SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

Benchmarks From The Agency Perspective

How agencies plan to overcome new obstacles to achieving important social media marketing objectives, based on their broad-range of client experience.

SharpSpring

Social Media Strategy Benchmarks from the Agency Perspective
Ascend2 Research Conducted in Partnership with SharpSpring.

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Social media strategies agencies will use in 2015

In the sea of social networks and the millions of potential customers using them, it's time to start thinking strategically before planning tactically. What strategies will agencies use to achieve social media marketing success for themselves and their clients in the year ahead?

To find out, SharpSpring and Ascend2 fielded the Social Media Strategy Survey and completed interviews with 327 marketing professionals; 156 of whom work for agencies that provide marketing solutions to other organizations and are represented in this report.

This report, titled Social Media Strategy Benchmarks from the Agency Perspective, presents a unique view of marketing challenges based on a variety of agency client marketing situations. We thank these busy agency marketers for sharing their valuable insights with you.

This research has been produced for your use. Put it to work in your own marketing strategy planning and presentation materials. Clip the charts and write about them in your blog or post them on social media. Please share this research credited as published.
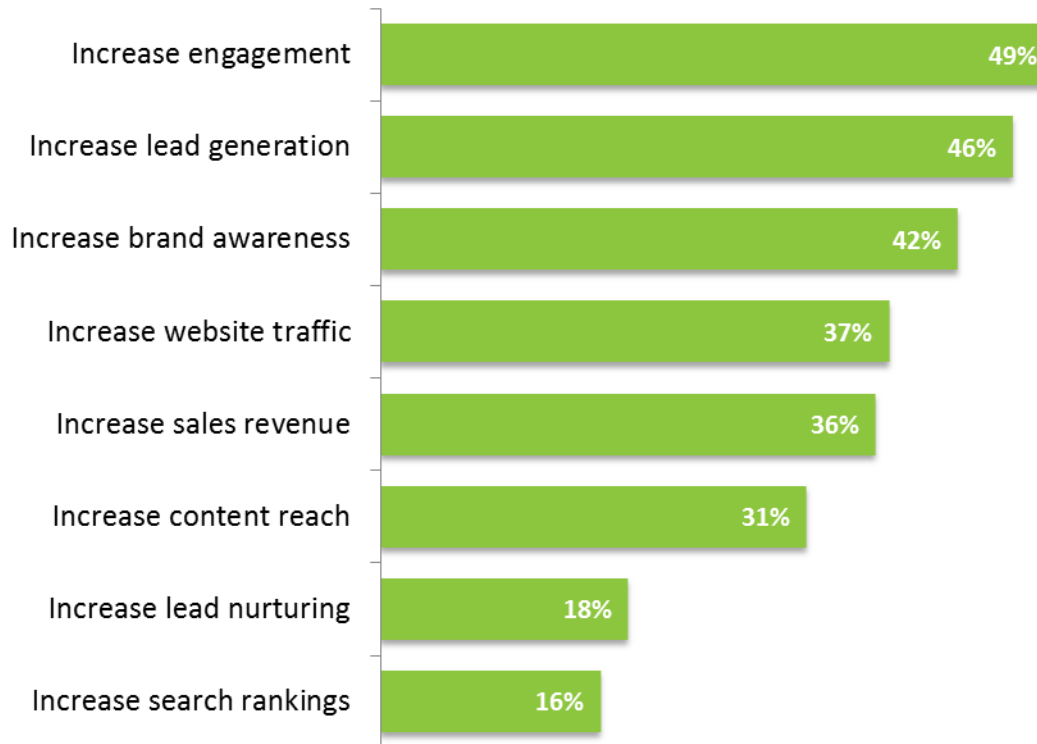
All the best,
Rick Carlson, Founder

SharpSpring

Social media used to be focused on lead gen and brand awareness, but now the top objective is to increase engagement with targeted audiences.

What are the MOST IMPORTANT OBJECTIVES for a social media strategy in the year ahead?

| Objective	Percentage
Increase engagement	49%
Increase lead generation	46%
Increase brand awareness	42%
Increase website traffic	37%
Increase sales revenue	36%
Increase content reach	31%
Increase lead nurturing	18%
Increase search rankings	16%

SPRING FORWARD

Different groups need a different message, even when the groups are all social, like Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. Using dynamic content and behavioral-based tracking, serve each of these segments exactly what they're the most likely to respond to, which means a big lift in engagement.

GET ENGAGED
LEARN MORE

Most agencies see some success with social media, but very few are capturing the full potential.

How do you RATE THE SUCCESS of social media marketing to achieve important objectives?

Very unsuccessful 3%

Somewhat unsuccessful 17%

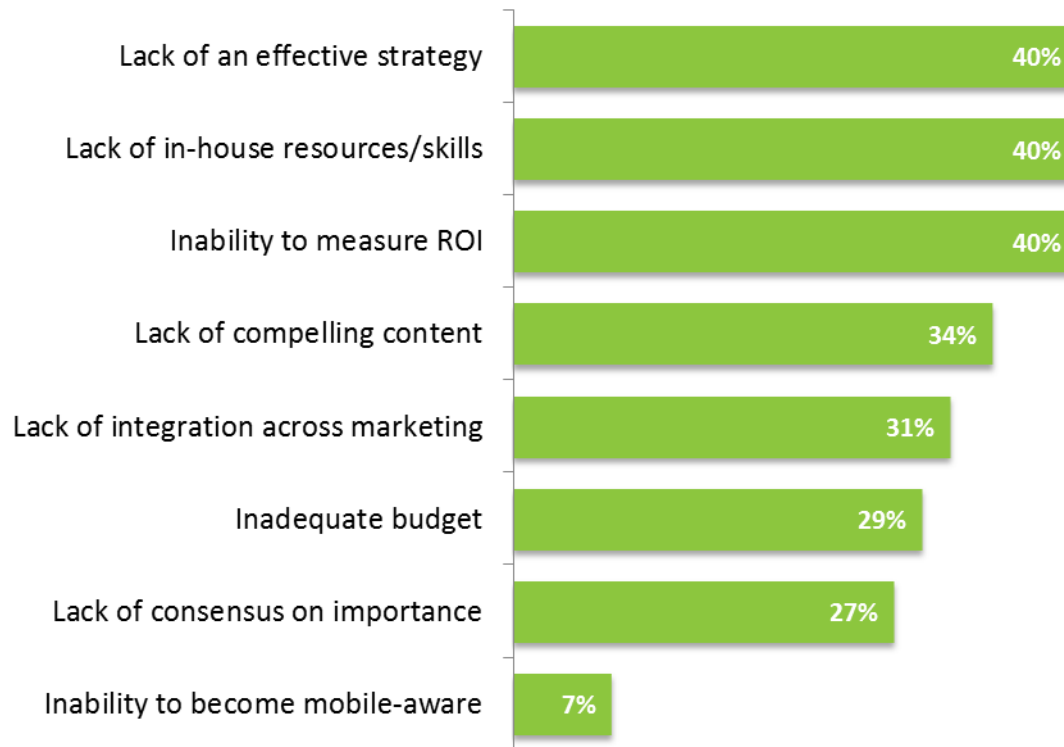Very successful 17%

Somewhat successful 63%
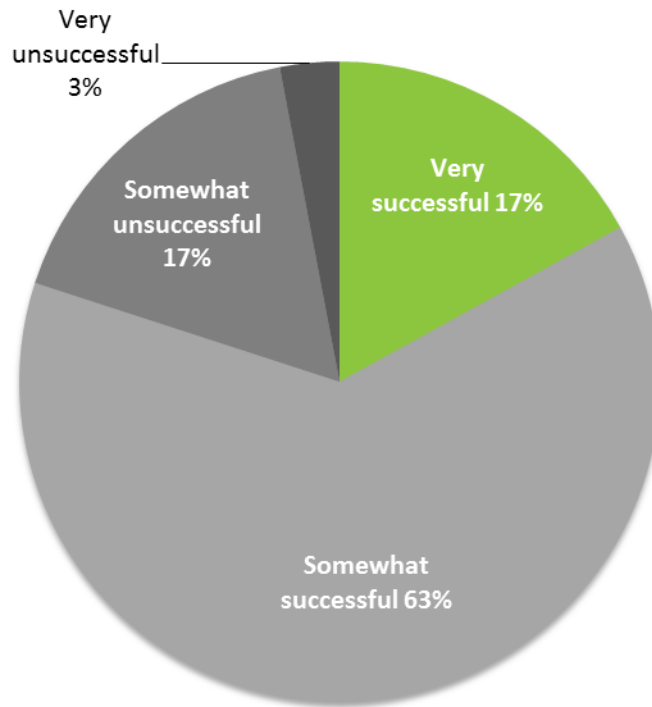
SPRING FORWARD

Supercharge your social with content that matters to your audience. Did someone visit the site through Facebook? Send them a fun infographic with a social spin to it. From LinkedIn? Follow-up with a professional whitepaper. Segment your social audiences for special treatment, and watch engagement soar.

SEGMENT SOCIAL
LIVE DEMO

One of biggest roadblocks to social media marketing success for agencies is being able to measure ROI.

What are the MOST CHALLENGING OBSTACLES to social media marketing success?

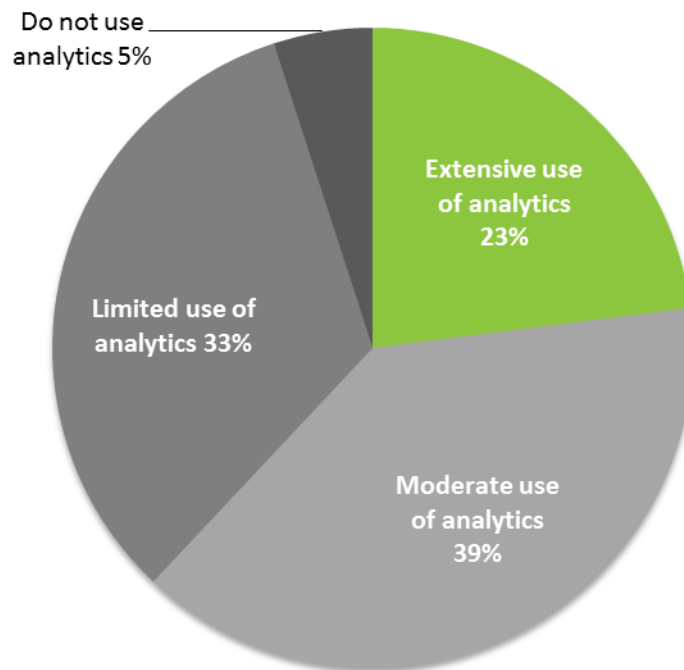| Obstacle	Percentage
Lack of an effective strategy	40%
Lack of in-house resources/skills	40%
Inability to measure ROI	40%
Lack of compelling content	34%
Lack of integration across marketing	31%
Inadequate budget	29%
Lack of consensus on importance	27%
Inability to become mobile-aware	7%

SPRING FORWARD

This is an issue that permeates modern marketing: the lack of clear metrics for defining marketing success. Marketing automation is conquering the problem, though: follow leads from the very first site visit all the way through to closing the sale. This means a complete end-to-end ROI for every tactic, so you can double down on what works and axe what doesn't.

OPTIMIZE ROI
SEE HOW

Agencies are incorporating analytics to track social media success, but there's still a lot that's being missed.

To what extent are ANALYTICS USED to gauge social media marketing performance?

Do not use analytics 5%

Extensive use of analytics 23%

Limited use of analytics 33%

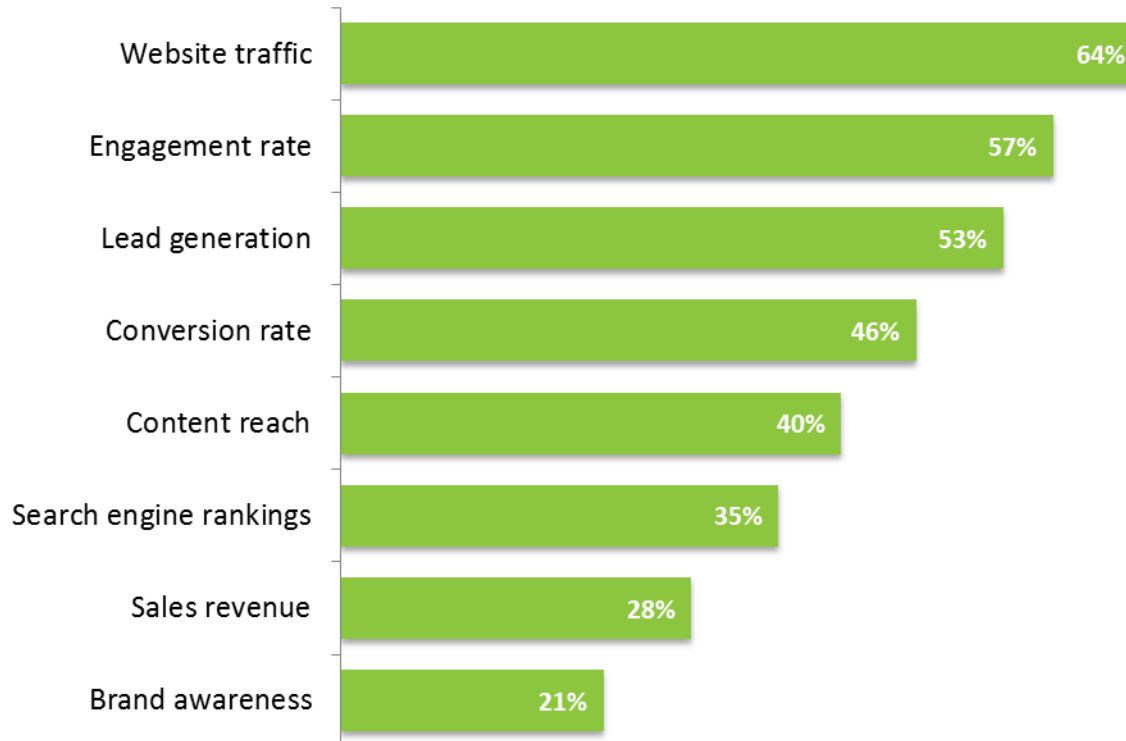Moderate use of analytics 39%

SPRING FORWARD

It's no longer enough to just be able to say that a click came from Facebook or LinkedIn, which isn't a great indicator of potential revenue. You need to know how well those clicks convert on your landing page, how likely those conversions are to become a sale, and be able to A/B test social ads and landing pages to optimize your marketing. In short, what's expected is both full click-to-sale conversion so you know what's driving revenue, and proactive optimization so you can drive even more revenue with the stuff that works.

OPTIMIZE SOCIAL
LEARN MORE

Traditionally agencies have relied mainly on website traffic to judge social media marketing performance because it is easier to track than some more relevant metrics like engagement, lead generation, and conversion rate. But that's changing...

Which of the following METRICS are tracked to gauge social media marketing performance

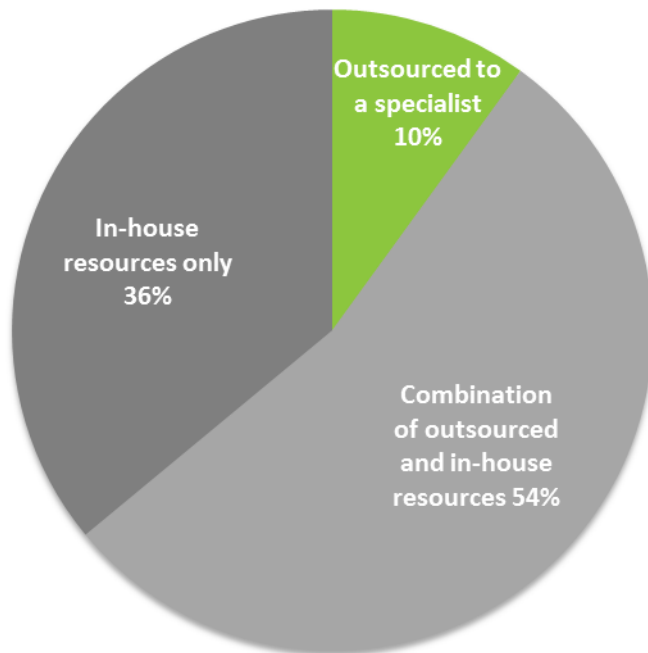| Metric	Percentage
Website traffic	64%
Engagement rate	57%
Lead generation	53%
Conversion rate	46%
Content reach	40%
Search engine rankings	35%
Sales revenue	28%
Brand awareness	21%

SPRING FORWARD

Website traffic gives you a vague idea of whether all your marketing efforts together are working, but it doesn't give you the granularity to say 'PPC isn't working, LinkedIn is working and Facebook drives a lot of traffic but doesn't really impact our bottom line.' By tracking the behavior and source of visitors, you can accurately track engagement separately for each social source, as well as how likely a visit from a source is to generate a lead or sale. You can focus on quality traffic, not just raw traffic. That means you can optimize your marketing spend and get more for less.

GET GRANULAR
OPTIMIZE NOW

Almost two-thirds of agencies rely on outsourcing to achieve their social media marketing goals.

Which best describes the RESOURCES USED to perform social media marketing?

Outsourced to a specialist 10%

In-house resources only 36%

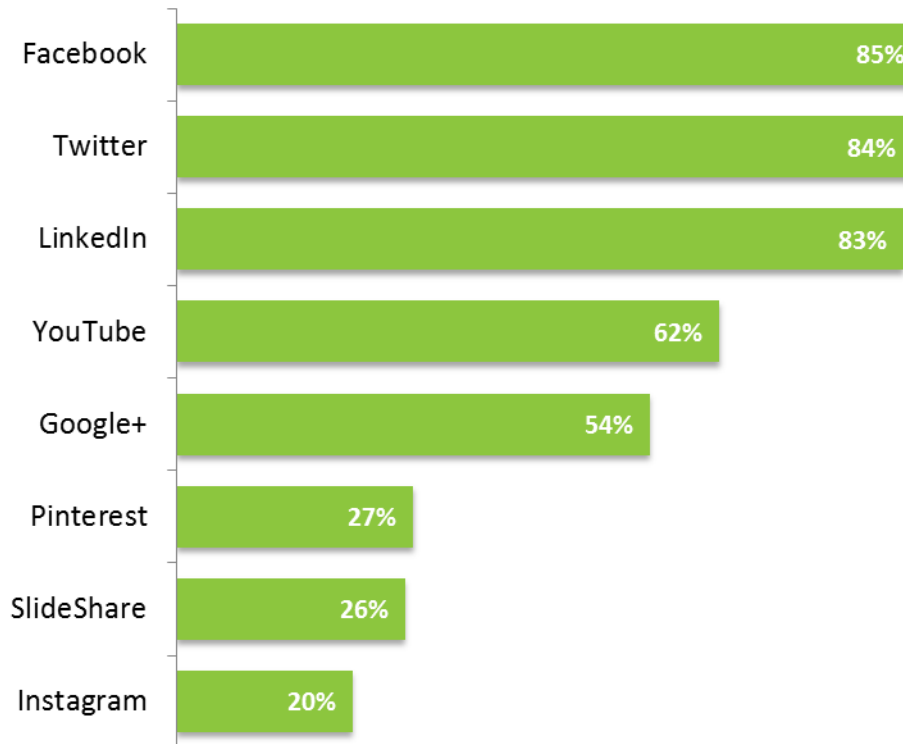Combination of outsourced and in-house resources 54%

SPRING FORWARD

A large part of why so many agencies rely on outside help to drive social media marketing forward is because the traditional tools to manage it are clunky, complicated and expensive. The trend is moving toward more integrated, intuitive and affordable. As the specialized tools of niche firms are made accessible to everyone, agencies are taking on more responsibility in-house, which means higher margins, more billable hours and stronger retainer-based relationships.

TAKE CONTROL
LIVE DEMO

The three top social platforms that agencies market with are still Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, but YouTube is catching up as the 'Year of Video' continues.

Which of the following SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS does your company use for marketing purposes?

| Platform	Percentage
Facebook	85%
Twitter	84%
LinkedIn	83%
YouTube	62%
Google+	54%
Pinterest	27%
SlideShare	26%
Instagram	20%

SPRING FORWARD

Videos are the rising stars of lead nurturing this year. YouTube makes it easy to distribute easily digestible content, which helps move leads down the sales cycle. As YouTube becomes more interactive with linked content as part of the actual video, it will continue to grow as a powerful tool to promote engagement. Links in video also mean you can use marketing automation to actually see which parts of your videos are driving the most conversions (such as having the referral parameter of a link change ever 30 seconds).

GET ANIMATED
LEARN MORE

Agencies are signaling with their wallets that social media is going to play a key role in driving engagement in 2015.

How is the BUDGET CHANGING for social media marketing?

Decreasing 4%

Increasing 47%

Staying the same 49%
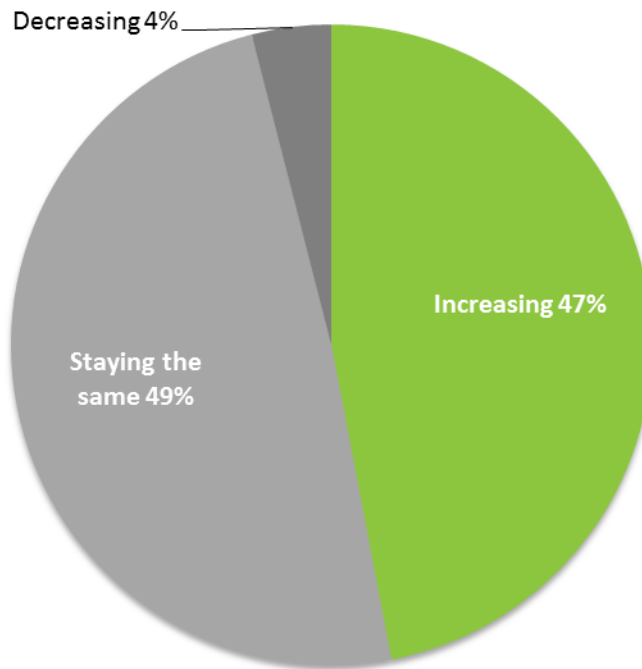
SPRING FORWARD

As agencies accelerate social media spending, it's even more important to know what those dollars are really buying. Track exactly which sources are driving conversions, which sources aren't but are pushing people down the sales cycle and wasting marketing dollars.

SPEND SMARTER
SEE HOW

Discover Why Hundreds of Agencies Around
The World Choose SharpSpring
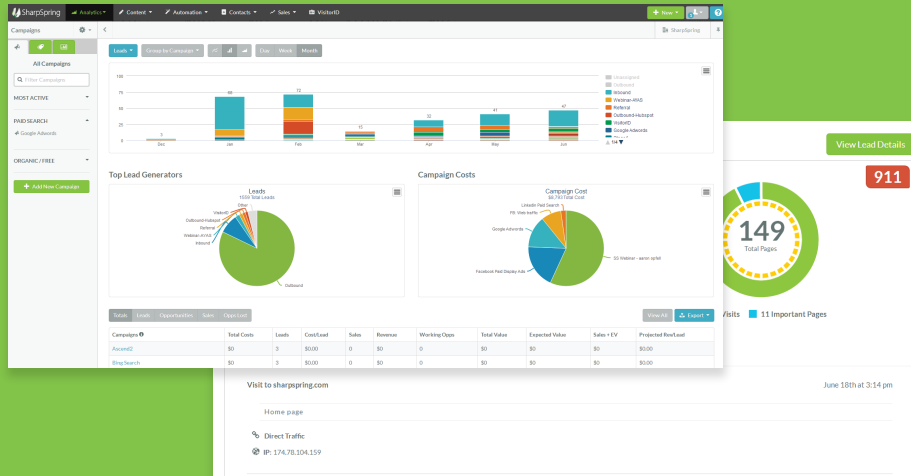
- **Drive More Sales**

- **Generate More Leads**

- **Optimize ROI**

GET YOUR LIVE DEMO

SharpSpring   Built To Work
With Everyone   salesforce

Research Methodology And Survey Demographics

Ascend2 benchmarks the performance of popular digital marketing strategies and practices using a standardized questionnaire, research methodology and 3-Minute Survey format. Findings are examined in a quantitative context by experienced analysts and reported objectively.

This survey was conducted online from a panel of more than 50,000 US and international marketing, sales and business professionals. The following is a breakout of the demographics represented in this report:

Agency Location
- North America   71%
- Europe   13%
- Other   16%

Number of Employees
- More than 500   11%
- 50 to 500   15%
- Fewer than 50   74%

Role in the Agency
- CEO / COO / CMO / CSO etc   53%
- Marketing VP / Director / Manager   21%
- Sales VP / Director / Manager   4%
- Marketing or Sales Staff   12%
- Other   11%

ABOUT THE RESEARCH PARTNERS

SharpSpring

Simple Marketing Automation for Agencies and SMBs

Powerful, affordable marketing tools that help you automate workflows, drive more leads and convert them to sales with SMB friendly pricing to fit your budget. Sharp-Spring is built to help your marketing agency attract new business, create a recurring revenue stream and tie your clients to you.

Learn more at www.SharpSpring.com

Ascend2

Research - Based Demand Generation for Marketing Solution Providers

Marketing software firms and marketing agencies partner with Ascend2 to reliably generate new business opportunities. Our integrated research, content creation and demand generation programs are transparent – putting the spotlight on your brand and the interests of your audience.

Learn more at www.Ascend2.com