

A woman with short hair, wearing a dark blazer over a white ribbed top, is looking upwards and to the right. She is wearing gold hoop earrings. The background is a blurred cityscape with buildings.

ON24

Ready for Growth

The State of
Digital Maturity
in B2B Marketing



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Introduction

Emerging industry trends like generative AI, personalization and the rise of digital-native millennial decision makers in the enterprise are causing B2B marketing and selling to change at a faster pace than ever before. In fact, Gartner predicts that by 2025, the overwhelming majority of B2B sales interactions will occur in digital channels. Meanwhile, current sales cycles are already getting increasingly complex, with Forrester finding that B2B buyers now require 58% more interactions than they did in 2019 to make a purchase decision.

So, how can companies adapt their digital marketing plans to drive results today, while building a strategy that's resilient to whatever lies ahead? And, what are the key factors that differentiate top-performing, digitally mature sales and marketing teams to keep them ready for the future?

To find out the state of digital maturity in B2B marketing and its impact on overall revenue growth, ON24 conducted a global survey of over 1,300 marketers in 16 countries. The extensive study asked respondents about the key elements for digital maturity, including: their goal-setting and measurement practices; how they use digital channels to engage audiences; their ability to capture engagement data; the degree to which engagement data is used; and, how marketing technology is leveraged to support execution. This provided a view into the spectrum of digital maturity and readiness across the globe and its critical impact on business performance. And, based on these findings, unveiled the actions marketing organizations need to take to improve their business results now and moving forward.

Chapter 1

Digital engagement and company performance

Companies with a mature digital engagement strategy see stronger performance

After partnering with thousands of enterprise B2B organizations over the past decade, we've found that there are four key elements that separate experts from novice marketers when it comes to their digital readiness and maturity:

Pillars for digital maturity



Marketing strategy and digital engagement

Digital experiences are fully aligned to marketing strategy and outputs are used to understand audience insights.



Measurement and data

KPIs are set at the tactic and program level of digital experiences that include engagement and CTA conversions.



Acting on digital engagement data

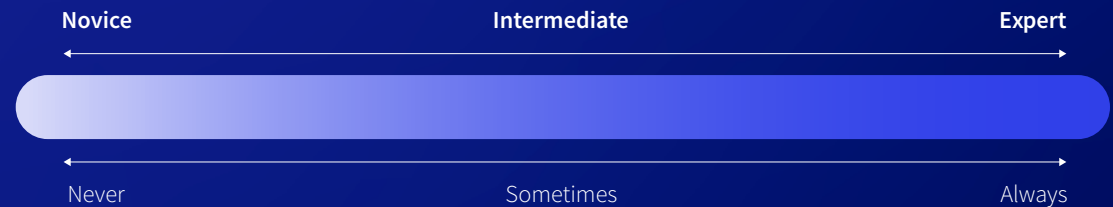
Digital engagement data is programmatically captured and a driver for sales and marketing plays.



Marketing technology integrations

Marketing technology is fully embraced and integrated into key sales and marketing systems.

Measuring for digital maturity



ON24 took this philosophy and surveyed more than 1,300 marketers across the globe and asked them how their organization was faring when it came to the critical characteristics that support a digitally ready and mature organization. The methodology evaluated marketers against their marketing strategy, digital engagement approach, engagement data tactics and their adoption of marketing technology. By aligning with characteristics, respondents were classified as expert or highly mature in their digital marketing, intermediate or novice or low maturity.

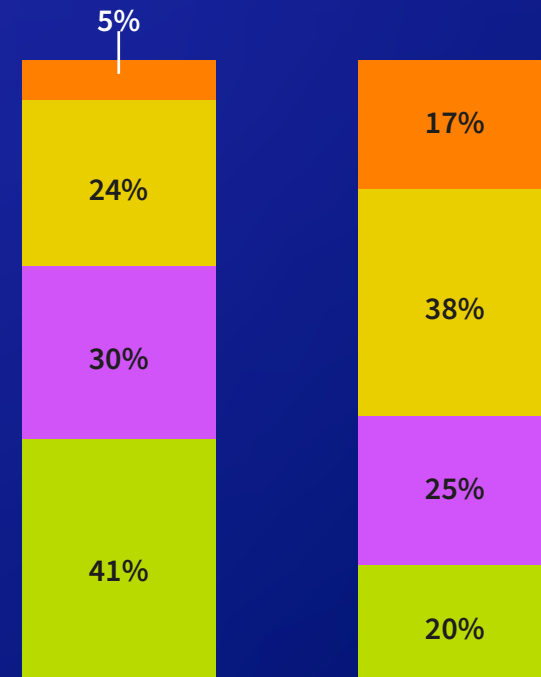
Overall, findings show that there is an even distribution of novice and expert marketers when it comes to digital marketing maturity. We found that leaders in digital marketing maturity correlate to company size, and most importantly, their ability to meet their business performance goals, including their revenue targets, growth goals or expansion into new markets.

2X

High maturity organizations were more than twice as likely to have significantly exceeded their top business goal.

Almost half, 41%, of the companies who exceeded their business goals described their marketing strategy as "expert." Importantly, companies with higher digital maturity had less underperformance. Only 5% of high maturity organizations missed their top business goal, compared to 17% of those with low maturity.

Businesses prioritizing digital marketing are achieving business goals



High maturity

Low maturity

- We exceeded our business goal by a significant margin
- We narrowly exceeded our top business goal
- We met our top business goal
- We missed our top business goal

The study also highlights that a marketing strategy that prioritizes acting on data through insights captured through digital engagement programs boosts overall digital maturity and positively improves business performance. Almost 60% of businesses with a digital engagement strategy significantly exceed their top business goal, compared to a mere 16% of those with either a basic digital strategy or no strategy at all.

4X

Businesses with a digital engagement strategy were 4X more likely to exceed their business targets.

The results are clear - for B2B marketers to move the needle on business growth and performance, having a mature digital engagement strategy is essential. Companies that prioritize the development and implementation of key digital programs are more likely to outperform their competitors and establish themselves as industry leaders.

One key point of difference between regions is in the share of B2B marketers with the highest maturity levels. Across the globe, there is room for improvement. In EMEA and APAC, only 3% of those surveyed had an “advanced” level of digital maturity, representing an overall maturity score of 80% or more. In North America, the figure was slightly higher at 8%.

ON24 tip: If you're serious about growth, programs that drive digital engagement must be centered on audience needs.

To strengthen digital maturity, the first place to start is by understanding the preferences of your audience and what are their preferred channels for engagement. Then, you can align your marketing strategy and tactics to your buyers' needs, improving their overall experience and increasing the success of your marketing. Learn more about the ways B2B buyers prefer to interact with brands in the eBook, [‘The New Era of Engagement’](#).

Chapter 2

Digital maturity and ROI

Integrations separate marketing technology success from failure

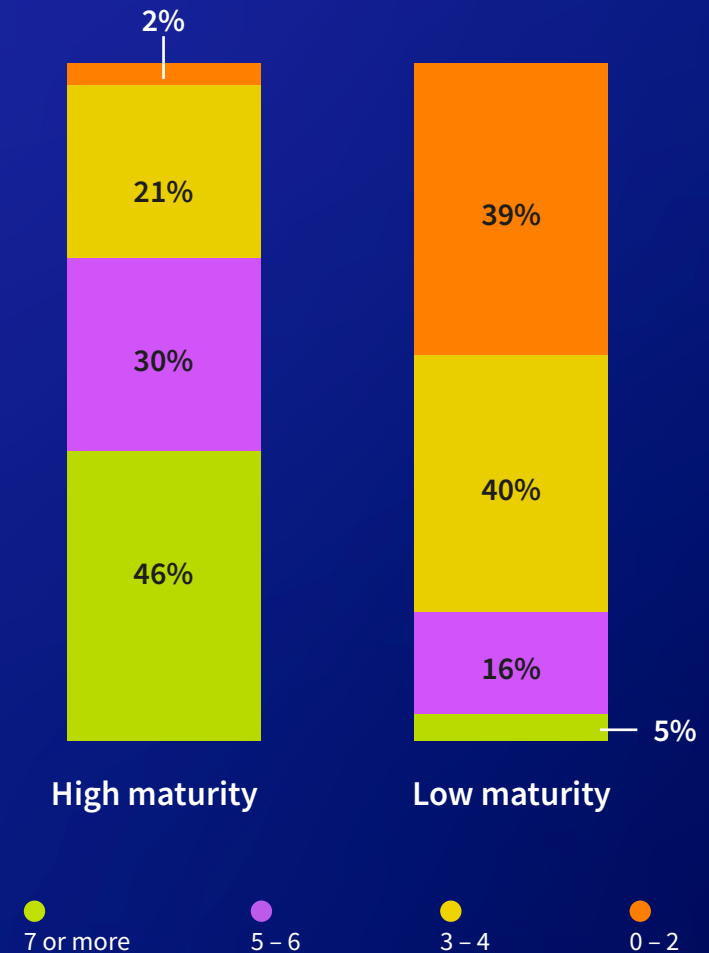
When it comes to enablers of digital readiness and maturity for marketers, technology obviously plays a central role. In fact, high maturity organizations are 9X more likely to be using seven or more digital marketing technologies.

However, as the volume of technology solutions increases, the differentiating factor for marketing technology success is based on how integrated these technologies are. High maturity companies were four times more likely to state that their systems were well-integrated (60% vs. 15%).

4X

High maturity businesses 4X more likely to have digital marketing technologies well integrated with other sales and marketing systems.

Number of technologies used vs maturity and business performance



Digital marketing maturity also leads to greater ROI from technology investments. When asked about the ROI from marketing technologies, overall companies with higher maturity saw more ROI from technologies across the board. This is critical as companies must focus on implementation and process alongside technology to get the most of their investments.

20%

High maturity businesses saw a 20 percentage point uplift in strong ROI from webinar and virtual event technologies, and on-site content hubs.

ON24 tip: It's not just about how much technology you have. It's about how you adopt, utilize and integrate those solutions to plan, scale and support the needs of your business.

To optimize utilization of your martech stack, follow these steps:

- Take stock and conduct an assessment of the technologies you have to identify the features you use and the features you don't.
- Invest in training and education to ensure your team is fully utilizing the tools at your disposal.
- Assign product owners who become experts in how the tools get adopted and integrated.

Chapter 3

Digital engagement data execution gaps

Engagement data is captured, but is not being leveraged by sales

One of the key areas assessed for this digital maturity study was data and measurement.

Overall, across the globe, the vast majority of marketing organizations are centralizing digital engagement data from multiple systems. EMEA marketers appear to be slightly outperforming their North American and APAC peers, with 87% in EMEA, compared to 81% in North America and 83% in EMEA.

5%

85% of APAC organizations collect engagement data from multiple sources, but only 5% are satisfied with the volume of digital engagement data their team can generate.

ON24 tip: To drive audience engagement, you first need to define what's the ideal audience experience.

You want to engage your audiences with compelling content and event experiences, but not all engagement is measured equally. These steps will guide the alignment of what you create to what your audiences crave:

1. Define your goals – What do you want to accomplish, increase or improve?
2. Define your audience – Who will you need to engage to achieve your goals?
3. Define the type of experience and engagement – What types of experiences and engagement techniques are right for this audience? What will help you trend towards your goals? What will generate the right data for follow-up?
4. Define how you'll take action on the data you collect – How will you use the engagement data to optimize your program, qualify attendees and personalize follow-up?

With the right engagement data, you can enable your sales team to drive better results in their follow-up. Read more in the eBook, ['B2B Trends: Harnessing the Power of First-Party Data'](#).

While B2B marketers are advanced in capturing data, there is tremendous opportunity to unlock its potential by enabling their sales teams to find prospect interests and buying signals from this rich data source. Across all regions, less than one third of marketers reported sharing engagement data with their sales teams, with data-sharing occurring amongst 25% of EMEA marketers, 21% of North America marketers and 8% of APAC marketers.

2X

APAC teams are 2X less likely to have alignment on digital data & insights across their sales and marketing teams.

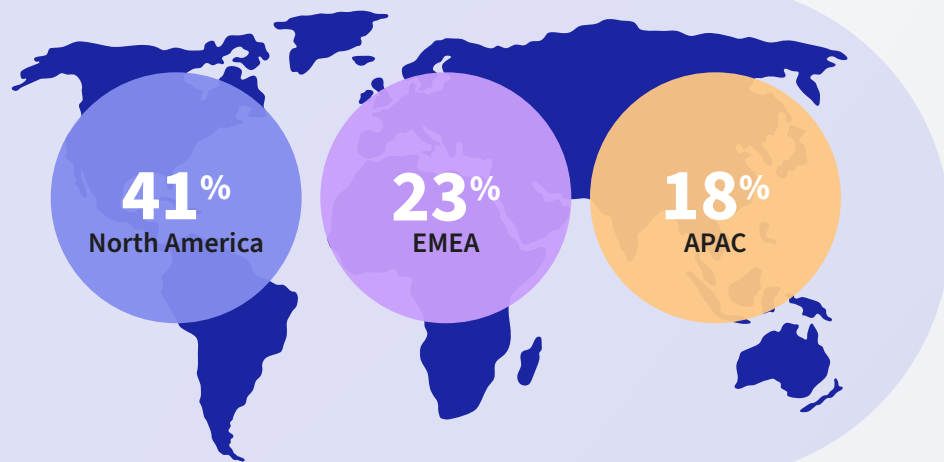


Chapter 4

Regional disparities in personalization

Personalization varies by region based on data privacy regulations

The study also suggests that despite strides in creating marketing strategies, there are gaps in acting on this information or finding ways to personalize experiences and enact account-based marketing tactics.



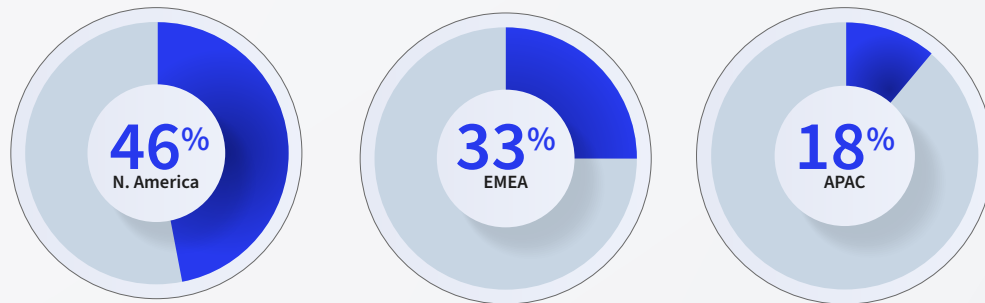
Industry personalization lags across the globe with only 41% in North America, 18% in APAC, and 23% in EMEA deploying these tactics.

ON24 tip: Use engagement data and get feedback from your buyers for the real picture.

In the digital world, it's challenging to know what your prospects and customers are thinking behind the screen. The best way to get feedback is to look for first-party signals of interest and buying intent from live on-site chat, surveys, polls, emoji reactions and more. To learn more techniques for getting to know buyers before you've met, tune into our on-demand webinar on ['How to Optimize Digital Experiences to Drive Pipeline'](#).

Personalization varies regionally, as data privacy rules vary across the globe.

One noteworthy difference is that almost half of North American respondents report personalizing on a one-to-one level for named accounts, compared to just one-third of those in EMEA and 18% in APAC.



When asked what data sources were used to personalize experiences and content, respondents in North America used an average of 4 sources of data, compared to 3 in EMEA and 2 in APAC. A key to organizations looking to deploy more personalization strategies is to first set what angle is most important to personalize on, account or industry, for example, and then determine the appropriate data sources for personalization.

Top 5 data sources used to personalize digital experiences and content across the globe:

1. Named accounts
2. Account-level engagement history
3. Industry
4. Key account segment
5. Contact-level engagement history

Chapter 5

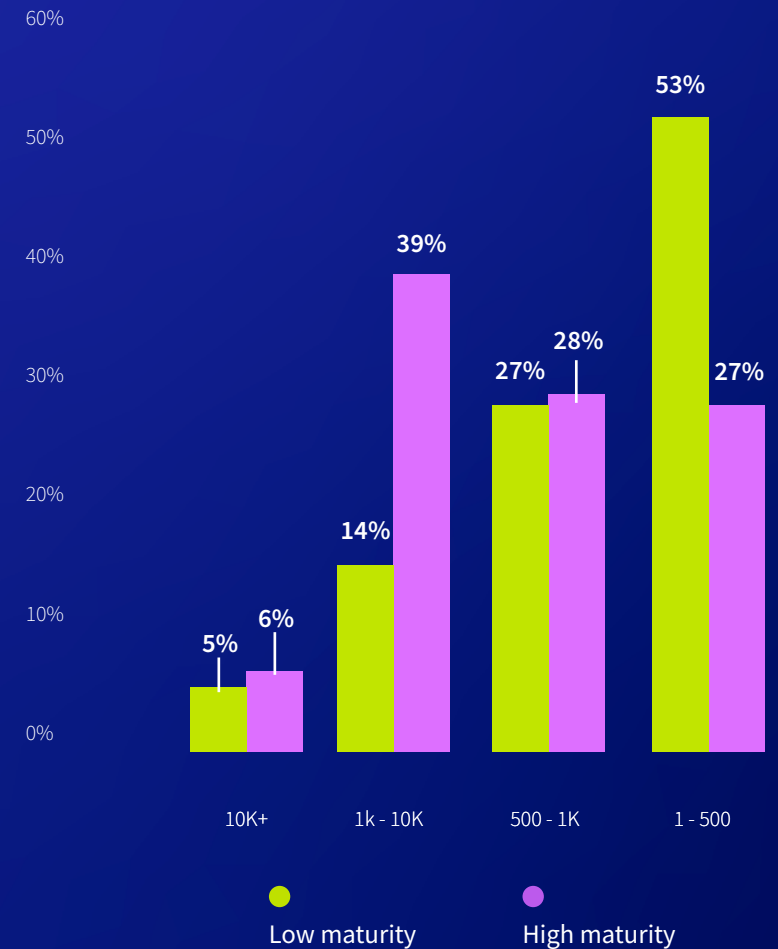
Company size and digital maturity

Enterprise-size firms lead in advanced levels of digital maturity.

Across the world, research has previously found that larger businesses tend to have higher levels of digitisation than smaller organizations. The data for this survey further confirms that larger, enterprise-scale firms have higher levels of digital maturity, Organizations with less than 5,000 employees deemed themselves to be at expert-level in their digital maturity, whereas in the largest organizations, 17% of survey respondents deemed themselves to be experts.

With one of the critical factors in achieving expertise in digital marketing maturity being integration of marketing technologies, this is a clear area of focus for organizations looking to scale and be ready for growth.

Digital maturity by company size



As companies grow, they mature in their digital marketing. The largest companies (10,000+ employees) are 3X more likely than SMBs (under 100 employees) to have an expert digital maturity. For this reason, B2B marketers at smaller organizations need to work harder to drive positive improvements and choose technology solutions that build on the advantages that larger firms possess, including budget and access to shared resources, while minimizing the challenges that come with size-related complexity. For these companies, repeatable processes, integrations and technologies are critical. Smaller organizations can future-proof their ability to scale by putting systems and processes in place that enable a similar degree of programmatic success and consistency as larger companies. Essentially, it's prudent for smaller organizations to invest in marketing technology that supports the company size they want to grow to be in the future, rather than the current size they are today.

3X

Large companies are 3X more likely than SMBs to have expert digital marketing maturity.

The good news is that given the increasing role that today's B2B marketers play in the investment and implementation of digital technologies, they can play a key role in driving change. In particular, when business conditions are challenging, they can push for investments to be made on the basis of driving digital engagement and enabling revenue-driving activities, rather than other competing factors, like other software and program investments.

ON24 tip: Ensure your organization invests in the right enterprise technology by aligning digital engagement needs with IT and wider business requirements.

As more solutions integrate with more and more technology in the enterprise, IT teams do, in fact, have more “skin in the game” than in years past. Therefore, it's important to understand IT's underlying mission when they are brought into the procurement process.

For example, IT may want to move their whole organization to one messaging platform, even though sales and marketing have already purchased — or are considering — different tools.

IT might be a late entry to the sales process. And in some cases, the timing of their involvement could throw a monkey wrench in your plans. So, it's best to be prepared.

Read more about it on our blog post: [Selling Martech: How To Get IT On Your Side](#).

Conclusion

Embrace digital engagement drive growth

B2B marketers must rise to the challenge of today's selling environment

Even with emerging technologies and evolving buying behaviors, marketers can control their readiness to meet these challenges. External forces will always have an impact, but focusing on shoring up internal processes, strategies and technologies sets novices apart from experts.

Research supports this hypothesis: as organizations with higher levels of digital maturity achieve stronger business outcomes, regardless of region. Simply stated: A company's readiness to grow is dictated by digital marketing maturity. Having a focus on driving engagement through digital channels leads marketing teams to greater enable sales with engagement data that can be used to strengthen relationships and build market share. In a constantly evolving business landscape, understanding and harnessing digital engagement is crucial for B2B marketers looking to remain competitive and grow.

Next step: Embracing digital engagement and committing to ongoing improvement will empower B2B marketers across the globe to unlock their full potential and drive growth.

Whatever your path, ON24 is here to help. [Explore our resources to drive digital engagement and digital maturity in your organization.](#)



To advance from novice to expert in digital marketing maturity, B2B marketers must focus on:

1. Evaluate the organization's digital maturity: Understanding the current state of digital readiness helps marketers identify strengths and areas for improvement. This knowledge can guide the development of strategies that align with organizational objectives, ensuring that marketing initiatives contribute to overall business success.
2. Focus on investing in digital engagement technologies: It's essential for marketers to select and implement technologies that cater to their buyers' preferences and expectations. Integrating these platforms cohesively across all touchpoints maximizes return on investment and enhances the overall buyer experience.
3. Equip sales and customer success teams with first-party engagement data: Providing sales representatives with insights into how leads, accounts, and contacts engage with content and experiences helps them personalize their outreach for more impactful conversations with buyers.
4. Pursue continuous improvement: B2B marketers should always aim to enhance their marketing experiences. By leveraging engagement data and gathering feedback from buyers, they can refine and optimize their strategies to stay ahead of the competition.

Appendix

Methodology

To understand the level of digital maturity across the world, Market2Marketers and ON24 conducted online surveys across 2022 and 2023. A total of 1,308 qualified respondents were used in the analysis.

All respondents worked for B2B organizations within a marketing or marketing-related role. Panel respondents were sourced through Dynata and its providers from the United States, Australia, New Zealand and Singapore. In EMEA, the survey was fielded in the UK, France, Germany, Spain, Belgium, Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Portugal and Italy. To ensure understanding and achieve high completion rates within the region, the survey was translated from English into French, German, Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Danish and Swedish.

Respondents were placed in one of five maturity categories based on their answers to the questions. For comparability across markets, only respondents that answered every maturity-related question were assigned a performance rating. Some figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Maturity scores for questions

The questions factoring into the maturity assessment and individual scores are below.

Section	Question	Max Score
Strategy, process and people	Which of the following best describes your organization's marketing strategy?	8
	How does your marketing team typically set goals for your tactics and digital experiences?	8
	Which statement best describes your use of defined processes in marketing?	8
	Total for Strategy, process and people	24
Data and Measurement	Which of the following best describes how your organization collects marketing data?	8
	How much visibility do you have in terms of marketing's contribution to revenue goals?	8
	To what extent are you able to collect engagement and action data to qualify and understand your buyers?	8
	How does your marketing team use data to improve its content and digital experiences?	8
	Total for Data and Measurement	32
Driving Action and Engagement	Which best describes how your marketing team incorporates calls-to-action and other conversion touch points?	8
	Which of the following techniques and tactics do you currently use to drive action and engagement?	10
	Total for Driving Action and Engagement	18

Scoring continued on next page



Maturity scores for questions

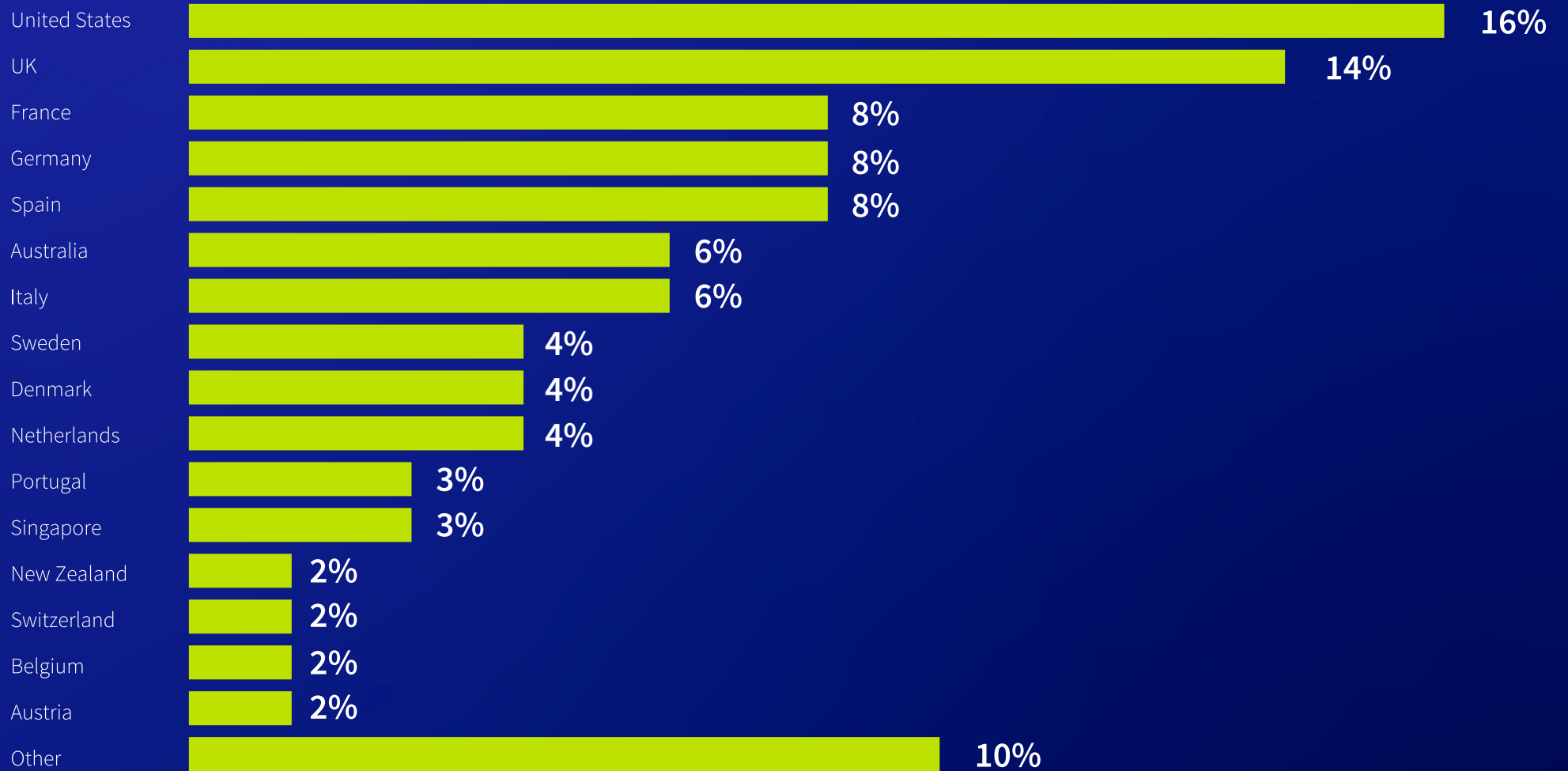
The questions factoring into the maturity assessment and individual scores are below.

Tech Adoption and Use	Which of the following technologies do you have in your business?	12
	How integrated is your technology with other sales and marketing systems?	8
	Note: this question was split into two for respondents in North America and APAC.	
	Total for Tech Adoption and Use	20
Experiences and Personalization	Which of the following types of data do you use to personalize your digital experiences and content?	10
	Which of the following digital experiences and content do you personalize?	10
	In your digital content and experiences, which of the following do you offer to your buyers?	10
	Total for Experiences and Personalization	30
Overall Digital Maturity Total		124

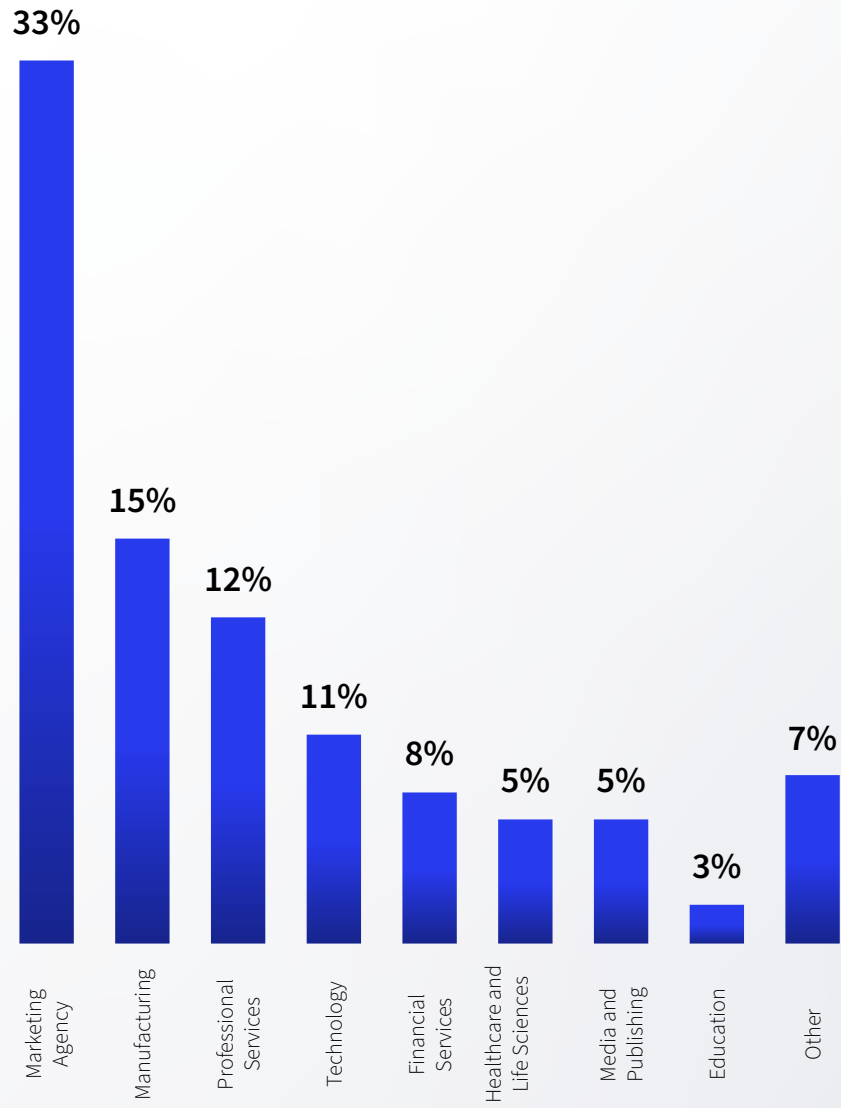
Broad Maturity Rating	Granular Maturity Rating	Total Maturity Score
High maturity (Expert)	Advanced	100 to 124
	Proficient	75 to 99
Intermediate maturity	Intermediate	51 to 74
Low maturity (Novice)	Beginner	26 to 50
	Novice	0 to 25

Respondent profiles

Methodology



Industry



Job level

