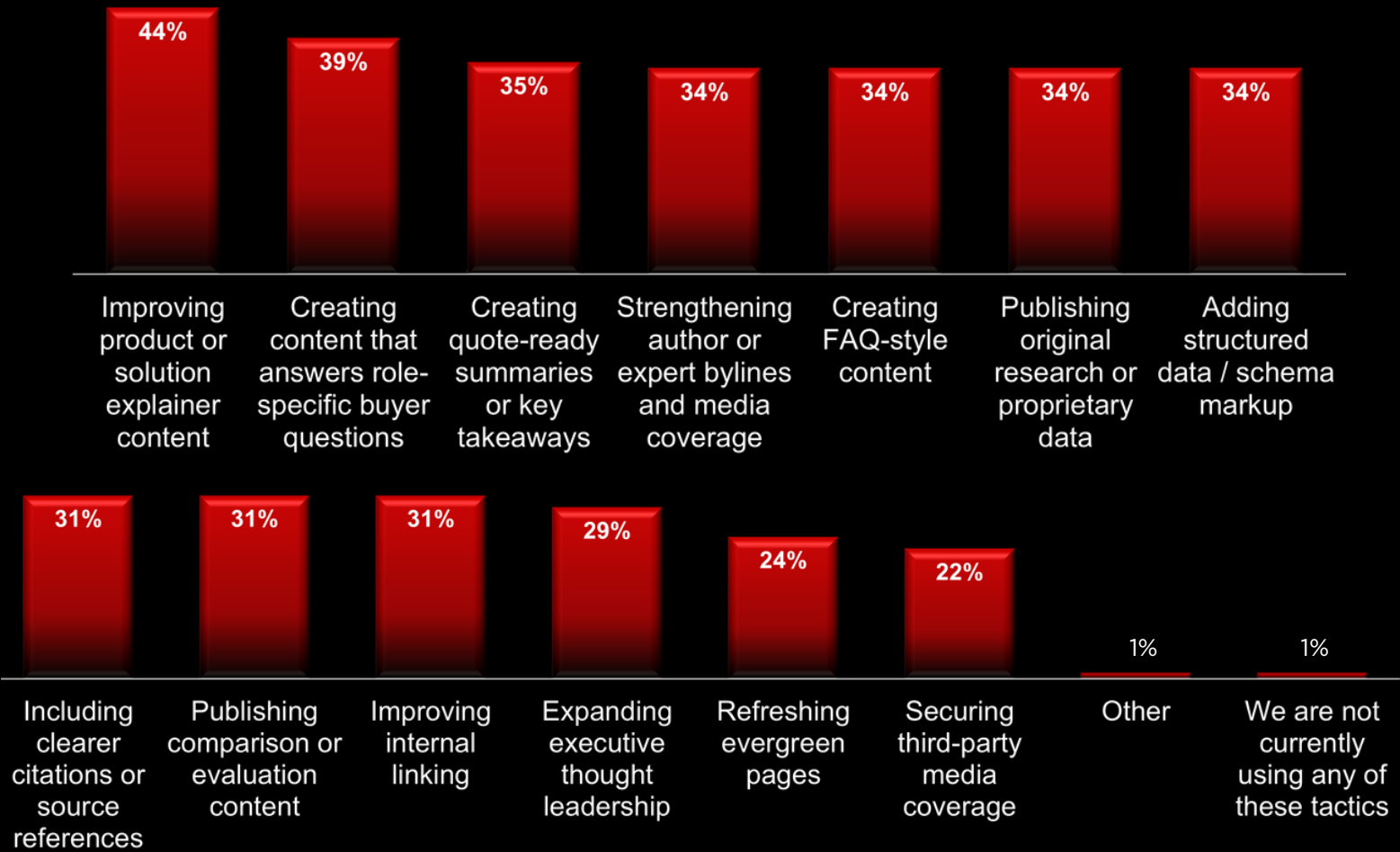
Marketers are already experimenting with a wide range of tactics to improve visibility in AI-powered discovery environments. The most common tactic is improving product or solution explainer content, followed by creating content that answers role-specific buyer questions and creating quote-ready summaries or key takeaways.



Developing AI visibility is not driven by a single action. It requires a combination of content clarity, technical structure, authority, external validation and buyer relevance.

The brands most likely to succeed in AI discovery may be those that provide clear, useful, evidence-based content that AI tools can interpret and buyers can trust.

Top Tactics Used to Improve AI Visibility



The path to AI visibility combines content substance, technical structure and third-party credibility.

Conclusion

AI is not making content marketing less important. It is making content marketing more strategic.

The findings show that B2B tech marketers are investing more in content by increasing budgets, adding resources, adopting hybrid AI-human workflows, and rethinking how content is discovered, measured and trusted.

Success will not come from publishing the most AI-generated content. It will come from creating content that is clear, credible, useful and differentiated enough to be found by AI systems and trusted by human buyers.

Companies with successful B2B content marketing will update their content for AI-powered discovery, strengthen their expert and third-party credibility, maintain strong editorial and governance controls, and measure visibility alongside lead quality and business impact.

In short, AI has changed the rules for content marketing and now B2B marketers must change how they create, distribute and measure content.

Contact Us



PHONE

1.415.800.5361



EMAIL

INFO@10FOLD.COM



ADDRESS

1555 BOTELHO DR. STE 504
WALNUT CREEK, CA 94596



WEBSITE

WWW.10FOLD.COM

Appendix- Demographics

Geographies Surveyed

France – 21%
Germany – 21%
UK – 25%
USA – 33%

France

Ile de France(Paris) - 100%

US Breakout

California – 62%
Florida – 8%
New York – 15%
Texas – 8%
Washington – 8%

UK

East of England – 28%
Greater London – 38%
North West England – 2%
Scotland – 3%
South East England – 22%
East Midlands – 2%
Other – 5%

Germany

Bavaria(Munich) – 36%
Berlin – 28%
North Rhine-Westphalia – 13%
Lower Saxony – 9%
Other – 11%

Other Demographics:

1.All were full-time employees of the companies they responded for.

2.Title Breakdown:

Owner – 7%
C-Level Executive – 22%
Director/Head of Dept. – 33%
Senior Management – 29%
Middle Management – 10%

3.100% were responsible for Marketing and Communications

4. Most were privately held companies

Private – 88%
Publicly Traded – 12%



Demographics Continued

5. Industry Sectors:

Enterprise Technology / Software - 23%

AI / Generative AI - 15%

Fintech - 9%

Cybersecurity / Privacy - 7%

Health tech - 5%

IoT / Industry 4.0 / Supply Chain / Edge Computing - 12%

Big Data / Data Analytics - 3%

Energy / Electricity, Oil, and Natural gas - 13%

Application Development / DevOps - 3%

Networking - 5%

Cloud infrastructure - 7%

6. Size, as measured by employee numbers:

11 - 100 Employees - 10%

101 - 250 Employees - 18%

251 - 500 Employees - 22%

501 - 1000 Employees - 28%

1001+ Employees - 23%

7. Size, as measured by revenue:

Less than \$1M - 0%

\$1M - \$4.9M - 11%

\$5M - \$9.9M - 10%

\$10M - \$49.9M - 14%

\$50M - \$99.9M - 13%

\$100M - \$499.9M - 20%

\$500M - \$999.9M - 14%

\$1B - \$4.9B - 14%

More than \$5B - 3%