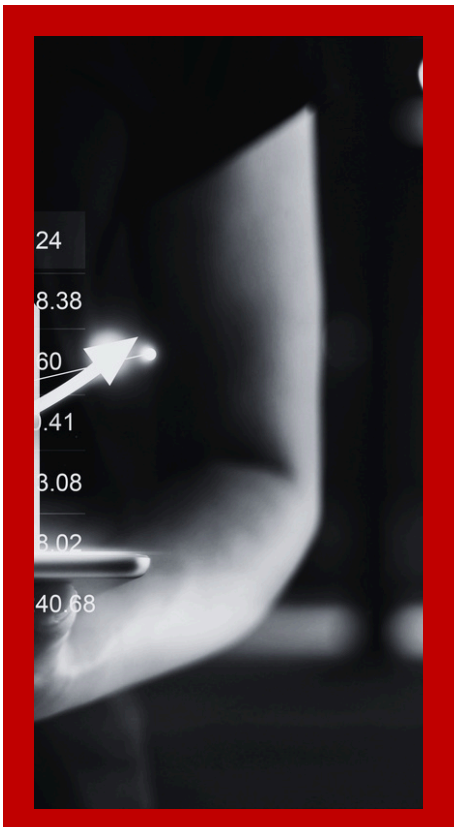
10Fold

THE COMMUNICATIONS ROI RESET

WHAT B2B LEADERS MEASURE, TRUST AND ACT ON

A 10Fold study on how marketing leaders are redefining business impact across PR, content, social, digital and AI visibility.



August 2026

Helping Innovators Change the World

Executive Summary

CMOs are under increasing pressure to defend how brand, communications, content, social and AI visibility contribute to business growth. The challenge is no longer whether teams have enough data. It is whether they can connect that data into a business-impact story their CEO, CFO and board trust. 10Fold sponsored a study using Sapio Research to better understand the state of connecting communications results with business impact. The research includes insights from 400 marketing leaders located in Europe and North America.

Communications is no longer being judged only by reach, coverage volume or social engagement. Forward-thinking marketing leaders are expanding the measurement mix to include AI visibility, website traffic, downstream actions and revenue impact. These are the business outcomes executives trust most. The trend is positive, but the challenge is equally clear: communications teams are not losing relevance because they lack metrics. They are at risk because they have too many disconnected metrics and too few agreed-upon business-impact signals.

As AI search, social sharing and digital behavior reshape how buyers discover and validate brands, marketing and communications leaders need a measurement model that follows influence across channels instead of reporting each activity in isolation. The future of communications measurement is not about abandoning brand, media, content or social metrics. It is about connecting them into a business-impact narrative the C-Suite can trust.

Top Leadership Takeaways

- **More measurement does not automatically create more proof.**
  Teams are tracking a wider mix of communications outcomes, including AI visibility and downstream action, but the most valuable business signals are still not consistently connected.
- **AI visibility has become a mainstream communications metric.**
  AI search visibility, AI referral traffic and brand citations in AI-generated answers now sit beside website traffic, social engagement and earned media in the measurement mix.
- **Executives trust business outcomes more than communications activity.**
  Revenue impact is the most trusted board and CEO metric, while share of voice and pipeline influence rank lower.
- **Integration is the operating challenge.**
  Most teams have access to data sources, but only about one-third say they have fully integrated reporting.
- **Measurement is already changing budget decisions.**
  Measurement influences strategy and budget decisions across paid social, paid media, digital, content and earned media, even though fewer than half are very confident in data completeness and accuracy.

Communications Enters an Era of Proof

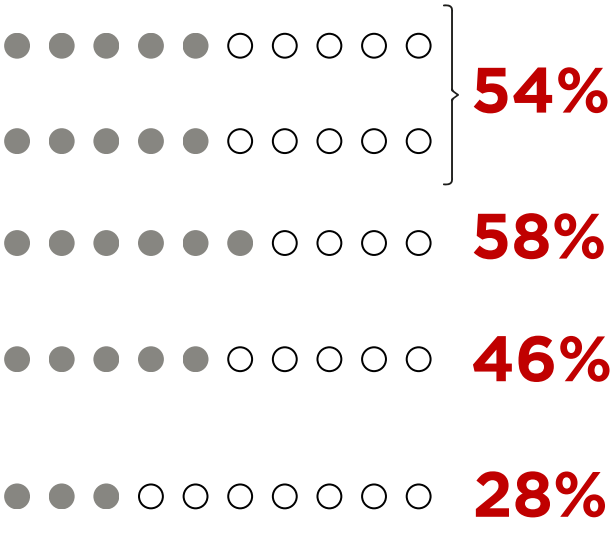
Marketing leaders are being asked to show how communications contributes to traffic, demand, revenue, reputation and AI visibility. The data suggests communications teams are responding. More than half of respondents now measure website traffic correlated to communications activity, AI search visibility or brand citations in AI-generated content, and AI referral traffic from tools such as ChatGPT, Perplexity and Gemini. Social audience growth remains the most commonly measured outcome at 57%, but the broader pattern is clear: the definition of communications impact is expanding.

The problem is that the highest-value business signals are still not consistently connected. Only 38% measure pipeline or revenue influence correlated to communications activity, and only 35% say they have fully integrated reporting across earned, paid social, content and digital channels. That disconnect is the heart of the Communications ROI Reset. The metrics teams measure most are not always the metrics executives trust most.

The Measurement Map Has Changed

Modern communications measurement now spans social, website, paid media, earned media, AI visibility, analyst impact, content engagement and SEO. AI visibility is already a mainstream measurement category. It is being measured almost as often as website traffic and social engagement, and it is moving quickly from an experimental metric to part of the core reporting stack.

Communication Measurement



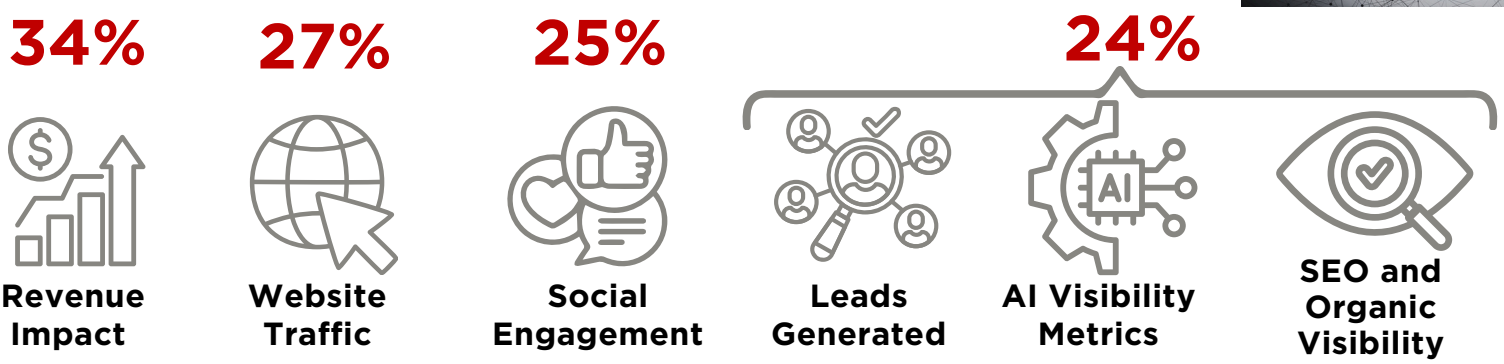
This is a major shift for marketing leaders. AI visibility is no longer a future-facing experiment or a side metric for digital teams. It now sits beside website traffic, social engagement and media visibility as part of the core communications measurement mix.

Executives Trust Communications More When It Speaks the Language of Business

87% of marketing leaders agree their CEO or board trusts integrated communications metrics.

But trust is not distributed evenly across every metric.

Most Trusted Metrics by CEO or Board



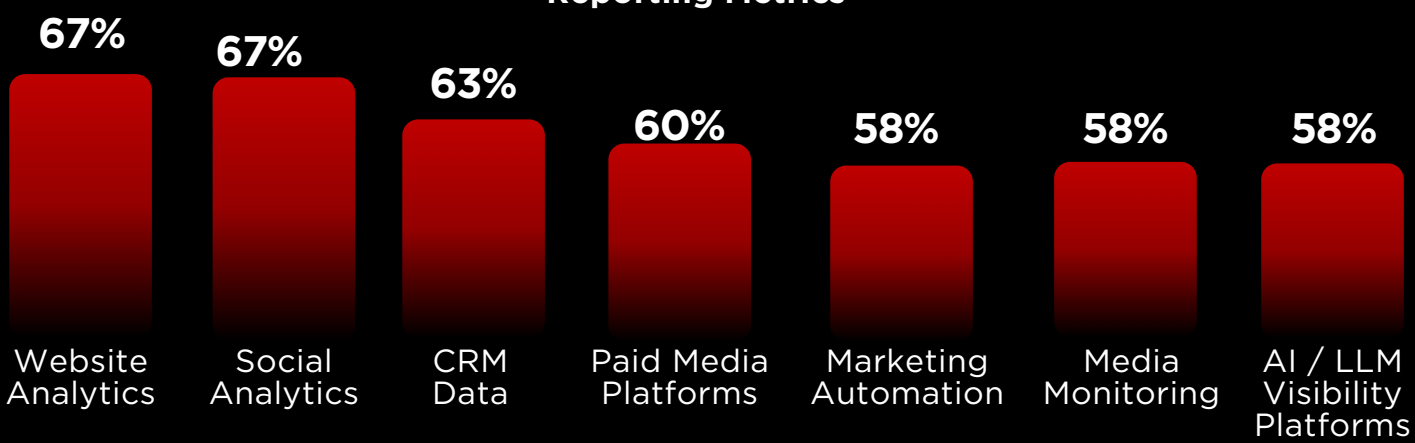
Traditional PR metrics are not gone, but they are no longer sufficient on their own. Pipeline influence ranks at 16%, media coverage volume ranks at 16%, and share of voice ranks at only 11%. This does not necessarily mean communications fails to influence pipeline. It suggests many teams still lack the attribution model, data integration or executive agreement needed to credibly claim that influence.

The implication is direct: executives trust communications more when it speaks the language of business. Visibility still matters, but the value of visibility increases when teams can show what it produces, including traffic, leads, trust, AI citations and revenue impact.

The Integrated Reporting Gap Is the Main Obstacle

Some marketing leaders have the ingredients for integrated reporting but not the operating model.

Reporting Metrics



The issue is not a lack of data. It is the difficulty of connecting data across systems, teams and outcomes.

- Only 46% include agency or partner reports
- 37% still use manual spreadsheets
- only 35% say they have fully integrated reporting

Social, Earned Media and Content Are Being Reframed Around Impact

Paid social is closest to the business reporting model

Paid social is the most tracked owned or paid channel at 61%, and it is the only owned or paid channel included in C-Suite reporting by more than half of respondents, at 51%.

Most Effective Channels for Driving Business Outcomes

Paid Social **35%**

SEO **29%**

AI Visibility **28%**

The distinction between paid and organic social is important. Paid social performance is most often judged by engagement rate, website or landing page traffic and click-throughs. Organic social is also judged by engagement and traffic, but shares and reposts become more prominent. Paid social is closer to business reporting because it produces more trackable performance signals, while organic social still depends heavily on amplification and engagement signals.

Earned media is becoming both a demand and AI discoverability channel

Earned media is no longer measured only by volume. Leads or conversions influenced by earned media is tracked by nearly half of all respondents. Additionally, the chart below demonstrates how earned media is being pulled into the AI search conversation as well as the business impact conversation.

Top Tracked Earned Media Metrics

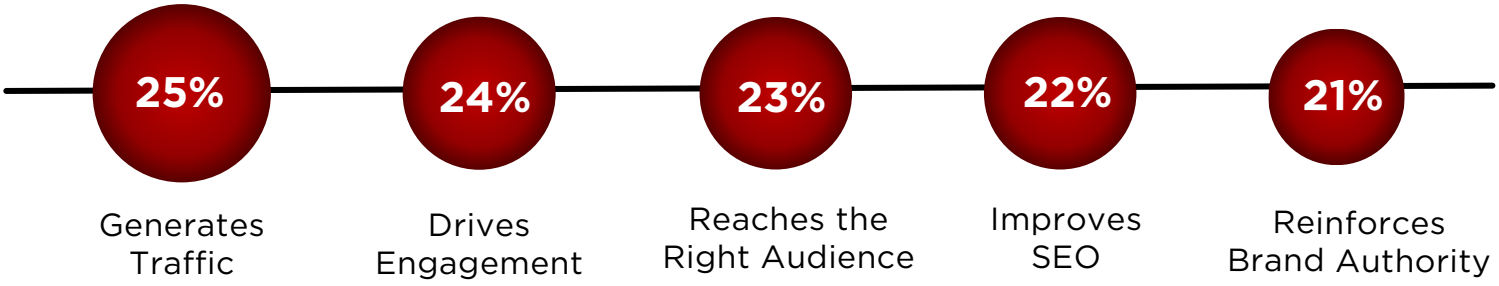
- Leads or conversions influenced by earned media **48%**
- Number of media placements or mentions **45%**
- Number of LLM prompts that cite brand media coverage **42%**
- Sentiment or tonality **31%**
- Podcast coverage **28%**

Do not actively measure earned media **1%**

Content still has a definition problem

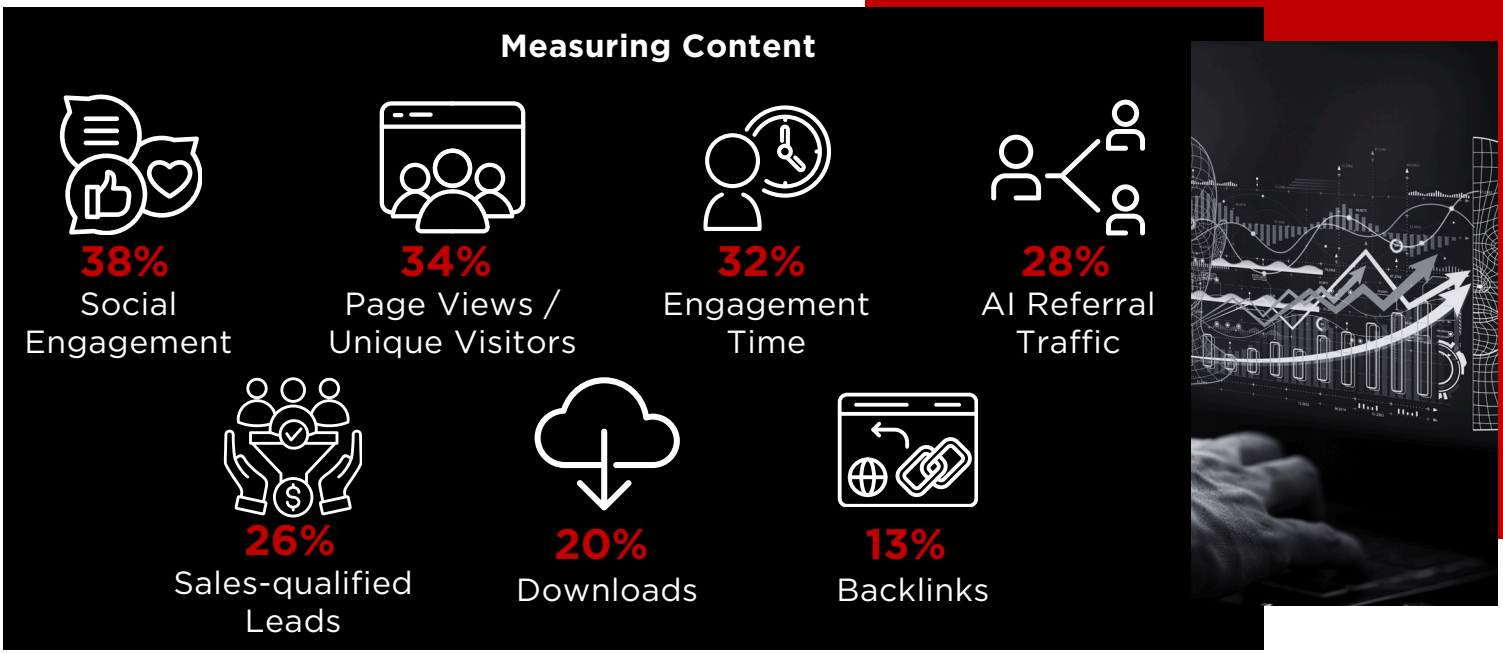
The low agreement on content efficacy suggests confusion, especially because AI discovery has changed the value of content. Respondents define content efficacy in several ways, but no definition dominates.

Content Efficacy Defined



The most surprising finding may be what ranks lower. Only 15% say content supports discoverability in AI search and answer engines, and only 15% say it supports cross-channel amplification and reuse. This finding reinforces what 10Fold's earlier content research suggested: AI has not made content less important. It has made content harder to evaluate. Content now has to serve search, social, sales enablement, brand authority and AI discoverability at the same time.

The metrics used to evaluate content reinforce the same point. Social engagement on content posts is the top content performance metric.



Downstream Action Is Where Communications Becomes Business Impact

Business impact becomes clearer when communications measurement follows the audience from visibility to action. When respondents were asked what they measure after someone engages with content, media coverage or social posts, click-through to website topped the list.

Measurement After Engagement

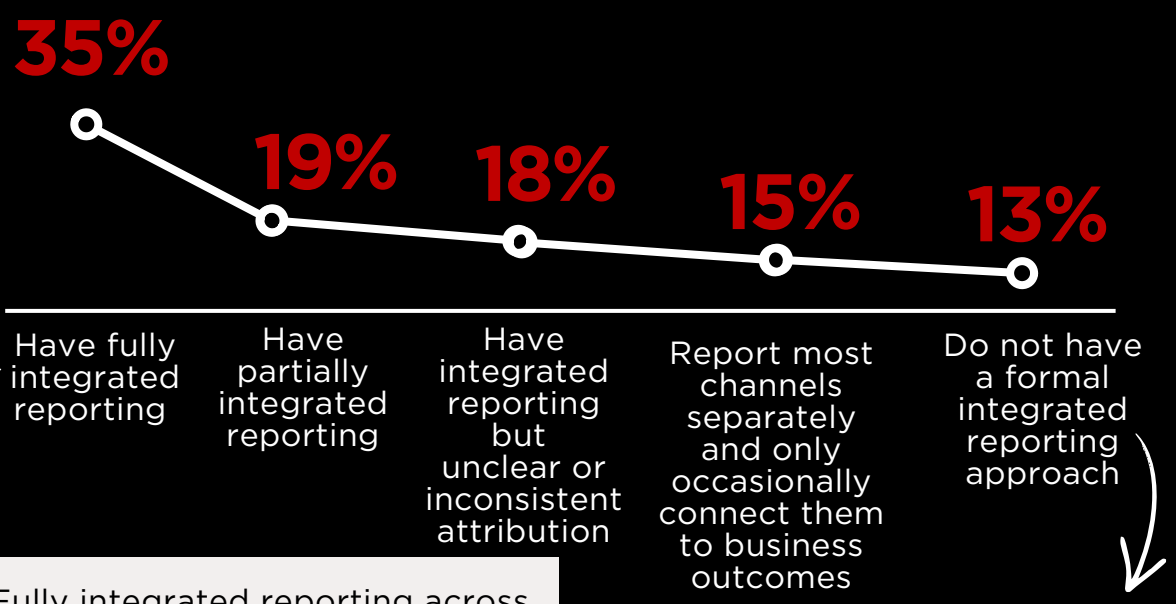
51%	Social Ad CTR
43%	Email CTR
41%	Form Fills / Inquiries
40%	AI Visibility / Brand Citation Tracking
39%	Specific Webpages Visits
37%	Landing Page Conversion Rate

These metrics are important because they help connect communications activity to audience behavior. A media placement, social post or piece of content may begin as visibility, but its business relevance grows when the team can show what the audience did next. That next action may be a click, a form fill, an AI referral, a demo request, a webinar registration or another signal that the audience is moving closer to the business.

The Maturity Gap Is Narrowing But Not Closed

Only about one-third of CMOs classify their measurement as fully integrated.

Percent of Integrated Marketing



Fully integrated reporting across earned, paid social, content and digital channels and can connect communications to business outcomes.

Or they are still building their framework.

A slight majority, 57%, say they can consistently tie communications to business outcomes. But only 28% say they can do so with CEO or board investment. Another 46% are still building the capability, mainly report channel metrics, do not attempt it, or can only do it for some programs.

The most common method for tying communications to outcomes is multi-touch attribution.

Measuring Outcomes

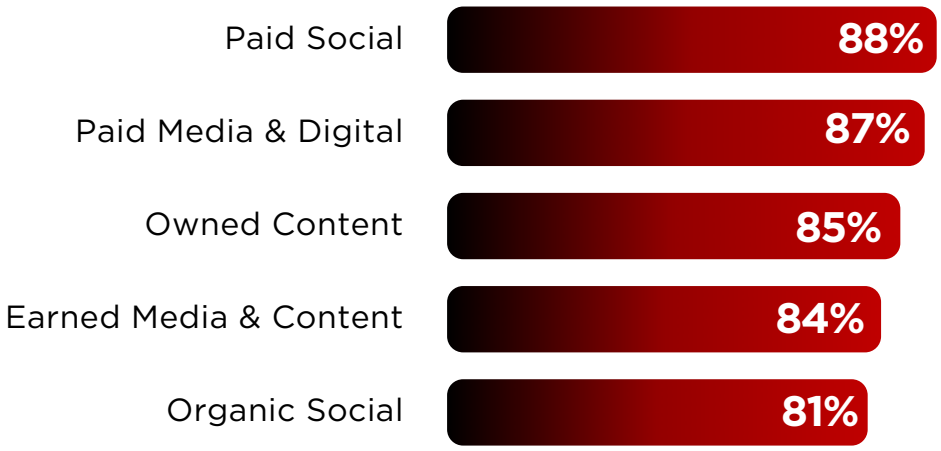
43%	25%	18%	8%	2%
Multi-touch Attribution	Correlation / Directional Analysis	First-touch Attribution	Anecdotal / Qualitative Evidence	Do Not Connect Communications to Outcomes

The maturity story is not binary. Many teams are close, but they have not fully closed the gap between measurement activity, attribution confidence and executive investment.

Measurement Is Influencing Budgets Before Teams Fully Trust the Data

Measurement results are already affecting budgets and strategy. Respondents say measurement changes strategy or budget decisions sometimes or very often across paid social, paid media, digital, owned content, earned media, earned content and organic social.

What Affects Budgets and Strategy



Confidence has not caught up. 49% are very confident in the accuracy and completeness of their data, while 92% are at least somewhat confident.

At the same time, confidence has not caught up. That is a useful distinction. Most CMOs are not dismissing their data, but fewer than half have the level of confidence that should exist when measurement is influencing strategy and budget decisions.

This creates a new mandate for marketing leaders. The goal is not simply to collect more data. It is to build enough integration, consistency and shared interpretation that data can support confident business decisions. CMOs need a measurement model that does three things: shows how visibility supports demand, proves how content and earned media influence buyer action, and connects emerging AI visibility signals to the same business outcomes used to evaluate paid, digital and revenue programs. The opportunity is not more reporting. It is a clearer operating model for deciding where to invest.

The New Communications Scorecard

The next era of communications measurement requires a scorecard that connects visibility to trust, trust to action and action to business growth. Communications leaders do not need to choose between brand and revenue. They need a model that shows how brand, media, content, social and AI visibility work together to create measurable business value.

1. Visibility: earned media, social audience growth, AI search visibility and share of voice.
2. Engagement: content engagement and downloads, social amplification, website behavior, and time on page.
3. Authority: analyst or influencer inclusion, message pull-through, brand citations in AI-generated answers and authority indicators.
4. Action: click-throughs, form fills, demo requests, event registrations and newsletter signups.
5. Business impact: leads, pipeline influence, revenue impact and multi-touch attribution.

This scorecard is not meant to replace every channel-specific metric. It is meant to organize the metrics that matter into a narrative executives can understand. It gives communications teams a way to show how visibility creates trust, how trust creates action and how action contributes to business growth.

Conclusion

B2B communicators have more metrics, more tools and more executive trust than ever, but it still lacks a fully integrated model for proving business impact. That is the Communications ROI Reset.

The next era of communications measurement will be won by the teams that can connect visibility, trust, action and business growth in a way leadership can understand and act on. For CMOs, that creates a clear opportunity: build a measurement model that not only proves impact, but also guides smarter investment across brand, content, demand and AI visibility.

Contact Us

PHONE
1.415.800.5361

ADDRESS
11536B NEWELL AVE. STE 504
WALNUT CREEK, CA 94596

EMAIL
INFO@10FOLD.COM

WEBSITE
WWW.10FOLD.COM

Demographics

Geographies Surveyed:

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

US Breakout

California – 62%
Florida – 15%
New York – 11%
Texas – 6%
Massachusetts - 4%
Washington – 2%

France

Ile de France(Paris) - 60%
Hauts-de-France - 9%
Grand Est - 6%
Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes - 5%
Bourgogne-Franche-Comté - 5%
Nouvelle-Aquitaine - 5%
Other- 9%

Germany

Bavaria(Munich) – 28%
Berlin – 32%
Hamburg - 13%
North Rhine-Westphalia – 13%
Lower Saxony –4%
Other – 10%

UK

Greater London – 50%
West Midlands – 11%
South East England – 10%
North West England - 9%
North East England - 4%
South West England - 4%
Scotland - 4%
East of England - 3%
Other – 5%

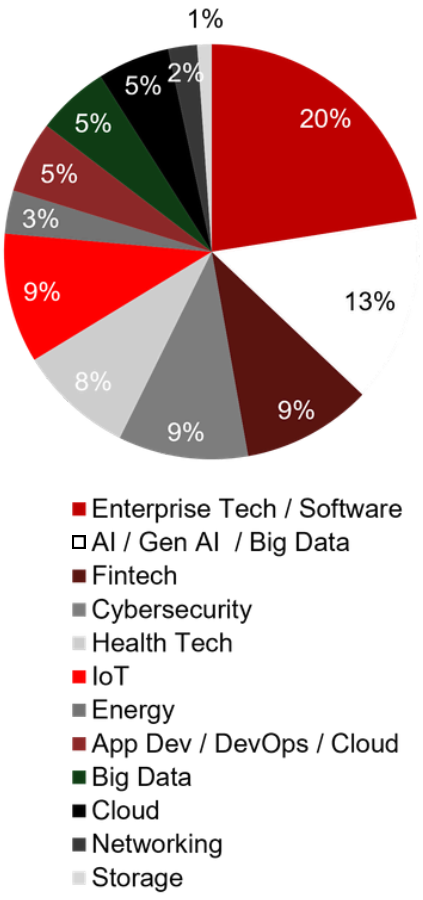
Other Demographics:

1. All were full-time employees and responsible for Marketing and Communcations.

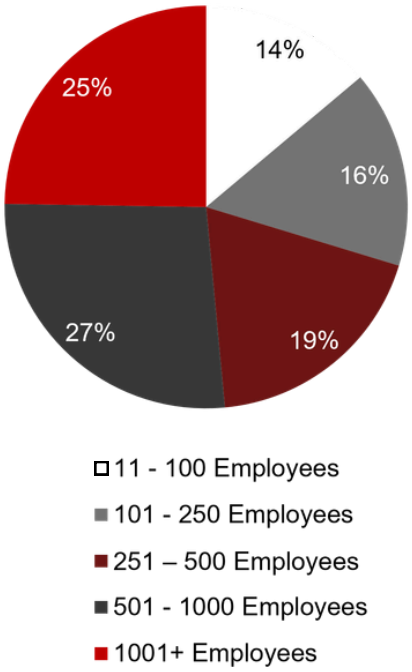
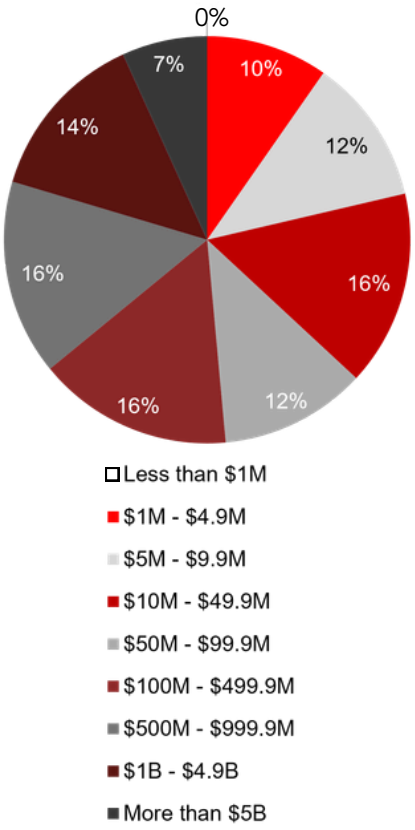
2. Title Breakdown:
   Founder - 2%
   C-Level Executive – 28%
   Director/Head of Dept. – 29%
   Senior Management – 27%
   Middle Management – 14%

3. Company Status:
   Private – 82%
   Publicly Traded – 19%

5. Industry Sectors:



6. Size, as measured by employee numbers:



7. Size, as measured by revenue: