

MarketingWeek



**THE LANGUAGE OF
EFFECTIVENESS**

2023

SUPPORTED BY

KANTAR

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Foreword



Russell Parsons
Editor-in-chief,
Marketing Week

Marketers have faced a plethora of challenges over the last 10 years, and many of them have resulted in having less money to spend. The last 12 months will have proven particularly demanding. Double-digit inflation has dented the confidence of the customers that marketers serve. It has also led to nervy finance leads looking to chop what they often see as an operating expense – marketing budget.

But what impact has this had on the way marketing effectiveness is defined and measured? And which levers are marketers pulling in the face of a macroeconomic environment most working-age people have never had to navigate? In short, are brands viewing success differently and looking to achieve it in different ways?

The answers to those questions, and to many more, you will find in this report. By way of a summary, and a tease of the findings, much has inevitably changed.

Driving sales volume is increasingly being seen as the outcome most desired of marketers, at the inevitable expense of profitability, while short-term measures of success often trump longer-term indicators of impact, which remain difficult to capture and explain to key stakeholders. Conversely it is surprising, in light of the pressure on price all brands in all categories have had to mitigate, that this one of the ‘four Ps’ remains on the periphery of marketers’ priorities.

Elsewhere, the report details interesting precursors of what’s next and what still needs to be done. The evolution and maturity of digital channels is captured in our respondents’ growing use of them for brand building. Despite received wisdom from some that data-driven digital media is good for performance only, marketers are increasingly using online media to build mental availability. Related, it’s interesting to see the increasing importance marketers are placing on determining creative effectiveness, despite the challenges in identifying a measure of success. Consequently, the effectiveness of media is still preferred.

The report brilliantly illustrates where the industry is in its quest to better define, measure and communicate success. The vagaries of the last 12 months will inevitably slow progress in some ways and quicken it in others. This report is a fascinating snapshot of how marketers are responding to circumstance and pursuing what’s essential – finding a ‘Language of Effectiveness’ that better articulates and helps deliver greater impact. An objective crucial to the success of businesses and the influence of marketers.



Richard McLeod
*Head of marketing effectiveness,
Kantar Insights UK&I*

Marketing effectiveness is a hot topic. Ask any CMO and the dual goals of maximising effectiveness and communicating impact to the rest of the organisation increasingly top their list of priorities. A scan of your LinkedIn feed serves as a reminder that there is no shortage of opinions and rules that marketers must wade through to guide decision making. It is a complex and contentious topic, and in many organisations confidence is eroding. As opinions, media choices and data solutions continue to fragment, closing the marketing effectiveness confidence gap is increasingly important.

As the world's leading marketing data and analytics company, Kantar shares Marketing Week's mission to help the marketing community navigate this complexity. Earlier this year Kantar launched a dedicated marketing effectiveness practice with a mission to bridge the effectiveness confidence gap. We partner with organisations to diagnose where they sit on the 'marketing effectiveness maturity curve', defining three key steps to a more informed and effective marketing strategy:

- 1. Establish the fundamentals** – ensure the business is measuring meaningful data signals across the marketing ecosystem.
- 2. Connect the dots** – develop a holistic measurement system, connecting the full marketing mix to short-term and long-term outcomes with a common language for effectiveness.

3. Culture of effectiveness – establish a culture in which the programme is driving capability development and sustained effectiveness gains, fuelled by routine meta-learning.

The topics addressed in this year's edition of the 'Language of Effectiveness' report mirror key areas where Kantar is focused on guiding our clients: from unleashing the brand-building power of digital, to recognising the importance of getting creative quality right, through to re-establishing price and profit margin creation as a core responsibility of the marketing team.

We often see a gulf between effectiveness theory and practice – an effort that is consistently undermined by the myriad ways that organisations define, measure and communicate success. Doing away with vanity metrics and establishing a more meaningful common vernacular around effectiveness is a foundational step in galvanising organisations behind marketing strategy. By supporting this year's report, our hope is that we can start to move the industry towards a more unified understanding of what marketing effectiveness is, with practical guidance and inspiration for how to succeed.

Executive summary

In 2022, Marketing Week launched a unique and unprecedented investigation into marketing effectiveness – how it was regarded, measured and communicated within businesses. The centrepiece of that project, named the ‘Language of Effectiveness’, was a landmark survey and report that uncovered how companies large and small defined marketing effectiveness and the metrics they prioritised.

This new study supported by Kantar – the second edition of the report – in part continues the work of the first, tracking how the landscape has changed in the past year. But more importantly, it explores new narratives around effectiveness, placing it explicitly within some of today’s biggest marketing conversations – the optimal media mix, the importance of creativity, marketers’ role in delivering sales and profit, and

perhaps most notably, how brands balance short-term and long-term growth priorities under acute economic pressures.

The headline results make for stark reading. The first of these is that marketers now rank digital media above offline for brand-building effectiveness. In so doing, they make a stronger case than ever for seeing the shift of marketing budgets towards digital as structural and lasting, not merely a symptom of brands’ hunt for efficiency.

Yet, despite the continuing importance of brand building, the report nevertheless shows how marketers are driven by the imperative of generating sales and demonstrating short-term return on investment. The challenging economy and pressure from business

leaders demand it, so to achieve it marketers default to short-term metrics that are most readily obtainable in digital channels.

Our respondents deny a general flight to short-termism, and are investing more, both online and offline, in achieving long-term objectives. Profit, however, remains too low on marketers’ agenda.

As our report concludes, marketers and marketing effectiveness need to be better aligned to business priorities and senior leadership. That doesn’t mean kowtowing to the whims of CEOs, CFOs or shareholders – it means embedding an understanding of the full commercial return of all short- and long-term marketing activity throughout organisations, as well as building the culture and capability to measure it credibly.

Methodology

The 'Language of Effectiveness 2023' report has been produced using responses to an online survey of 1,369 qualifying marketers conducted by Marketing Week between 27 March and 28 April 2023.

In the report, answers to certain questions are segmented by 'overperformers' and 'mainstream' respondents. The former are defined as those who said their organisation is currently performing better than its competition (37.7% of the total sample); the latter are those who said they are performing worse than or in line with the competition (55.5%).

Some charts do not display answers such as 'Don't know', 'Not sure', 'Other' or 'Not applicable'. This is marked on the charts to which it applies.

Where year-on-year comparisons are made, these relate to responses to the same question in the first 'Language of Effectiveness' survey, conducted in 2022. The inaugural 'Language of Effectiveness' report, created

from the results of that survey, is available for purchase at <https://www.marketingweek.com/premium-reports>

Marketing Week would like to thank the following executives, who contributed qualitative insight to this report through interviews:

Leanne Banks, *UK marketing director, Pernod Ricard*

Andrew Geoghegan, *chief marketing transformation officer, PZ Cussons*

Craig Inglis, *EVP of global brand and integrated marketing, Sage*

Amanda Jobbins, *global CMO, Vodafone Business*

Margaret Jobling, *CMO, NatWest Group*

Sam Taylor, *interim marketing director, Direct Line Group*

1. Digital has come of age as a brand-building channel

Until recently, many brands kept a firm divide between digital and offline media channels in their marketing plans, with digital's primary role being to drive short-term performance goals and offline's being to build the brand.

But, as digital media has evolved to include broadcaster and subscription video-on-demand, digital out-of-home, online publishers and a host of video and social media platforms, marketers have increasingly looked towards digital channels with a longer-term view.

Now, according to Marketing Week's survey of over 1,300 marketers, digital media is considered more effective at building brands than offline media. While offline media is still seen as effective by the vast majority (80.1%), an even higher proportion (86.7%) say the same of digital. This evolving view of digital is largely a result of changing media consumption habits, as Craig Inglis, EVP of global brand and integrated marketing at B2B financial software brand Sage, points out.

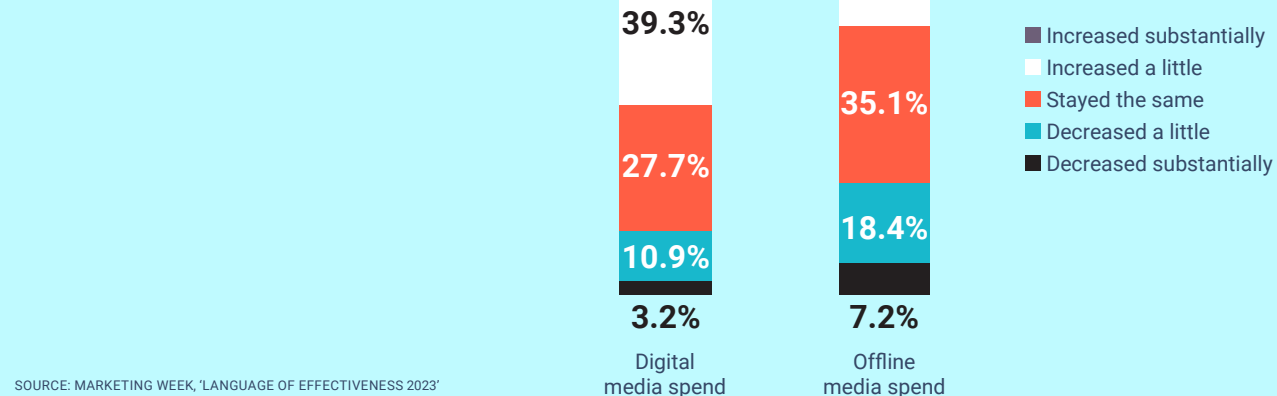
86.7%
of marketers say digital is very or somewhat effective at building brands

80.1%
say the same of offline media

"The reality is that digital channels are crucial if you want to get the reach and frequency you need to build your brand, because we're all spending more time online," he says.

However, Inglis warns marketers not to "ignore" offline media, which still has huge reach. Linear TV, for example, reached 79.4% of the UK population weekly in April 2023,

How have your brand or business's priorities changed over the past 12 months?



with adults consuming an average 1 hour and 51 minutes of commercial TV each day.¹

"At Sage, we're certainly finding that it's that combination of online and offline channels that work really well to deliver that connection with customers," he says.

Brand budgets shifting to digital

Nevertheless, a quarter (25.6%) of marketers report cutting their offline media spend over the past 12 months, whereas only 14.1% have done so in digital. Over half (58.3%) have increased their spend on digital, versus 39.3% who have done the same offline.

'Outperformers' – defined in the survey as those

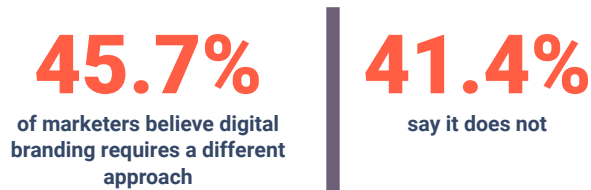
marketers who claim their company is generally performing better than the competition – have been slightly more protective of their offline budgets, with fewer of them (21.9%) making cuts than their 'mainstream' counterparts (those performing worse or in line with their competition). However, less than half (48.1%) of outperformers have increased their offline spend, compared to the 65.3% who are spending more on digital.

The economic climate is no doubt playing a role in accelerating the shift towards higher digital budgets. As will be explored in section 3 of this report, many marketers are facing rising pressure to deliver ▶

¹ <https://www.thinkbox.tv/research/nickable-charts/viewing-and-audiences/monthly-report/>

short-term returns, and 83% of all respondents believe digital is effective at delivering this. In comparison, 68.5% say the same of offline media.

Whether for brand-building or short-term results, digital also offers brands measurability and flexibility in a way most offline media can't, which makes it particularly appealing at a time when budgets are being closely watched. Indeed, 71.8% agree it is easy to measure digital's effectiveness, while only 38.1% say the same of offline media.



Direct Line Group's interim marketing director Sam Taylor says: "A lot of it, for me, comes down to the ability now to get access to [digital] media quicker and more flexibly, and in a measured way."

Yet, although more marketers now believe digital is effective at brand-building than say the same of offline media, they're split on whether it requires a different strategic or creative approach. While 45.7% believe it does – citing 'shorter attention spans' and increased 'competition for attention' when consumers are online as some of their reasons – a similar proportion (41.4%) disagree.

Both Taylor and Inglis argue that, at a strategic level, the brand-building approach should be the same in digital and offline media. Inglis says: "You want consistency in your strategy and your creative approach so that you're a recognisable brand and you cut through over the course of time. But, equally, you don't ignore the differences in offline and digital media. They're consumed in different

ways, so you've got to translate the creative strategy appropriately."

Measuring effectiveness effectively

The greater measurability of digital channels doesn't necessarily make them a more effective choice, Inglis warns. If marketers only invest in what they can directly measure, they may end up making the wrong decisions, he argues.

At Sage, finding the optimal media mix across digital and offline means using what has widely come to be seen as the 'golden trinity' of cross-media measurement tools – econometrics, multitouch attribution and controlled experiments performed alongside one another. Not a single one of these three tools is currently in use by a majority of marketers, though outperformers are more likely than mainstream respondents to be using each of them.

It is perhaps a symptom of this immaturity in measurement expertise that only 51.9% of marketers

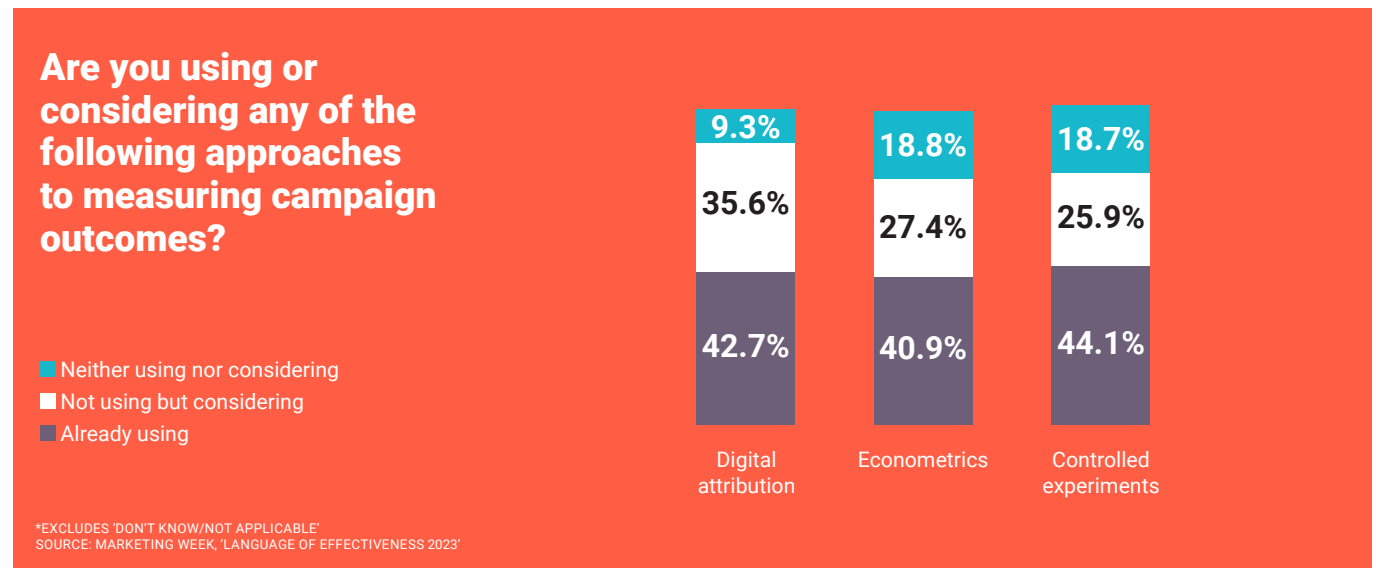
"Digital channels are crucial if you want to get the reach and frequency you need to build your brand."

– Craig Inglis, Sage

overall are confident they can measure short- and long-term effectiveness across media channels – indeed, some of these may in fact be overconfident.

While using these techniques consistently to track marketing effectiveness can require substantial upfront investment in skills and data infrastructure, which may be a barrier to smaller businesses, Inglis argues that brands need to do all three to maximise marketing effectiveness.

"It's pretty complex – you've got a lot of data points and it takes time to build them. But if you can get that right, blending those three approaches allows us to improve what we do over the long term and allows us to yield the most insight to inform our marketing decisions going forward." ■



2. The economy is pushing sales – but not profit – up marketers’ agenda

While sky-high inflation rates have left businesses grappling with higher supply chain costs over the past 18 months, consumers too have had the rising cost of living to contend with. Research by KPMG reveals 55% of consumers have reduced their non-essential spend thus far in 2023.²

Against that backdrop, Marketing Week’s latest ‘Language of Effectiveness’ survey sees around 70% of marketers claim marketing’s role of defending and growing sales has grown in importance as a result of the economic climate, with almost a third (32.8%) saying it has increased substantially.

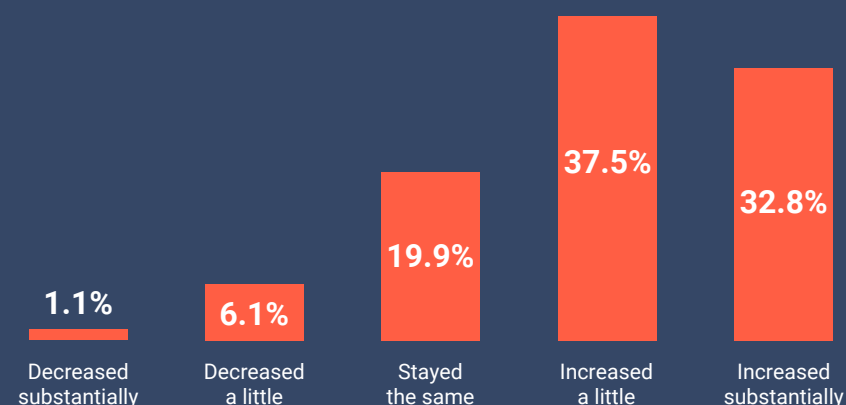
Meanwhile, sales ranks as the outcome marketers most commonly look at when performing marketing effectiveness analysis, with 67.3% always or often measuring the impact a campaign has had on sales or lead generation.

For Vodafone Business’s global CMO Amanda Jobbins, it’s no surprise to see marketers have been taking on a bigger role in sales at this time.

“All organisations have been facing an increase in their cost base, so of course that puts a huge amount of pressure on revenue. Marketing is a large part of helping to drive revenue because it’s marketing that attracts customers to the business.”

Andrew Geoghegan, chief marketing transformation officer at Carex-owner PZ Cussons, suggests it’s not just inflation which has pushed sales up marketers’

How has the importance of sales changed at your company as a result of the economic climate?



*EXCLUDES 'DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE'
SOURCE: MARKETING WEEK, 'LANGUAGE OF EFFECTIVENESS 2023'

agendas, but also the disruption to consumer behaviour caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Marketers are having to consider with more “intensity” what value means to consumers in this new environment, to prevent loss of revenue.

Marketing’s top priorities

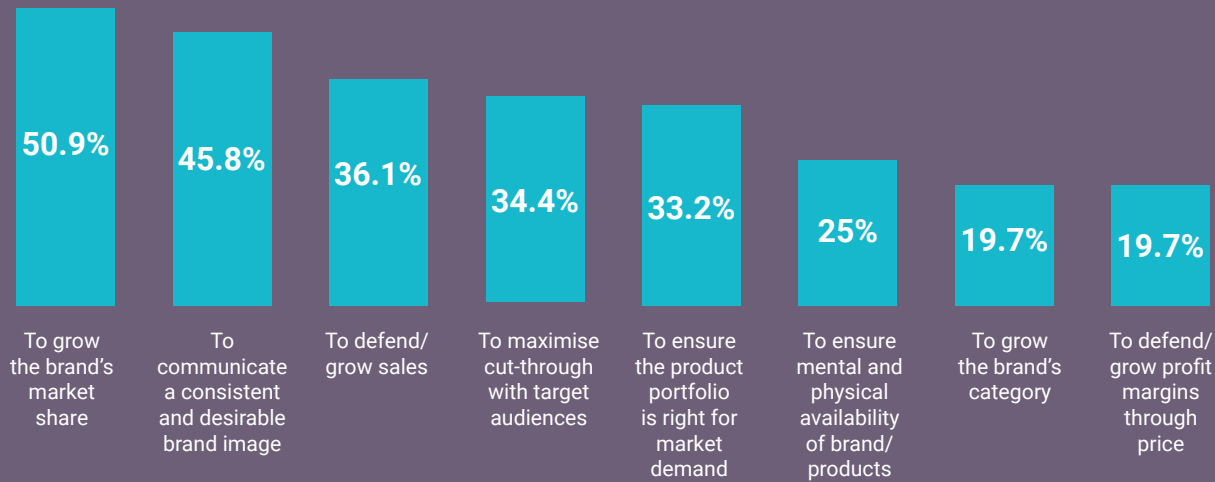
Asked to consider the most important jobs for marketing within an organisation, two of the top three identified by the survey are related to sales. Growing a brand’s market share – a function of sales, relative to competitors – comes out on top, with 50.9% of

respondents rating it among their top three priorities. Communicating a consistent and desirable brand image comes in second, identified by 45.8% of marketers, followed by defending or growing sales at 36.1%.

According to marketers, the joint-least important job for marketing is defending or growing profit margins through price, which is identified as a priority by just 19.7% of respondents. This is despite 56.7% claiming that pricing has been a more important focus of ▶

² <https://kpmg.com/uk/en/home/media/press-releases/2023/03/research-shows-scale-of-cutbacks.html>

What do you see as being the most important jobs for marketing in an organisation?



*EXCLUDES 'OTHER'
SOURCE: MARKETING WEEK, 'LANGUAGE OF EFFECTIVENESS 2023'

marketing as a result of the economic climate, which has seen a large number of brands make price rises on their products to cope with higher production costs.

Meanwhile, less than a third of marketers (32.7%) share profit figures with stakeholders as a metric to demonstrate the success of their investments, although outperformers are more likely to do so (38.3%).

While Geoghegan agrees that growing market share is the ultimate goal of marketing, he adds that he is disappointed to see price so low on the priority list.

"I think marketers are still a little bit scared of pricing, which is a real shame because price, first and foremost, is one of the most important ways of communicating your positioning and your value to the consumer. It's not one of the four Ps for no good reason," he says.

One of the "forgotten benefits" of investing in brands is to enable them to make price increases without losing a disproportionate number of sales, which allows businesses to extract both revenue and profit growth, he adds. PZ Cussons achieved its sixth successive quarter of revenue growth in the three months to 4 March 2023 after successfully executing price hikes earlier in its financial year, while also improving its profit margins.³

"It's such an important lever for brands to grow and for consumers to understand their value, so I wish it were higher. I wish people were more into pricing as one of the secret weapons of marketers," Geoghegan says. ■

³ <https://www.pzcussons.com/investors/reports-presentations>

3. Marketers are struggling to resist short-term pressures

Marketing is often the first budget to be cut when cost pressures mount, but in positive news for the industry, most marketers (54.3%) claim to have increased their overall marketing investment over the past 12 months. Only a fifth (21.6%) say their spend has been cut. Outperformers in particular are choosing to invest through the downturn, with over 60% boosting spend.

Among outperformers, the proportions of marketers increasing investment in long-term and short-term marketing activity are almost equal, at 60.7% and 60.3%, respectively. Only 9.7% of this group have cut their spend on long-term activations, while 7.6% have made cuts to short-term tactical efforts.

However, the outlook is different at mainstream companies. They are almost twice as likely as outperformers to have cut spend on long-term activity (18.6%), while 12.1% have decreased short-term spend. Less than half of mainstream respondents (47.5%) have increased their long-term spend, while 56.2% have increased their short-term activity.

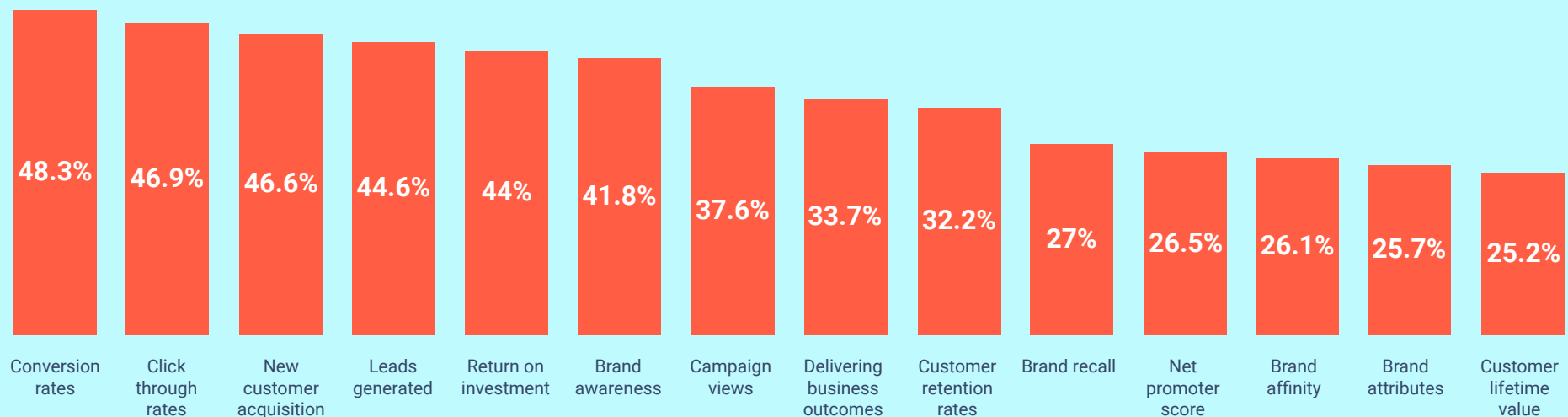
Short-term measures predominate

While these spending figures don't paint a picture of drastic short-termism entering the industry, under the surface there is evidence that marketers are facing acute pressure to demonstrate short-term results. ▶

60.7%
of 'outperformers' have increased spend on long-term marketing in the past year

47.5%
of 'mainstream' respondents have done the same

Which of the following metrics do you currently use in your effectiveness tracking?



*EXCLUDES 'OTHER' AND 'NONE/DON'T KNOW'
SOURCE: MARKETING WEEK, 'LANGUAGE OF EFFECTIVENESS 2023'

All of the top five metrics marketers mention as part of their effectiveness tracking are short-term ones, namely conversion rates, click-through rates, new customer acquisition, leads generated and return on investment – each cited by between 44% and 49% of marketers. The only long-term metric cited by more than 40% is brand awareness, while many others languish at 27% or less, including brand attributes, customer lifetime value and net promoter score.

Short-term measures are important, says NatWest Group CMO Margaret Jobling, because “without the short term, there is no long term”. However, brands have to deliver the commercial outcomes of today while ensuring they’re building their brand for tomorrow.

“The businesses I think are doing it the best have marketers who understand that you’re looking at both ends of the spectrum. I don’t think they prioritise short over long or long over short. They understand you have to be able to walk and chew gum.”

Yet almost half (48.2%) of all marketers believe their campaigns are too focused on performance over brand, while only 24.6% disagree. Pressure from senior leadership to achieve targets ranks as the top reason why companies are focusing on performance marketing, with 45.2% of marketers identifying this as a key factor within their firm.

The long and the short

It’s important to note marketing activity can deliver both long- and short-term outcomes in a single activation. Half of marketers (51.3%) agree brand-building marketing is also effective at delivering short-term returns, while slightly fewer (46.7%) believe performance marketing is effective at building brands.

Direct Line Group’s Taylor agrees that brand campaigns

can drive performance and vice versa, as long as marketers are clear on their number one objective. At the insurance company, brand advertising is always measured through a sales lens but over a longer period using multipliers.

“For Direct Line Motors, for example, for every 10 sales we drive in year one, we drive another seven in years two and three. We know that, and therefore we use that to get agreement from the business to invest in brand, which makes it an easier financial conversation,” he says.

However, when looking at brand advertising through a one-year lens, it’s less effective at driving sales than other short-term channels, he explains. “It only works if you’re really clear on what you’re trying to get your spend to do.” ■

48.2%

of marketers say their business is too focused on performance marketing

24.6%

disagree with this statement

45.2%

say pressure from leadership drives their performance focus – the top-ranked reason

“For every 10 sales we drive in year one, we drive another seven in years two and three.”

– Sam Taylor, Direct Line Group

Facing short-term pressures

Vodafone Business’s global CMO Amanda Jobbins admits that when businesses are facing financial concerns, the demands on marketing to deliver in the short term create a “difficult pressure for marketers to resist”. But marketers have to be “commercially savvy about it”, she adds.

“This is a business and you need to be attuned to the cycles that your organisation is going through, that the market is going through, and sometimes you’re going to have to be weighted a bit more on one area than the other,” Jobbins says.

Having said that, Jobbins adds that companies which are “brave” enough to protect long-term brand investment during the economic downturn can expect to see it pay off in higher share of voice at a lower cost, while also building stronger relationships with customers. At Vodafone, the business has tried to be “balanced” in its approach, she says.

“There’s a good understanding in telecommunications companies that brand is critical and you’ve got to keep up that investment, as a huge part of whether people are going to make the decision to buy from you is going to be about the trust they have in you as an organisation.”

4. Creative effectiveness is increasingly vital – but lacks a gold standard

While driving sales is dominating marketers' focus (see section 2), there's growing appreciation of creativity's role as a key tool for achieving this.

Over 60% of marketers say their department's focus on creative quality has increased compared with 12 months ago. Furthermore, two-thirds (66.3%) of them believe creative quality is one of the most influential factors in overall marketing effectiveness, while a further 14.2% believe it is the most influential factor of all.

57.3%

of marketers analyse creative effectiveness

43.9%

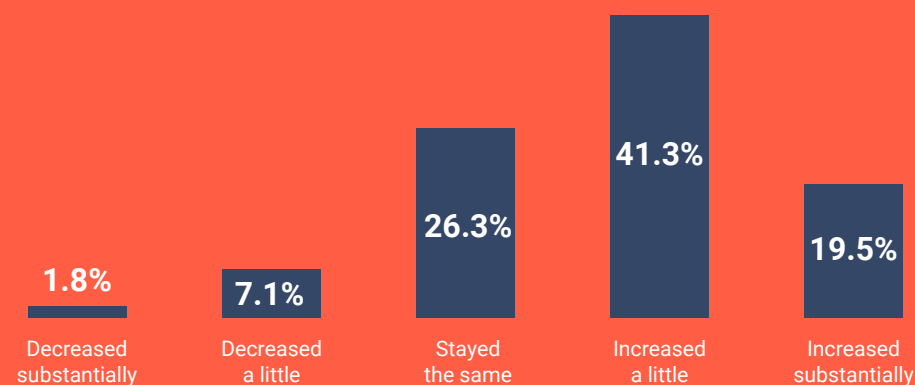
are happy with the analytics they have available to do it

However, the measurement of creative effectiveness remains a nascent area compared to the measurement of media effectiveness. While most marketers claim to have some analysis in place for measuring creative effectiveness – citing A/B testing, brand uplift studies and engagement statistics as examples of techniques – it's barely a majority, at just 57.3%.

It's therefore perhaps unsurprising that only 43.9% of marketers agree, including 12.2% who strongly agree, that they are happy with the analytics available to them to specifically examine the effectiveness of creative.

Sage's Inglis argues that measuring creative effectiveness is crucial, but also challenging. ▶

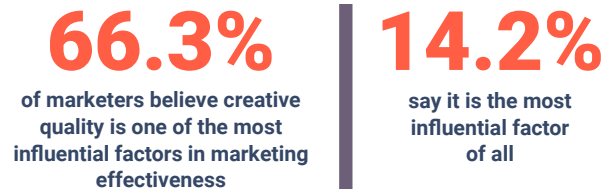
How has your marketing department's focus on quality of creative changed compared with 12 months ago?



*EXCLUDES 'DON'T KNOW'
SOURCE: MARKETING WEEK, 'LANGUAGE OF EFFECTIVENESS 2023'

“It’s a muscle that’s not yet fully developed, particularly in B2B,” he says. Nevertheless, Sage is “constantly optimising” to ensure it understands how it is connecting with an audience, and plans to develop more creative testing as it matures as a business.

Meanwhile, Pernod Ricard’s UK marketing director Leanne Banks believes creativity will always have a level of subjectivity to it that can’t easily be measured, even though the drinks company measures creativity in a variety of ways from pre- to post-campaign.



“At the end of the day, I get quite simplistic about it. If you’re looking at the creative, does it bring you joy?” she says. “Sometimes it becomes too analytical and the reality is most consumers see things very briefly and pay very little attention to it. So that creative reaction needs to be quick and natural.” ■

How creativity levels the playing field

Alcoholic drinks giant Pernod Ricard has spent the last few years embedding creativity at its heart, but the difficulties of the last year have “absolutely” made it an even more important tool, says UK marketing director Leanne Banks.

As referenced in section 2 of this report, inflation has given many businesses little choice but to raise prices. Banks echoes the sentiment of PZ Cussons’ chief marketing transformation officer, Andrew Geoghegan, that brand equity – and therefore creativity – is critical in enabling brands to make those price increases without impacting sales.

Creativity also offers brands a way to compete with rivals without having to outspend them. Pernod Ricard is a challenger brand in almost all of its categories, outspent significantly by its main competitor. However, creativity offers its brands, including Malibu and Absolut, another way to cut through.

“The only level playing field you have is creativity, so it’s your best lever to pull in new situations. I imagine that’s why people are focusing on it now,” Banks says.

Agreeing, Sage’s EVP of global brand and integrated marketing, Craig Inglis, says the optimal media mix “only gets you so far”, adding that creativity is a “crucial” part of his firm’s marketing strategy.

“If all things are equal, the thing that differentiates a brand is how it shows up in [its marketing] channels. When we’re in a challenging environment economically, where media budgets will inevitably be under focus, that’s even more the case. Creative has got to lift the brand,” he says.

5. Conclusion: How to align with business leadership on marketing effectiveness

Alignment with senior leadership on business goals is always central to defining marketing's role and influence. This is even more true when uncertainty plagues the economy, as it does today, and such situations force marketers to prioritise ruthlessly.

According to Marketing Week's survey, two-thirds of marketers (66.5%) claim budgets are forcing them to focus on investments that deliver the highest effectiveness and to save money elsewhere. However, the data suggests a disconnect between marketers' view of effectiveness and that of their senior business leadership.

The top three marketing effectiveness metrics that marketers say their CEO, CFO and board focus on are ROI, new customer acquisition and business outcomes – and they rank some distance ahead of the rest. By marketers' own admission, then, the wide range of campaign metrics they assess when analysing marketing effectiveness (see section 2) have very little resonance for senior stakeholders.

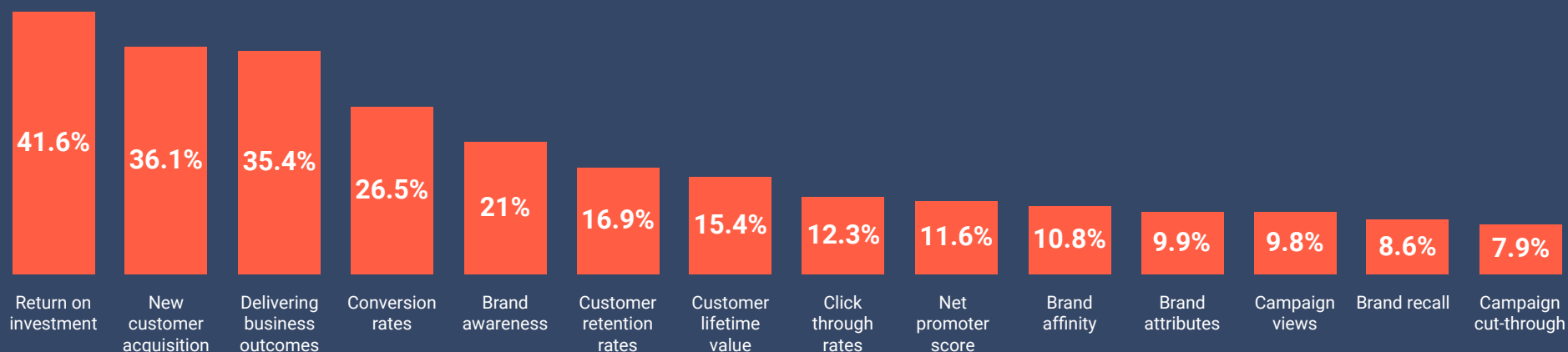
It is telling that the proportion of marketers who believe their employer is too focused on ROI has risen slightly in the past year – up from 45.7% to 48.1% since Marketing

Week conducted the first 'Language of Effectiveness' survey in 2022. And while today 64.3% are satisfied their marketing team understands the need for both short- and long-term marketing effectiveness, only 56% say the same about the leadership of their business.

Telling the full story

Pleasing bosses is not always paramount, of course. Sage's Inglis agrees that sometimes there can be too much focus on ROI in businesses. While at Sage he says it is important that ROI is at an "acceptable level", it is seen ▶

When it comes to assessing the success of a marketing campaign, what are the most important metrics among senior business leadership?



* EXCLUDES 'OTHER' AND 'NONE/DON'T KNOW'
SOURCE: MARKETING WEEK, 'LANGUAGE OF EFFECTIVENESS 2023'

as a measure of efficiency, not effectiveness. “If we were just optimising towards maximising the ROI, we’d make some of the wrong choices, we’d end up cutting budgets... and we wouldn’t necessarily get to where we want to be,” he explains.

“ROI is part of the story, but there are so many other things you want to measure in order to understand whether you’re achieving that business objective or not. So I think our job is to educate and tell that full story, and we’re having huge success with it within Sage. People understand it when you take the time to explain it.”

NatWest’s Jobling adds that what senior stakeholders ultimately care about is commercial return – a wider view on the full growth potential delivered by all commercial activities.

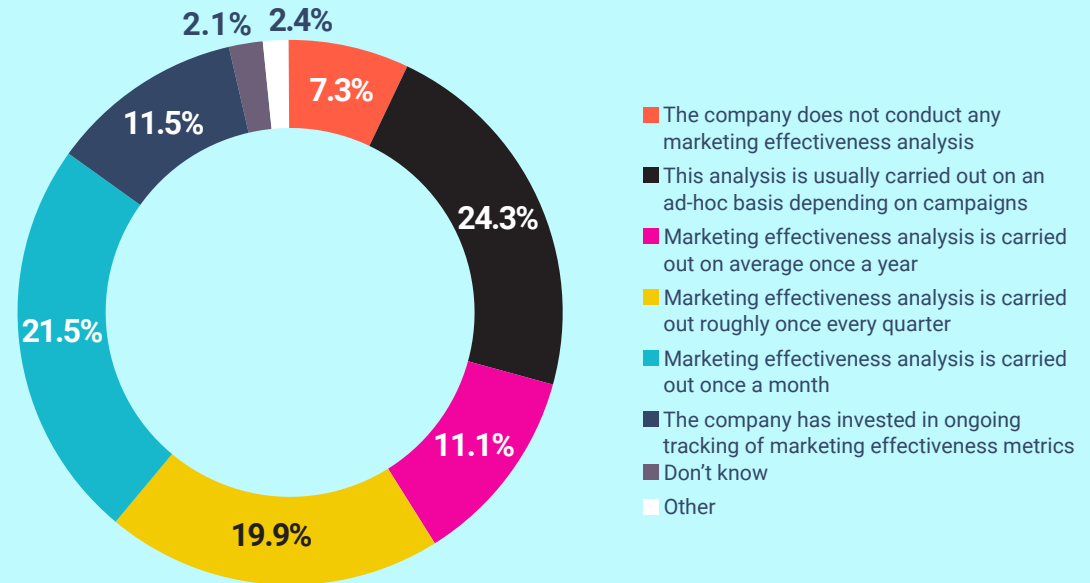
“You have to be able to talk the language of business and you have to be able to help people understand how marketing works... If you can help them understand and convince them on the commercial return, then good things will follow,” she says.

Building an effectiveness culture

Efforts to prove marketing’s effectiveness beyond ROI depend on measuring and tracking it consistently, however. The survey suggests this is rising in importance within businesses, as 61.3% of marketers agree there has been a greater focus on marketing effectiveness tracking over the past three years in their company.

However, only 42.9% agree marketing effectiveness is a well-defined function in their business – virtually unchanged since 2022. As regards the regularity of the analysis, only 11.5% of marketers say their company invests in ongoing effectiveness tracking, while 7.3% don’t do any marketing effectiveness analysis at all. Most perform periodic analysis on either a monthly, quarterly

How regularly is marketing effectiveness analysis and reporting conducted within your company?



SOURCE: MARKETING WEEK, 'LANGUAGE OF EFFECTIVENESS 2023'

“If you want something to happen, you need someone who is in charge of it.”

– Margaret Jobling, NatWest Group

or annual basis, but nearly a quarter carry it out ad-hoc, depending on campaigns.

Jobling believes that “if you want something to happen, you need someone who is in charge of it”. At NatWest, she has a dedicated marketing effectiveness team.

“They’ve got very clear deliverables that we will be measuring and tracking, and then using the data to drive

decisions in how we plan, spend and buy.” The outcomes are then measured and fed back into the analysis so the company is “constantly optimising”, she explains.

Having a dedicated team won’t be feasible for all businesses. But even for smaller companies, having an “effectiveness culture” that puts “data and commerciality at the heart of your decision making” is necessary, Jobling argues.

“Marketing isn’t a function operating in a vacuum. Marketing is there to support and execute the purpose and the needs of the business,” she says. “We’re the link between customers and the business, so you’ve got to be building a culture, and ultimately the data and the insight to drive that.”

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