

GUIDE

3 ways to win in a new marketing era

How marketers can transform their business with new approaches to products, campaigns, and events

The big challenge

Raising the bar while leadership is raising the stakes

As another cycle of product launches, events, ad campaigns, and demand gen initiatives rolls around, it's easy to fall back on what's worked in the past and simply add a fresh coat of paint. However, marketers are emboldened to take risks in a crowded marketplace this year. According to our research, the status quo just isn't cutting it anymore.

In our recent [survey of marketing professionals](#), 56% say their company plans to take risks this year, rather than playing it safe.

Expectations are up at the same time that marketers are searching for new ways to show their impact. Eight out of ten leaders say their teams are facing increased performance expectations. And, less than a third (31%) of marketers say they will reach all their goals this year. This gap represents an opportunity for bold, innovative approaches to marketing.

Change is in the air

Marketers navigate shifting expectations and strategies in a dynamic landscape.

80%

Eight out of ten leaders say their teams are facing increased performance expectations.



31%

Less than a third of marketers say they will reach all their goals this year.

66%

Two-thirds of marketers value being flexible and experimenting over using established processes.



Maybe it’s time to seize the day

It’s no wonder that the majority of marketers are willing to try something new. In our study, two-thirds of marketers said they value the flexibility to experiment and discover new ways of doing things over sticking with established processes.

Now might be the time to do things differently. A successful go-to-market strategy or creative campaign may feel like part luck, part expertise. But more marketers are going to market with confidence and developing campaigns that

have a higher likelihood of success by gathering insights and letting feedback drive improvements.

This means uncovering trends before or as they are happening instead of chasing the market. And it means optimizing programs to make a quicker, larger impact. Perhaps most significantly, gathering customer insights before planning your marketing efforts means that you’ll understand how to connect more authentically, developing better closeness and a strong customer base over time.

The old way

Using disconnected, static data dashboards with outdated info

Pre-set dashboard configurations often can’t collect relevant data

May sacrifice quality for speed (and vice versa)

Restrictive permissions for sharing data

Requires paying an agency or creating a specialized team

The new way

Dashboards updated with real-time insights enable agile research

Data insights are customizable, through custom fields, integrations, and more

Insights are quick, accurate, and can be extracted using AI

Controls to access insights are intuitive

Research technology and integrations make analysis accessible to all teams



Feedback as fuel for success

In such a fast-paced market, nothing short of real-time, relevant insights will enable you to win campaigns, create memorable events, and go to market with confidence. Stale, static data from last quarter—or even last month—can create blindspots around how marketing efforts are tying back to pipeline and revenue.



24%

Nearly a quarter of all marketers find it difficult to measure the impact of their campaigns or decisions.

The old model of getting audience insights from an agency or from dated systems can't keep up with the needs of marketers, and is hampered by a list of blockers. Our data reveals that almost a quarter (24%) of all marketers find it difficult to measure the impact of their campaigns or decisions.



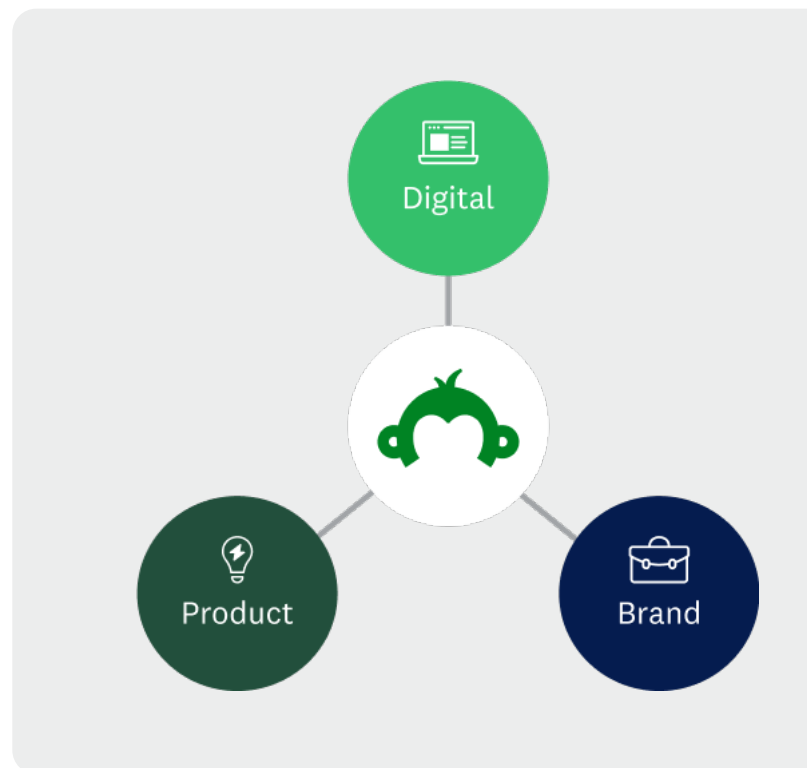
THE STRATEGIES

3 ways marketers can elevate their efforts

Launching a new go-to-market strategy or campaign has the power to energize your company and build brand momentum. But true success lies in boldly engaging your customers authentically; showing that you care at crucial moments. By asking the right questions at the right time, you can allow customer voices to guide your path. This approach transforms untested efforts into strategic moves, tapping into emerging trends and customer needs. Smart marketers don't just act—they listen, learn, and then leap forward with bold initiatives.

To help implement these strategies effectively, we've broken them down into three key marketing roles: brand, product, and digital marketing. However, these strategies should not be considered only applicable to the role in which they appear; they're versatile and can be adapted across various marketing functions to drive collective success.

Whether you're shaping brand perception, refining product messaging, or optimizing digital campaigns, these recommendations in the following sections will help you dare to make bold, customer-centric decisions that drive meaningful change.



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Feedback strategies for all marketing needs

STRATEGY ONE

Brand marketing

Tap into how your target audiences feel about your brand and products; test key concepts and messaging for feedback-driven campaigns.

STRATEGY TWO

Product marketing

Investigate usage patterns, consumer attitudes, and competitive positioning while testing claims to launch market-ready products.

STRATEGY THREE

Digital marketing

Optimize your online presence through idea screening, ad testing, and customer effort measurement across digital touchpoints.



STRATEGY ONE

Brand marketing

STRATEGY ONE

Brand marketing

Building a beloved brand through customer understanding and effective communication

Brand marketers face significant challenges in today's dynamic market. Our study revealed that 28% of marketers struggle to effectively communicate with their target audience, while only 34% find it very easy to measure the impact of their campaigns. These stats underscore the complexity of creating resonant brand strategies and highlight the need for data-driven approaches.

To overcome these challenges and build beloved brands, brand marketers use market research

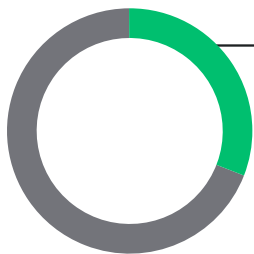
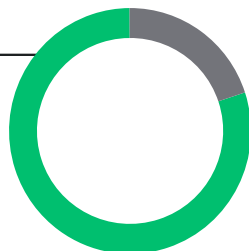
and customer feedback to inform strategy and create compelling content. This approach ensures that your brand messaging aligns with audience preferences and values.

Sounds simple, right? The catch is, you'll need to have a deep understanding of your target audience first. This means gathering deep insights into how customers think, feel, and interact with your brand and developing audience empathy—that is, truly understanding the needs, pain points, and aspirations of your target market.

Empathy-driven marketing leads to successful campaigns. Companies seem to understand this, according to our study: marketers said their company's top goals included more personalized efforts (55%), and strengthening relationships with customers (53%).

28%

Over 1 in 4 marketers have trouble communicating with their target audience.

**34%**

Less than half of marketers find it very easy to measure a campaign's impact.

By testing ideas and messaging before significant investment, you can prioritize audience needs and demonstrate respect for their time and input. This approach involves validating concepts, continuously refining messaging based on insights, using modern tools for quick market data analysis, and regularly assessing your competitive position.



Giving attention to three key areas can overcome these challenges and build beloved brands:

1.1 Brand health

Regularly assess how your brand is perceived in the market with brand health. These include brand positioning, awareness, consideration, purchase intent, loyalty, attributes, reputation, and perception. Each of these elements contributes to the overall strength and performance of a brand in the marketplace. For instance, **brand positioning** helps differentiate your offering from competitors, while **brand awareness** measures how well-known your brand is among consumers. **Brand consideration** and **purchase intent** provide insights into the likelihood of consumers choosing your brand, while **loyalty** indicates the strength of your customer relationships.

To effectively track brand health, marketers should employ a variety of strategies and tools. These may include conducting regular surveys to gauge customer perceptions and intentions, or monitoring social media and online mentions for share-of-voice and reputation management. By consistently measuring and analyzing these various aspects of brand health, marketers can identify areas for improvement, track the impact of their efforts over time.

These research methods would traditionally take weeks to outsource, but by then your data would be stale and retroactive. Today, you can quickly test an ad or message with your ideal target audience and collect feedback in hours. Insights are returned in presentation-ready scorecards so you can easily share the results with stakeholders.

	A	B	C	D
	Central College Cadets	Central College Comets	Central College Condors	Central College Condors
Overall appeal	31%	35%	54% D	23%
Believable	39%	34%	38%	41%
Memorable	42% AD	30%	28%	18%
Stands out	36%	24%	18%	52%



1.2 Ad/Video Testing

Ad testing, including video testing, is an important process when it comes to evaluating the effectiveness of advertising creative before investing in a campaign. This allows you to identify areas for improvement, which aspects will resonate, and predict which versions are most likely to drive **key performance indicators (KPIs)**. By utilizing automated analysis tools, such as those offered by SurveyMonkey, marketers can quickly gather data on various aspects of their ads, including digital ads, web pages, signage, and video content. This data-driven approach helps in securing stakeholder buy-in faster by providing concrete evidence of an ad's potential success.

The ad and video testing process typically involves presenting different versions of the creative to a representative sample of the target audience and collecting their feedback through surveys. Teams can then identify **key drivers** influencing customer preferences, and surface insights on which elements of their ads or videos are most effective across different demographic groups. By leveraging these insights, marketers can refine their advertising strategies, optimize their creative content, and launch campaigns with greater confidence in their potential to engage audiences and achieve desired outcomes.



1.3 Message and Claims Testing

Message and claims testing allows you to measure the impact of slogans, taglines, value propositions, and company positioning by presenting them to a targeted audience. [SurveyMonkey Audience](#) offers access to a trusted panel of respondents, ensuring high-quality feedback from qualified individuals worldwide. Marketers can customize their target audience using various demographic parameters and include custom screening questions to refine their selection.

The SurveyMonkey platform allows for a comprehensive analysis of messaging concepts, comparing and scoring multiple options across

various attributes such as **appeal**, **uniqueness**, **market fit**, and more. It offers both quantitative scorecards and qualitative feedback, including insights that identify standout attributes and trends within key segments. This approach saves marketers significant time on data analysis by automating the process of evaluating open-ended responses and generating presentation-ready reports. By conducting message and claims testing, you can gain confidence in your campaigns, understanding exactly what resonates with your audience and why, before investing resources in full-scale implementation.



CUSTOMER STORY

Our Ad/Video Testing solutions played a crucial role for ClickUp, a productivity platform, when it needed to run a successful ad campaign for America's biggest annual football game. Faced with the challenge of creating a high-stakes commercial for a massive audience, ClickUp's head of creative operations, Brian Sherry, turned to SurveyMonkey for its expertise and scalable testing capabilities. The platform allowed ClickUp to test their ad with over 5,000 respondents in less than a week, providing statistically significant and unbiased data. This rapid, large-scale testing enabled ClickUp to select the most funny and memorable version of their ad based on actionable insights.

[Read the entire customer story here](#)



STRATEGY TWO

Product marketing

STRATEGY TWO

Product marketing

Aligning product value with customer needs through research

Effective product marketing relies on a deep understanding of customer desires and how they align with product benefits. By leveraging key research methodologies, product marketers can create messaging and content that consistently resonates with their target audience.

Here are three essential approaches:

2.1 Message and Claims Testing

Validate your product messaging and claims before going to market. This ensures that your communication accurately reflects your product's value proposition and resonates with your target audience. By testing various messages, you can identify which ones most effectively convey your product's benefits and drive customer interest.

2.2 Usage & Attitudes

These studies are powerful tools for uncovering the drivers of purchase behavior. They provide valuable insights into your target audience's attitudes, behaviors, and demographics. With this information, you can create comprehensive buyer profiles, quantify and prioritize top customer challenges, and inform go-to-market strategies. Ultimately, this leads to improved purchase conversion rates.

For example, online course creation platform Kajabi was challenged with identifying and expanding its buyer personas. The company was focused on creators, entrepreneurs, and single-person businesses, but knew it needed to branch out. Kajabi ran a usage and attitudes and discovered new customer purchase drivers and motivations they could then leverage to create specific user personas to drive brand and marketing growth.

61%

Six out of ten product marketers said strengthening relationships with customers was their company's top goal.

47%

Nearly half of product marketers said tracking the changing needs of their target market is their biggest challenge for 2024 ([Product marketing trends](#))



2.3 Thought leadership

Gathering proprietary insights and thought leadership is often overlooked by product marketers, but it can be particularly useful for internal organizational purposes. By developing insights from customer data, product marketers can build a strong case for their key personas and strategic initiatives. This internal thought leadership helps align different departments around a shared understanding of the target audience and market dynamics. When product marketers present well-researched, forward-thinking ideas to stakeholders, they're more likely to gain support for their proposed strategies, resource allocations, and product development directions.

Gathering customer data through surveys is instrumental in developing thought leadership. By conducting regular surveys, you can present a unique window into customer behaviors, preferences, and pain points—challenging assumptions, identifying emerging trends, and refining personas and strategies.

By leveraging these research approaches, you can effectively connect customer desires to product value, creating more impactful marketing campaigns and driving product success. This comprehensive strategy not only improves current product performance but also informs future product development, ensuring long-term market relevance and customer satisfaction.



CUSTOMER STORY



Brex, a Fintech company serving high-growth companies and startups, leveraged thought leadership to amplify the impact of their new product launch at a trade show. Recognizing the power of industry intelligence, the product marketing team decided to go beyond traditional messaging and educate the market with original insights.

Using [SurveyMonkey Audience](#), Brex launched a market research survey targeting finance professionals to capture insights around the challenges addressed by its new product. The team received insights in just 2 days and created an entire campaign around the data, including a report, takeaways, and the trade show presentation. It even tested a promotional jelly bean giveaway to see how finance people would respond to a subtle reference to “bean counters.” (They were fine with it and the jellybeans were a hit.)

[Read the entire customer story here](#)



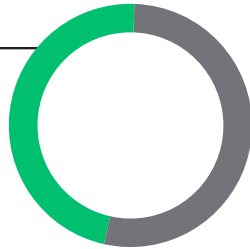
STRATEGY THREE

Digital marketing

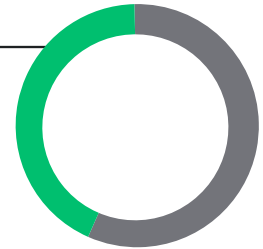
Optimizing your online presence through data-driven strategies

47%

Less than half of marketers expect their company to gain an edge during a downturn.

**43%**

3 in 7 business leaders say they'll look to insights to understand their industry during a downturn.



During economic downturns, marketers can face significant challenges in maintaining a competitive edge. Our survey reveals that less than half (47%) of marketers expect their company to gain an advantage during such periods. However, there's a silver lining: 43% of business leaders recognize the value of insights in understanding their industry during challenging times. This data suggests a potential strategy for marketers to overcome their pessimism.

In today's crowded digital landscape, a consistently optimized online presence is crucial for attracting target audiences. Below, we'll explore three key areas where insights can make a difference: idea screening, ad testing, and customer effort measurement across digital touchpoints. These strategies can help marketers stand out and thrive, even when the economic outlook seems uncertain.



3.1 Idea screening

Marketers face a constant challenge: identifying winning concepts before investing resources. Idea screening solves for this by allowing teams to validate and prioritize early-stage ideas quickly. You can test various elements with target audiences, from products and messages to ad creative, providing crucial insights earlier in the development process.

The idea screening process typically involves presenting concepts to a carefully selected sample of the target audience. Platforms like SurveyMonkey offer idea screening solutions that provide access to large, [diverse panels of respondents worldwide](#), ensuring marketers can reach even niche groups for unbiased feedback. SurveyMonkey also incorporates proven methodologies like [sequential and sequential monadic](#) testing, and offers automated analysis capabilities that compile results into clear scorecards and presentations. This not only saves time on data analysis, but also equips marketers with concrete data to inform decisions about which ideas to pursue and which to abandon early in the development process.

3.2 Ad testing

Essential in a crowded digital space, ad testing can offer different approaches such as the A/B testing of different ad elements, from headlines and visuals to calls-to-action.

This can significantly improve engagement and conversion rates. (Learn more about it above, in the [brand marketing section](#)).

3.3 Customer effort score (CES)

CES is a powerful metric that tracks how easy it is for customers to interact with a company's products, services, or support. Developed in 2010, CES is based on the idea that reducing customer effort is more effective at building loyalty than exceeding expectations. By quantifying the relative effort required for customers to complete tasks or resolve issues, CES provides marketers with actionable insights to streamline touchpoints and reduce friction throughout the customer journey.

Sending a CES survey involves asking customers to rate the ease of their experience immediately after an interaction, such as a purchase or Regular CES surveys at key touchpoints allow companies to continuously improve their customer experience (CX), potentially leading to increased loyalty, reduced churn, and more positive word-of-mouth recommendations. When combined with other metrics like [Net Promoter Score® \(NPS\)](#) and [Customer Satisfaction Score \(CSAT\)](#), CES gives you a comprehensive view of the customer experience to make data-driven decisions that enhance overall customer satisfaction and business performance.



These data-driven approaches are particularly important given current market conditions. Our study reveals that over half of marketers report facing more competition than last year, while less than half (47%) expect their company to gain a competitive edge during a downturn. In this challenging environment, leveraging data to inform digital strategies is essential.



CUSTOMER STORY



Combining them can yield even greater insights and results. The following customer story from Box demonstrates how integrating feedback like idea screening, ad testing, and CES measurement can create a comprehensive view of the customer journey and drive business success.

By using the app integration features within [SurveyMonkey Enterprise](#), Box brought together feedback from key moments in the customer experience, from the onboarding experience, to customer satisfaction across various interactions. Integrating SurveyMonkey with [Salesforce](#) and [Zendesk](#) allowed Box to break down data silos and create a single, accessible source of customer insights.

These integrations provided Box with a 360° view of their customers' experiences, empowering various teams at Box to make data-driven decisions, tailor their product development and marketing strategies, and ultimately enhance overall CX scores. And by connecting customer feedback directly to their existing data warehouse and analytics tools through API access and integrations, Box was able to create a truly customer-centric approach that informed their business operations at every level.

[Read the entire customer story here](#)



How marketers can use feedback

 **81%**

About 4 in every 5 marketers are concerned about job security in 2024

As previously noted, 43% of business leaders say they will gather insights to understand how their industry will shift during a downturn. This approach is particularly crucial given that 81% of marketers are concerned about their job security in 2024, a 53 percentage-point increase from the previous year. To demonstrate the value of their role, marketers can use customer data from feedback, applying insights throughout the marketing funnel—from campaign launch to conversion to strategies that build brand loyalty and product advocacy. Here's how:



Have the courage to ask

Before your go-to-market launch, tap into sentiment from your target market and collect feedback on their needs, instead of guessing what they want. Pressure test messaging, ads, and offers before you create full-blown campaigns.



Listen with care

Apply your insights to create programs that solve real problems. Listen to market feedback to understand why your programs work—or don't. Today's agile solutions allow you to tap into what your audience is thinking and collect insights in hours. Doing this kind of research doesn't have to derail your scheduled launch timelines and may even prevent blockers or crystallize project needs.



Take action and transform your business

Develop and execute a plan that incorporates your findings. Provide proof your ideas will be successful by sharing research results with stakeholders and leadership. Build consensus for your ideas by providing context with data collected from your target audience. Reduce iterative guesswork and anchor your decisions with insights.

And as your campaigns mature, research can help you continue to refine your target segments, measure and optimize the effectiveness of your campaigns, and monitor the marketing activities that impact brand health.

Get the insights you need to ask, listen, and act

Make every brand campaign, product launch, and customer experience count. Learn more about our purpose-built solutions for marketers.

[Start now](#)

