# 2020 Database Strategies & Contact Acquisition Survey Report

New Research Shows Companies Unlocking Buyer Intelligence To Identify Key Stakeholders & Deliver Relevant, Targeted Messages

DEMAND GEN REPORT

SURVEY REPORT

Close to half (47%) of respondents said their database strategy needs significant improvement.

Executive Summary

Modern marketing and sales teams are feeling the pressure to deliver seamless, authentic messaging to buyers at every point of their customer journey. As buyer expectations to receive this type of relevant engagement continues to heighten, effective database management strategies are more important than ever.

This year's *Database Strategies & Contact Acquisition Benchmark Survey,* conducted by *Demand Gen Report* in November through December 2019, revealed that while most marketers have a formal data acquisition strategy in place, they know there are plenty of opportunities for improvement. Specifically:

- **47%** said they have a strategy in place, but there is room for significant improvement;
- **30%** said they have a strategy, but there is room for minor improvement;
- **13%** don't have a formal data acquisition strategy in place; and
- **Only 9%** have a solid strategy in place and fine-tune it as needed.

The survey showed minimal movement in terms of where marketers stand with their data acquisition strategies when compared to last year's results. **However, respondents' goal to use data to identify key stakeholders within target accounts increased significantly from 68% in 2018 to 75% in 2019, underscoring the need to get more granular with their messaging to focus more on specific buyers within the committee to accelerate deals and reinforce buyer relationships. In addition, B2B organizations are looking to better target specific segments and collect detailed buyer behavior to fuel campaigns.**

Which of these bests describe your current data acquisition strategy?

9%

We have a very solid data acquisition strategy and we fine-tune it as needed

30%

We have a data acquisition strategy, but there's room for minor improvement

47%

We have a data acquisition strategy, but there's room for significant improvement

1%

We have a data acquisition strategy, but it is not working for us

13%

We do not have a formal data acquisition strategy in place
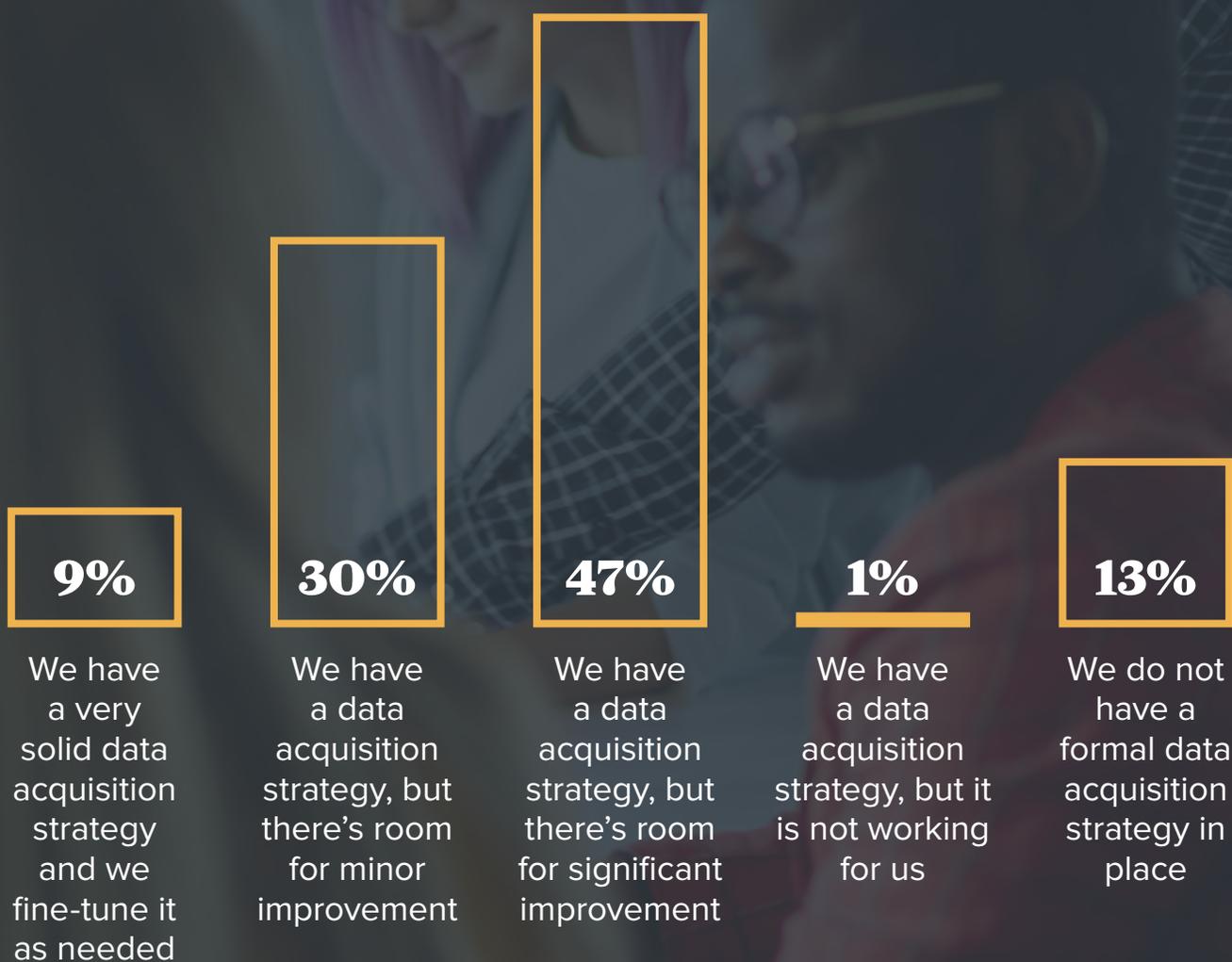
These expectations create new realities that B2B organizations must address to unlock deeper buyer intelligence and stand out against their competitors with more relevant and timely messaging. B2B organizations are realizing the benefits and winning outcomes of enhanced data practices to fuel more strategic, personalized campaigns for prospects and customers. Respondents pointed to the following reasons for investing in better data enrichment practices:

- Better insights to personalize content and messaging **(76%)**;

- Better data coverage of target accounts for ABM initiatives **(55%)**;

- Better data to expand TAM and identify new prospects **(52%)**; and

- Deeper intelligence to help tie intent signals to specific contacts **(46%)**.

This report highlights the current state of B2B database and contact acquisition strategies and organizations' goals to leverage data to fuel their go-to-market strategies in 2020 and beyond. Insights detailed within this report include:

- The tools marketers are using to gain deeper intelligence on current and prospective customers for better targeting and messaging;

- New tactics to acquire data to reach goals;

- Key database goals for education and resource prioritization;

- Where budgets and resources are being allocated;

- Top challenges for maintaining data quality; and

- Marketer's desires for intent data and insights on buying-decision timeframes.

75% of respondents noted that they are looking to better target specific segments for better engagement.

Budgeting Priorities Aim To Fuel Data Acquisition, Enrichment Efforts

B2B companies are making great strides to gain better intelligence from current and prospective customers to fuel future go-to-market initiatives with better targeting and messaging strategies to accelerate purchase decisions and reinforce buyer relationships. The research showed that more than a quarter (27%) of companies expect their database management budget to increase by more than 10% in the next year—while 11% said it'll increase by more than 25%.

Respondents also highlighted that they are prioritizing having deeper, richer data, as opposed to focusing on acquiring new names. They are looking to invest heavily in better data enrichment practices and solutions to ensure they are gaining intelligence on the most accurate data possible. Respondents noted that the three main benefits to this were better insights to personalize content and messaging (76%), better coverage of target accounts for ABM (55%) and better data to identify new prospects in their total addressable market (52%).

When asked about their database goals, 75% of respondents noted that they are looking to better target specific segments for better engagement. This signals that respondents understand the importance of data-driven targeting and engagement. More than half of the respondents also said they want to identify key stakeholders within target accounts (57%) and collect prospective buyer behavior to boost engagement and messaging (56%). Account-based strategies and buyer-centric content and messaging will benefit greatly from these insights, while also ensuring resources are being allocated appropriately by focusing on accounts and stakeholders in an active purchase decision.

What are your database goals?

75%	57%	56%	44%	46%	26%
Targeting specific segments for better engagement	Identifying key stakeholders within target accounts	Collecting prospective buyer behavior to boost engagement and messaging	Reaching Total Addressable Market in defined sectors	Growing database to add as many new contacts as possible	Identifying and targeting new verticals
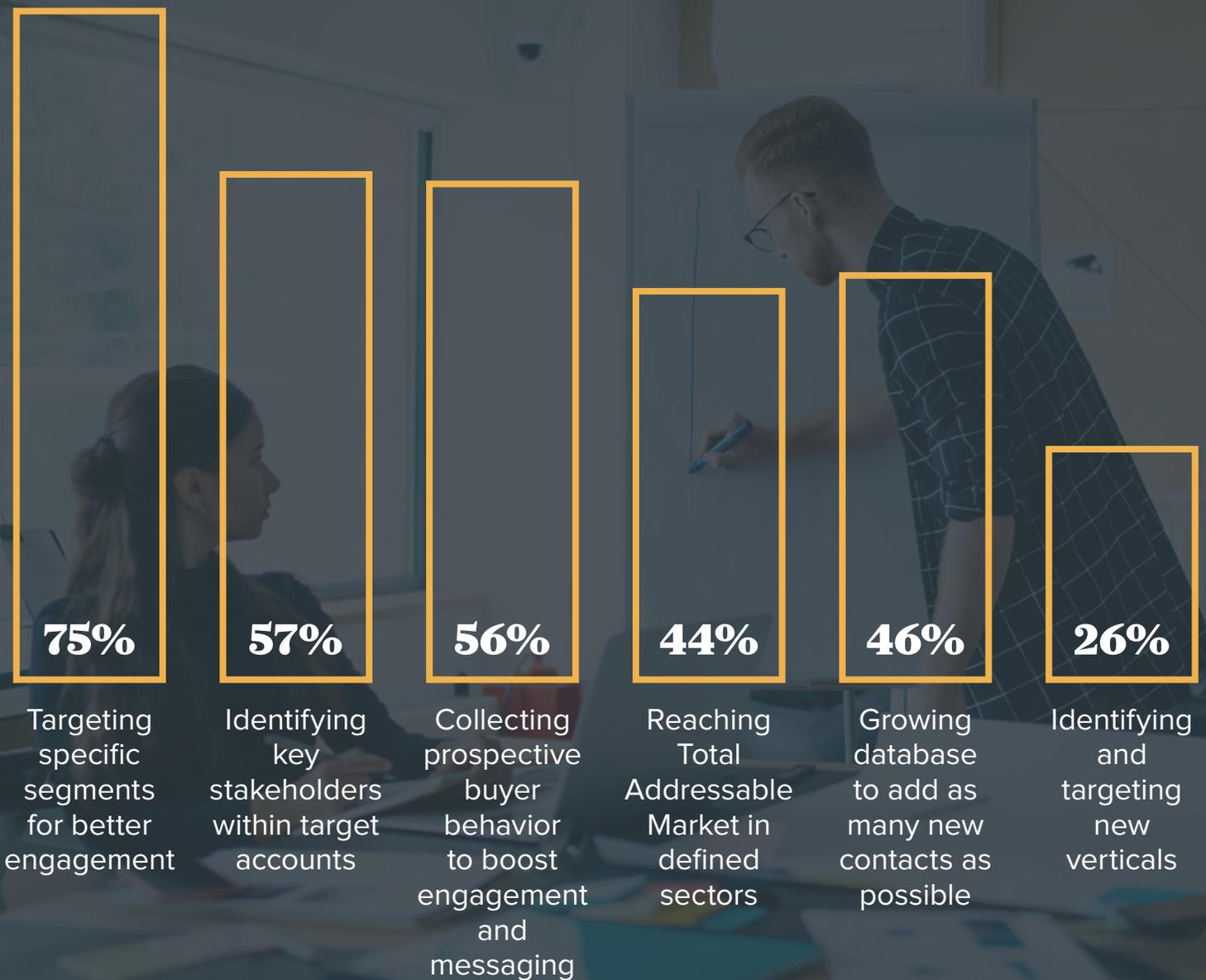
Which of the below tactics for acquiring prospect and customer data do you find most effective?

Registration forms on own website (e.g. newsletters, webinars, downloads)

86%

Content download/offer forms on dedicated landing pages

69%

In-person events and trade shows

59%

Online advertising

26%

Subscription database

25%

Social media ads

20%

Co-registration on partner websites

19%
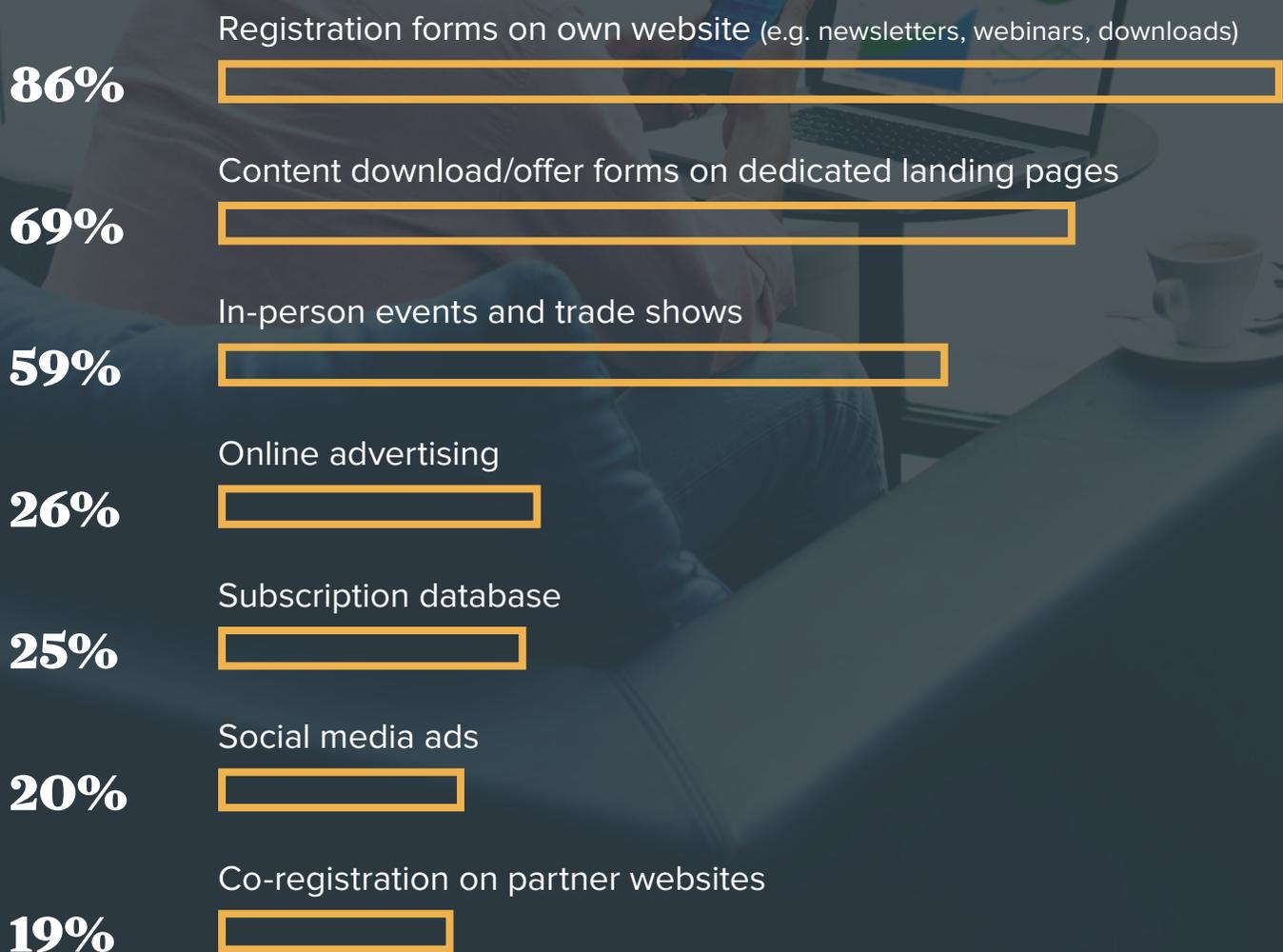
Other goals that respondents noted include:

- Growing their database to add as many new contacts as possible **(46%)**;
- Reaching their total addressable market in defined sectors **(44%)**; and
- Identifying and targeting new verticals **(26%)**.

Respondents are also experimenting with a variety of new tactics to acquire data that can offer them the insights they need to cater to customer needs. The study shows that registration forms on owned digital properties (86%), content downloads and offer forms on dedicated landing pages (69%) and interactions at in-person events and trade shows (59%) are the top-three tactics used to obtain prospect and customer data. While this has been the same trend year-over-year, new tactics such as subscription databases (25%), co-registration on partner websites (19%), as well as partnership and affiliate deals with other companies (16%) are growing in usage thanks to their effectiveness.

Other tactics considered effective by respondents include:

- Online advertising **(25%)**;
- Social media advertising **(20%)**; and
- Web directories **(7%)**.

What are your reasons for investing in better data enrichment practices/solutions?

Better insights to personalize content and messaging

76%

Better data coverage of target accounts for ABM initiatives

55%

Better data to expand TAM and identify new prospects

52%

Deeper intelligence to help tie intent signals to specific contacts

46%

Deeper intelligence for lead-to-account matching

44%

Better insights to increase customer retention and loyalty

35%

What percentage of your overall marketing budget will be dedicated to database management and customer acquisition in the next 12 months?
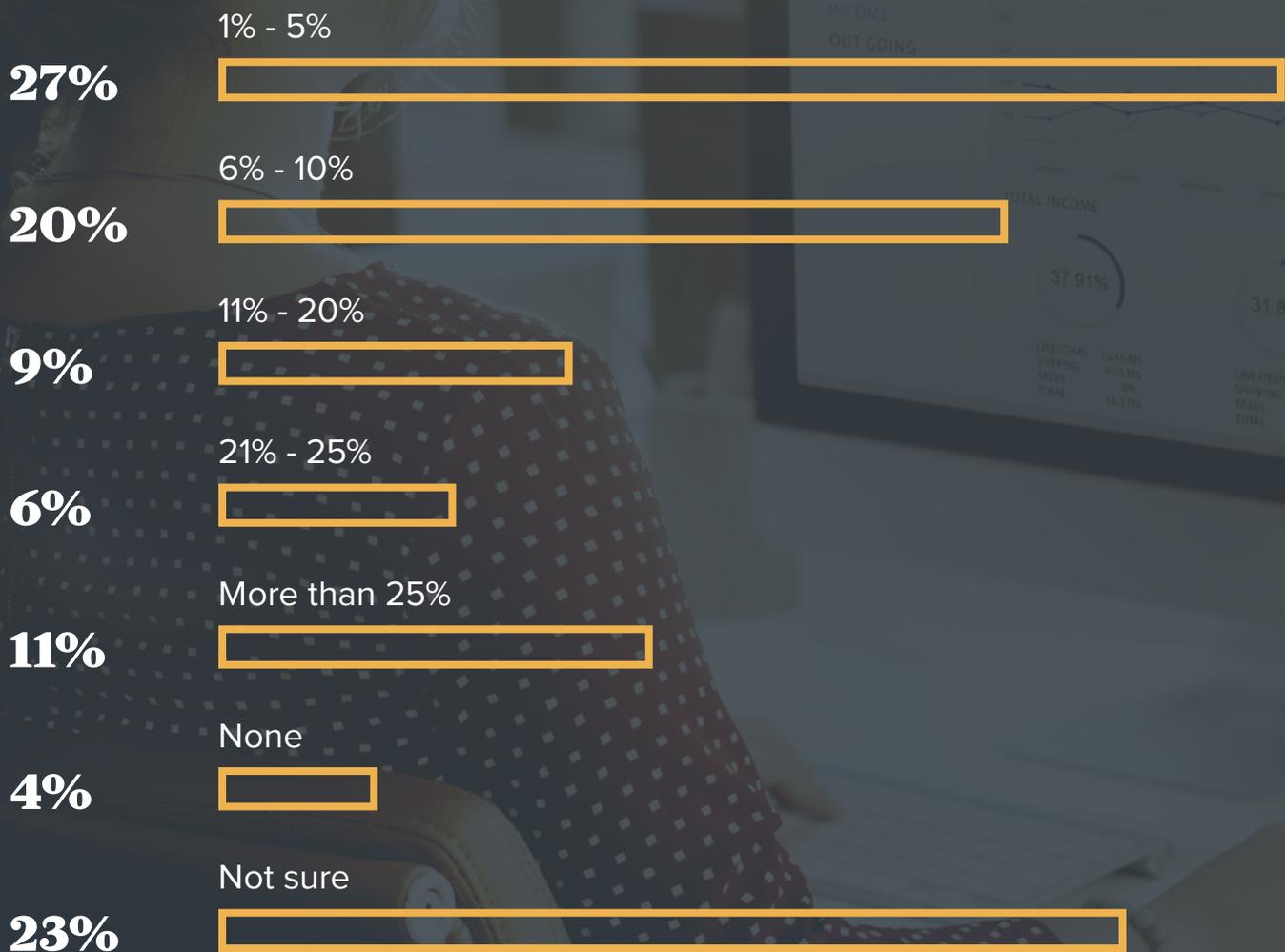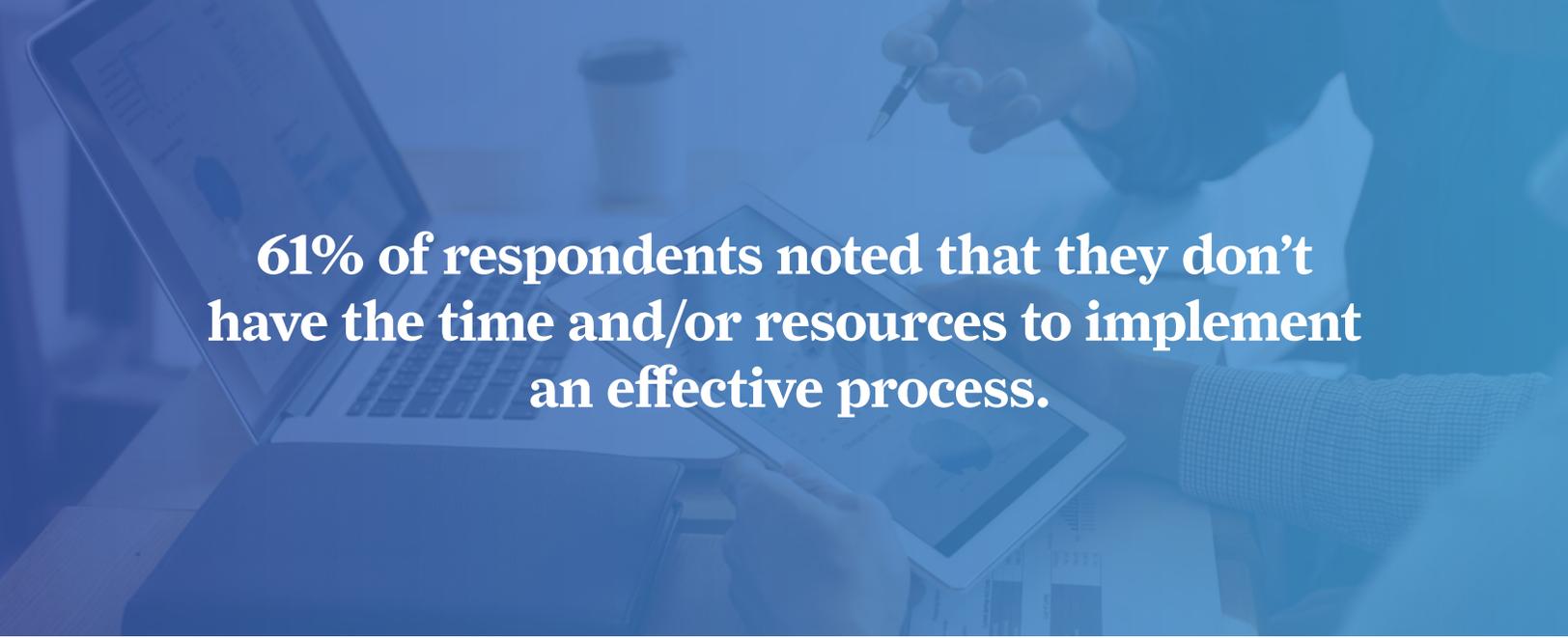
1% - 5%
27%

6% - 10%
20%

11% - 20%
9%

21% - 25%
6%

More than 25%
11%

None
4%

Not sure
23%

61% of respondents noted that they don't have the time and/or resources to implement an effective process.

Data Quality Challenges Remain As Manual Processes Limit Education, Resource Prioritization

While business goals around account targeting and messaging require a healthy database to fuel go-to-market initiatives, respondents also pointed to new realities their teams must address in order to succeed, including a need for deeper education in database management processes and a reprioritization of resources to meet and exceed expectations.

When asked about their data quality challenges, 61% of respondents noted that they don't have the time and/or resources to implement an effective process. Close to half (49%) also said they don't have a standard operation procedure for their teams to keep data up to date. This feeds into the biggest challenge, which is the fact that their data is old and outdated (78%). There is a shining light in the fact that most companies expect their database budgets to increase, meaning more resources can be used to better educate and reinforce teams in formal processes.

For those who said they did not have a formal data acquisition strategy in place, 56% said that they lack the resources to implement one. Again, with budgets for database management initiatives expected to increase for most respondents, it's clear that B2B companies see the need for proper investment to gain the most value out of their data.

What are your biggest challenges in maintaining data quality in your contact database?

78% — Data is old/outdated

61% — Don't have time/resources to implement an effective process

49% — Don't have a standard operating procedure for marketing/sales teams to keep data up to date

44% — Legacy technology issues/limitations

43% — Not enough data on current customers

31% — Data is siloed
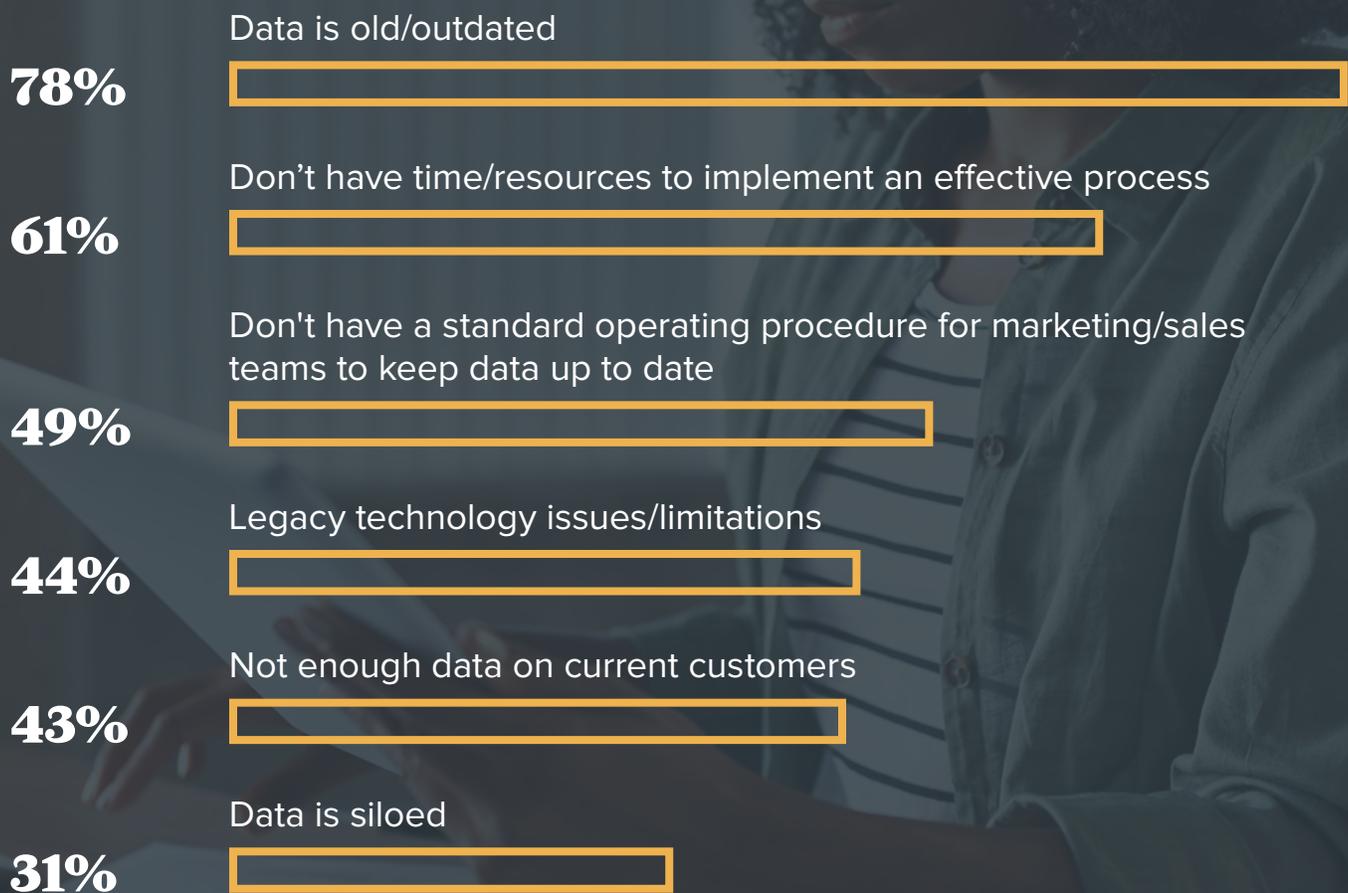
Close to one-third (31%) also said that their employees lack expertise and/or experience to implement a formal data acquisition strategy. It's important to note here that resources and investment should not necessarily focus solely on new technology, but also on the people and processes that put that technology to practice.

This has not deterred the group from planning to address their database strategy in the future. One-quarter (25%) said they plan to implement a formal data acquisition strategy in the next year, while 19% plan to implement a strategy that will take more than a year to come to fruition. Less than one-third (31%) are unsure about whether they will implement a formal data acquisition strategy in the future, but the data shows that they understand the value and benefits from having a practice in place.

Another reality comes from the ongoing struggle to manually clean data in house. Many respondents (66%) said they handle data cleansing in house, while several organizations are finding value in quality assurance via first- and third-party data providers (13%) and data quality management providers (10%). One respondent noted that their company "handles data cleansing in house and uses a third-party provider when needed." This highlights a unique hybrid approach to ensuring data is up to date and using partners in times of need.

What is preventing you from implementing a formal data acquisition strategy?

56%
We lack the resources to implement a formal data acquisition strategy

31%
Our employees lack expertise/ experience to implement a formal data acquisition strategy

19%
We have no alignment between our departments to break down data silos

25%
We're prioritizing on keeping our current data clean, not our acquisition strategy

Intent signals (61%) and timeframes for buying decisions (58%) topped as the primary data points companies want to collect.

## Marketers Crave Signal Data, Timeframe For Buying Decisions To Gain Deeper Buyer Insights

Respondents pointed to a variety of deeper insights on buyer behavior that go beyond demographic and firmographic data to help them achieve their goals around more precise targeting and messaging. When asked what type of deeper data marketers want to collect on contacts, unsurprisingly, intent data reigned supreme at 61%. In addition, respondents pointed to:

- Timeframes for buying decisions **(58%)**;
- Specific commentary on challenges and pain points **(48%)**;
- Budget information **(42%)**; and
- Current installed solutions/services **(34%)**.

The above desires signal that marketers see the importance of getting granular with the intelligence their getting from buyers so they can better cater their strategies for key audiences. Marketers are looking beyond industry and vertical data by drilling into the nitty gritty, such as intent signals and direct commentary around buyers' challenges, which can identify gaps in their content offerings. These insights also equip sales teams with the necessary details they need to have relevant and authentic conversations with prospects.

Additionally, there was an uptick in respondents who highlighted first-party engagement data as a form of data they want to collect in the future, which went from 16% in 2018 to 20% in 2019.

What type of deeper data intelligence are you currently not collecting, but want to collect on your contacts beyond basic fields?

Buying intent insights

61%

Timeframe for buying decision

59%

Specific commentary on challenges/pain points

48%

Budget information

42%

Current installed solutions/services

34%

Company size

26%

Company revenue

25%
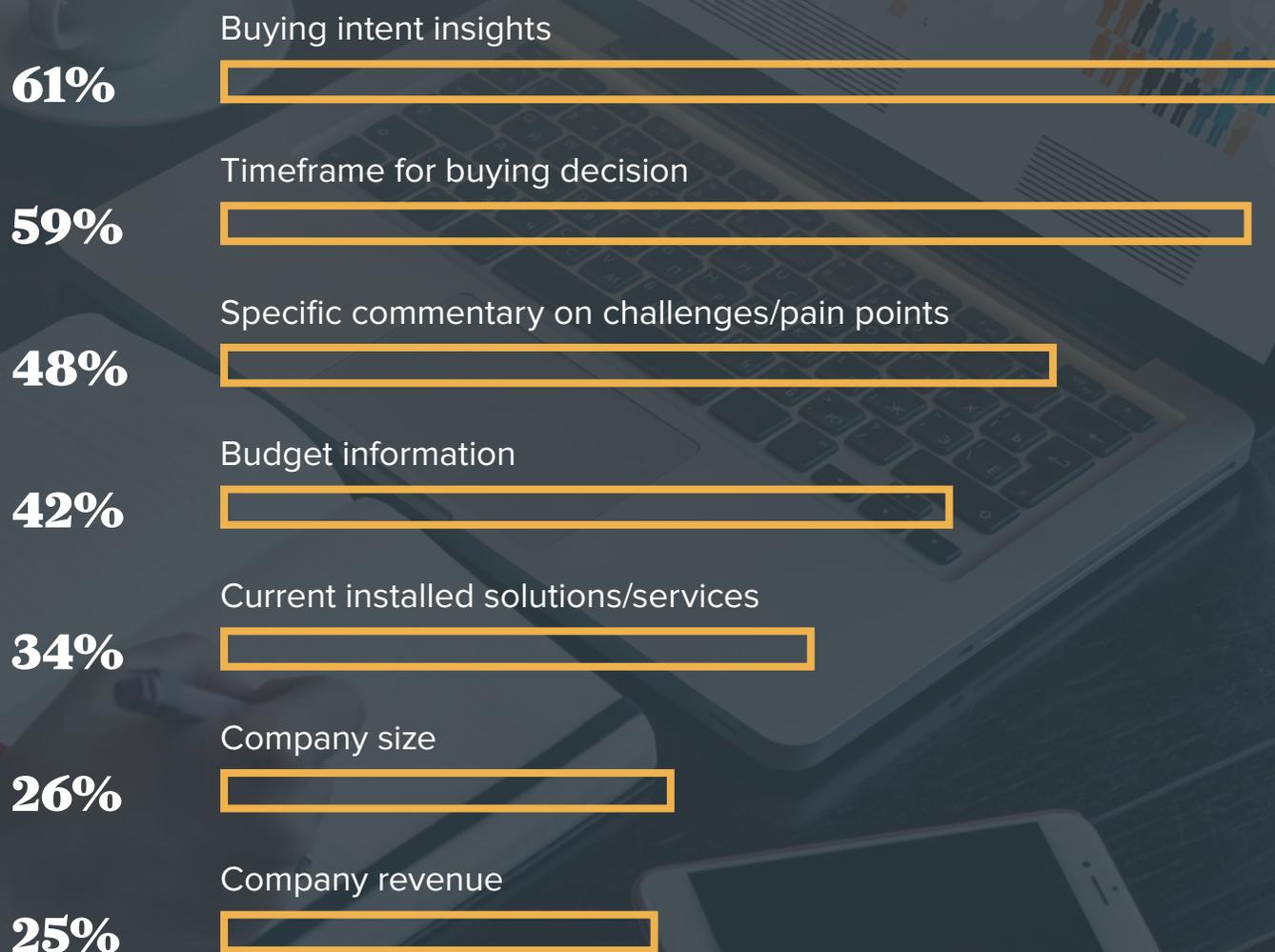
What kinds of third-party data do you use to supplement or enrich your in-house customer data?
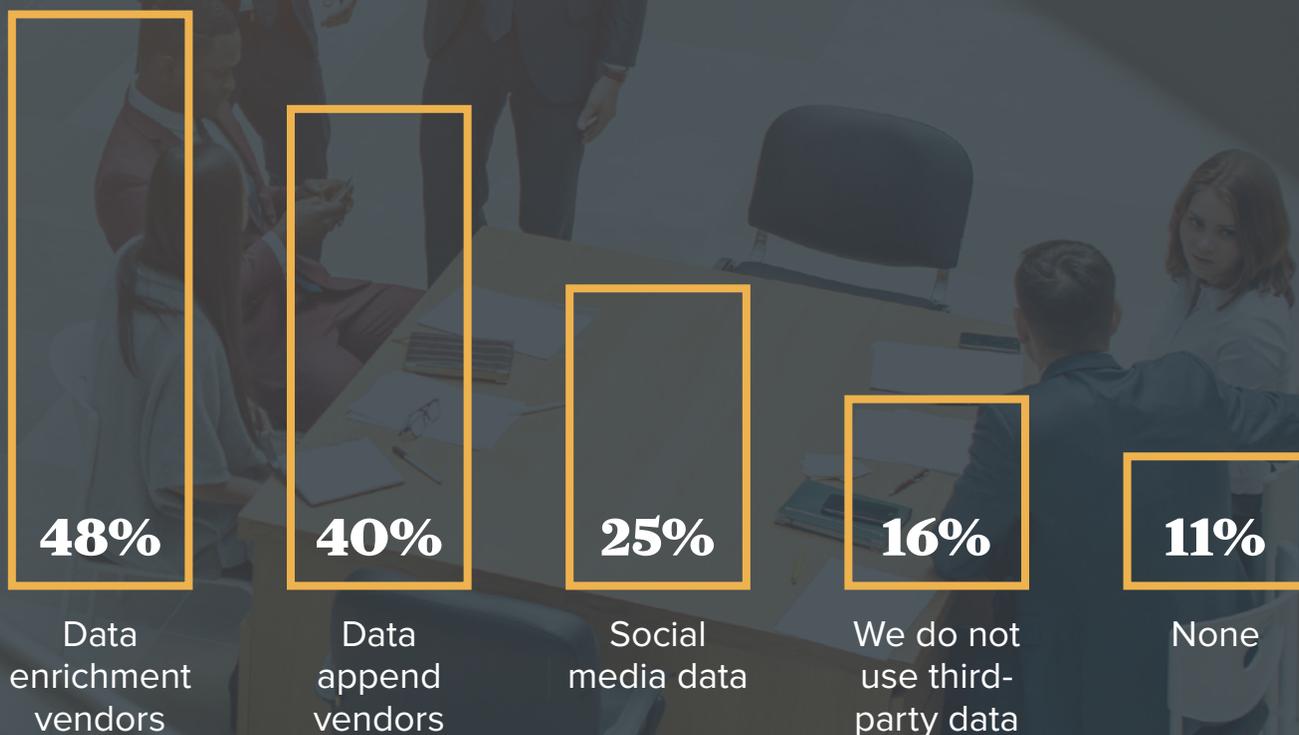
48%
Data enrichment vendors

40%
Data append vendors

25%
Social media data

16%
We do not use third-party data

11%
None

While a majority have a data acquisition strategy in place, 77% of respondents said it could use improvement.

Conclusion

B2B marketing and sales teams know that generic, batch-and-blast engagement strategies are no longer an option for today's educated, modern buyer. They know they must turn to all the data at their disposal to develop timely, personalized and highly targeted campaigns for every stage of the buyer journey.

The *2020 Database Strategies & Contact Acquisition Survey* unscored the value of effective database management to help marketers better refine their targeting and messaging and deliver experiences modern B2B buyers crave. While a majority have a data acquisition strategy in place, 77% of respondents said it could use improvement. The research revealed that marketers are making strides to do so by leveraging data to achieve goals such as identifying key stakeholders within target accounts, targeting specific segments and collecting detailed buyer behavior to fuel campaigns.

Although several challenges — such as outdated data, siloed data and not enough data — remain, the benefits of having a 360-degree view of the buyer through data outweigh the pain points.
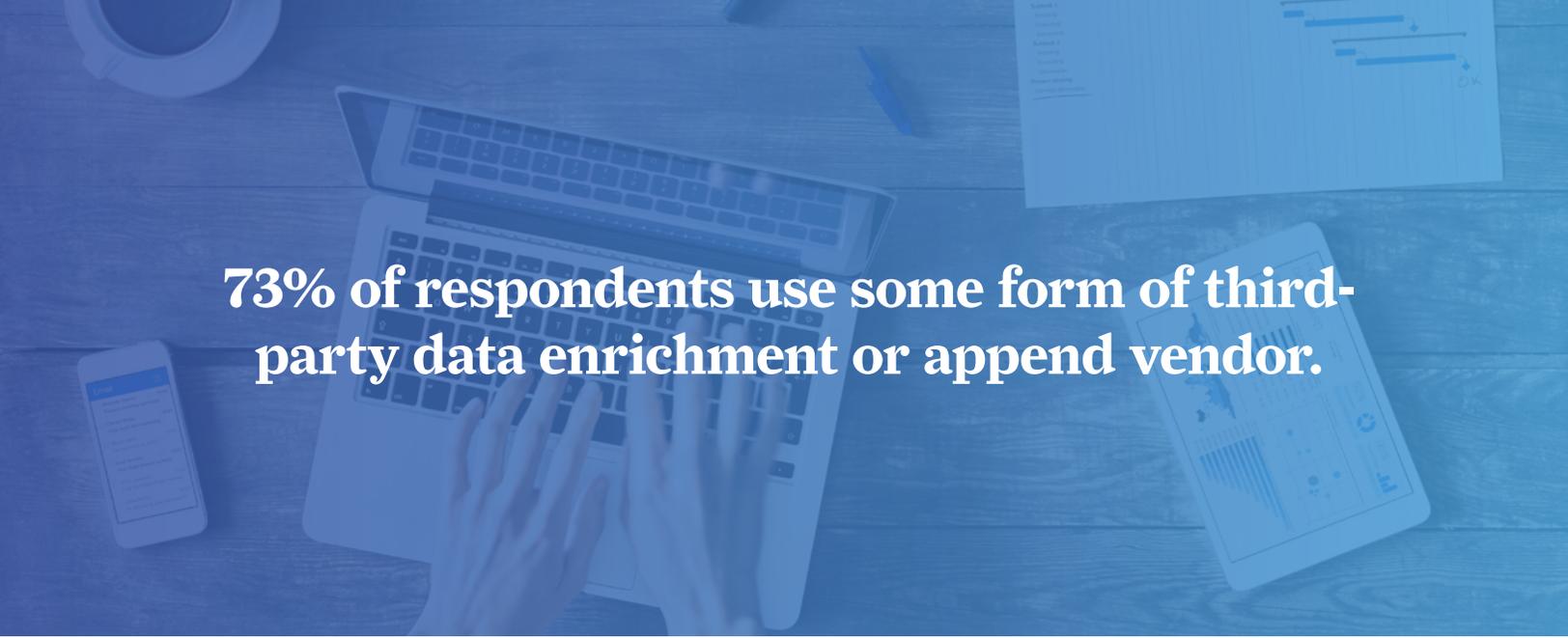
73% of respondents use some form of third-party data enrichment or append vendor.

About The Survey

The *2020 Database Strategies & Contact Acquisition Benchmark Survey* surveyed 122 B2B marketing and sales professionals across the high-tech industry (43%) and a variety of other verticals — including advertising and marketing (15%) and manufacturing (11%). More than a third (35%) of respondents hold managerial positions, while 26% hold director-level positions and 29% hold VP-level or above job roles.

With most of the respondents located in the United States (65%), the survey shows a healthy mix of responses from different-sized organizations. Specifically:

- **51%** are employed by midmarket-sized companies, making between $50 million and $1 billion in annual revenue;
- **37%** work for a SMB, defined as a company that makes less than $50 million in annual revenue; and
- **12%** work for enterprise-level businesses, making more than $1 billion annually.

What is your current job role?
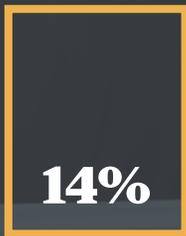
14%
C-level

14%
VP-level
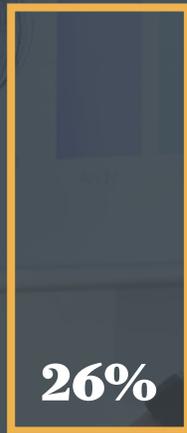
26%
Director-level
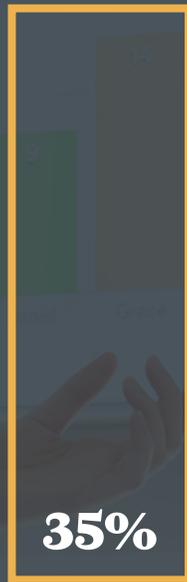
35%
Managerial-level

Additional Resources

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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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