# STATE OF B2B MARTECH IN 2023

AI & Automation Are Shaping Modern Tech Stacks

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# INTRODUCTION

Marketing technology is essential for B2B marketers to stay competitive in a rapidly changing digital landscape — and with **53% of marketers** experiencing legacy technology issues and limitations, they're researching innovations to expand and refine their technology stacks.

The primary goal in this evolving martech ecosystem is to continue enhancing integration capabilities with existing software, which has created a need for martech providers to keep improving their automation capabilities between various providers in the industry — even if they directly compete. By doing so, companies can optimize their marketing efforts and seamlessly connect different customer journey stages.

"I believe integration is much easier today than 15 or 20 years ago," said Sophia Agustina, Head of Global Demand Strategy at **IBM**. "When I joined a B2B company about 15 years ago, I helped implement Eloqua as the company's marketing automation platform. We used a lot of tactics to help automate the process of reaching our customers across many kinds of go-to-market (GTM) strategies. But then a challenge comes in when integrating a CRM system: What data do you want to push to the CRM so sellers can engage more proactively?"

One of the biggest influences on modern martech is artificial intelligence (AI) due to its ability to automate repetitive tasks and streamline workflows — and that doesn't even cover the predictive capabilities. As bosses task practitioners with "doing more with less," especially amid economic uncertainty, they increasingly turn to automation and machine learning solutions to keep up with the speed of change.

"With the exponential rise of ChatGPT and other AI applications, the state of martech is more volatile than ever," said Hussam AlMukhtar, Sr. Director of Customer Expansion at **ZoomInfo, a provider of GTM software**. "Especially as you look at today's economic make up and the buyers' budget-conscious inclinations — it's ripe for more consolidation than ever before."

And with data policies restricting how companies generate buyer information, practitioners are refining their technology stacks and utilizing technologies to build trust and offer more transparency around data collection processes. To help practitioners keep up with the rapidly evolving martech landscape, this special report will discuss:

- How practitioners are integrating technologies and systems to encourage information-sharing between departments and promote omnichannel marketing;
- How AI-powered analytics are leading to more intriguing and satisfying customer interactions; and
- The growing demand among buyers for open marketing platforms that can support "BYOD" (bring your own data).

# FUELING ATTRIBUTABLE ROI, OMNICHANNEL EXPERIENCES THROUGH AUTOMATION & INTEGRATION

B2B marketers quickly realized the value of integrated and automated tech stacks, which help them make more informed investments and increase the overall efficiency of their marketing efforts. **Gartner research** found that 60% of marketers are investing in an integrated suite of products, compared to 42% one year prior.

"It's an interesting time: We're coming out of a SaaS hangover with martech from the expansion and boom years," said Jon Russo, Founder of the **B2B Fusion Group, a marketing consultancy firm**. "We're more in a consolidation era now. There's a premium on ensuring a platform delivers on its promise, attributable to ROI. Integration is critical since that's where you maximize the platform's value and how the platforms become fully engrained in the fabric of the business."

Marketing teams are also learning that integration is essential for providing an omnichannel experience throughout every customer journey stage, from acquisition to retention. Marketers must be able to track performance across digital channels to continue personalizing each customer's behavior. Data-driven insights provide the foundation for improved customer experiences that drive higher engagement, loyalty and conversions.

"At the core of good B2B omnichannel marketing is good data and, in turn, good marketing measurement," said Colby Cavanaugh, SVP of Marketing at **Integrate, a precision demand marketing company**. "If your data isn't clean and compliant, you can't reach your buyer in their preferred channels, you're not able to segment or drive personalization, you can't measure your efforts and you've effectively wasted your budget."

# CREATING MORE COMPELLING CX THROUGH AI-DRIVEN ANALYTICS

In 2023, industry experts and practitioners agreed that AI-driven predictive analytics and automated personalization will become even more commonplace in modern tech stacks as B2B marketing teams strive to create compelling customer experiences and increase attributable ROI. In fact, a **Forrester survey** found that the top use case for AI in B2B marketing was targeting (40%), followed by personalization (36%) and marketing automation/tactic orchestration (36%).

"You're certainly seeing AI help predictive platforms predict what business may or may not close with a higher probability," said Russo. "And AI is being leveraged creatively to do more personalization at scale, which is now sharper."

AI-driven technologies, such as natural language processing (NLP), give marketers powerful insights into customer sentiment and engagement. Experts see that marketers can now determine how customers interact and engage with their product, service or brand — at an individual level and across larger groups — to create more tailored content.

For example, **Cisco**, a provider of networking, cloud and cybersecurity solutions, uses machine learning (ML) and AI within its tech ecosystem to support cases like lead scoring, identifying digital intent and personalizing offers based on account and individual interactions. According to Chad Reese, Sr. Director of Digital Marketing at Cisco, personalization efforts on the company website yield 6X conversion rates relative to static, non-personalized offers.

"We use digital intent modeling to understand what our B2B customers are searching for and to optimize the content and copy on our website for organic search," continued Reese. "We're also focusing on integrating our digital and demand operations to deliver a unified account and customer experience as we enable B2B buyers through the buying process to coordinate seller outreach, prospecting and nurture based on the accounts we are targeting and those demonstrating digital intent."

# HOW TIDE ROCK LEVERAGES MARTECH TO QUICKLY GENERATE QUALIFIED LEADS

**Tide Rock Holdings** (Tide Rock) is an unlevered buyout firm that acquires companies with strong free cash flow and grows them to scale while distributing high quarterly yield to its investors. It owns a portfolio of economically resilient B2B companies in the micro lower market, specifically in the manufacturing, distribution and services industries. The company's unique model consistently drives high yield returns, without the risk profile typically associated with other investment vehicles.

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The Tide Rock marketing team provides experience, networks and shared back-office resources to create tremendous value for each company.

With more than 50 years of manufacturing experience, **Interconnect Solutions Company (ISC)**, a Tide Rock portfolio company, designs and manufactures custom and complex interconnect solutions, including cable assemblies, harnesses, custom over-molded solutions and molded strain reliefs. ISC's products are used worldwide in commercial and military aircrafts, lifesaving medical devices, weapon systems, inflight entertainment, power systems and countless commercial, industrial and computer applications.

## THE CHALLENGE

When Tide Rock first acquired ISC, it took inventory of ways to accelerate ISC's growth potential and achieve its strategic objectives.

"It's our responsibility to identify roadblocks and ensure the companies we invest in have all the resources needed to successfully expand their customer base and run a profitable business," explained Jack Parcell, Digital Marketing Specialist at Tide Rock.

One of the key challenges Tide Rock faced when onboarding new subsidiaries was aligning marketing with sales initiatives to drive growth.

"When there is a lack of communication between leadership and the technologies each team leverages, it can be difficult to create sustainable growth," shared Parcell. "We saw similar challenges when we acquired ISC. Since we're a solution-oriented firm, we saw an opportunity to drive alignment by arming them with a tech stack that could help support both sales and marketing efforts."

## THE SOLUTION

With ZoomInfo's SalesOs and MarketingOS now supporting ISC's go-to-market teams, the company has eliminated internal silos and doubled down on its growth goals.

Rather than continuing with a "spray-and-pray" approach, ZoomInfo enabled ISC to launch more strategic and targeted marketing campaigns.

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"Marketing OS has been influential in allowing us to laser focus our marketing initiatives," said Eric Shumway, SVP of Sales and Business Development at ISC. "We no longer have to cast a wide net and hope we catch something good. We're crafting messages that are unique to each audience and the results are telling."

ISC's leadership team has benefited in working with a singular data set while having greater visibility into what's happening with both the sales and marketing teams.

"We've successfully eliminated friction between the two teams," commented Shumway. "Now, by the time a rep starts talking with a prospect, they know that a contact has already seen or engaged with one of our campaigns. Sellers feel more confident going into conversations knowing they are connecting with prospects who are familiar with our offerings and in the market for a solution like ours."

## THE RESULTS

"The ability to reach decision makers at a faster rate while aligning our messaging to potential buyers has led to greater ROI on ad spend," explained Shumway.

While hard numbers are still in the making, it no longer takes ISC six months to generate a qualified lead.

"MarketingOS gives us actionable insights that enable us to execute effective campaigns," shared Shumway. "It used to take us months to generate value from our marketing efforts but now, we're capturing high-quality leads in less than 48 hours after launching a campaign."

As ISC continues to expand its campaign efforts and identify new target markets, ZoomInfo will continue to remain an integral part of reaching their full revenue potential.

"The greatest value ZoomInfo has brought us is the opportunity for alignment," stated Parcell. "We're all working off one data set, our goals are aligned and our efforts are housed in one ecosystem. This has made a significant impact."

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# ACCOMMODATING 'BYOD' FOR OPEN PLATFORMS

The demand for open platforms is growing as B2B marketers continue to build and refine their tech stacks. Open martech platforms allow practitioners to easily integrate disparate technologies, providing greater flexibility in creating solutions tailored to their business needs.

More importantly, it allows these teams to use all the data they collect to inform the decision instead of being limited to the tech at their disposal. **Research by Ascend2** found that B2B marketers are prioritizing martech integrations to improve marketing-related metrics (34%), data centralization (30%) and marketing attribution (26%).

"Providers have seen that, the more they embed themselves in the fabric of a business, the more valuable they are," said B2B Fusion's Russo. "If you look at the ABM platforms, for example, they're integrating multiple intent providers now, which they didn't do five years ago. Before, intent data was part of the platform. Now, you 'bring your own data' (BYOD). Martech companies realize they must be more of an open platform, or they risk relevance. If they can't integrate them, they're worthless."

Experts are seeing this BYOD approach allow marketers to integrate disparate software and leverage all their available data sources to drive actionable insights more easily.

IBM's Agustina has also seen value in the BYOD approach, as it allows marketers to create a more personalized customer experience while helping reinforce data accuracy and clarity.

"We use Integrate to improve lead quality by removing duplicates and dirty data, and personalizing emails," said Agustina. "This leads to a 40% improvement in lead quality, and we also use their content syndication platform, which helped increase conversion rates from 8% to 12%."

Open platforms can give B2B marketers more freedom and oversight to develop personalized platforms that improve customer experiences. Additionally, these platforms can provide valuable data insights to support informed decision-making.

"Reliable insights like intent data, coupled with first- and third-party data, give marketers a better edge at reaching their audiences," said ZoomInfo's AlMukhtar. "Marketers also get a better fidelity into what to say and when to them than ever before."

# CONCLUSION

The marketing technology landscape continues to evolve rapidly and thought leaders state there is no surprise that the industry's current focus is on integration and automation. As martech continues to grow, it will be essential for companies to adopt innovative solutions that prioritize integrating different platforms and automating processes to drive effective and efficient marketing strategies.

"Marketing automation platforms are on a collision course with ABM platforms toward a new category of comprehensive B2B revenue marketing platforms," said Integrate's Cavanaugh. "Marketing automation is now taking on new functionality, such as account insights and embracing the buying group, embedding CDPs toward a more data-driven strategy and adding omnichannel capabilities."

Accelerate your growth with ZoomInfo, an Inc. 5000 company. ZoomInfo's Growth Acceleration Platform offers the most accurate and actionable B2B contact and company intelligence to help organizations accelerate growth and profitability. The continuously updated database enables sales and marketing teams to execute more effective marketing campaigns and improve sales prospecting efforts with access to on demand direct dial phone numbers, email addresses, and background information.

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*Demand Gen Report* is a targeted online publication that uncovers the strategies and solutions that help companies better align their sales and marketing organizations, and ultimately, drive growth. A key component of the publication's editorial coverage focuses on the sales and marketing automation tools that enable companies to better measure and manage their multichannel demand generation efforts.

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