

2022

2022 LEAD NURTURING & ACCELERATION BENCHMARK SURVEY

B2B Teams Turn To Multichannel Content, Account-Based Segmentation To Revamp Strategies, Better Engage Prospects



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

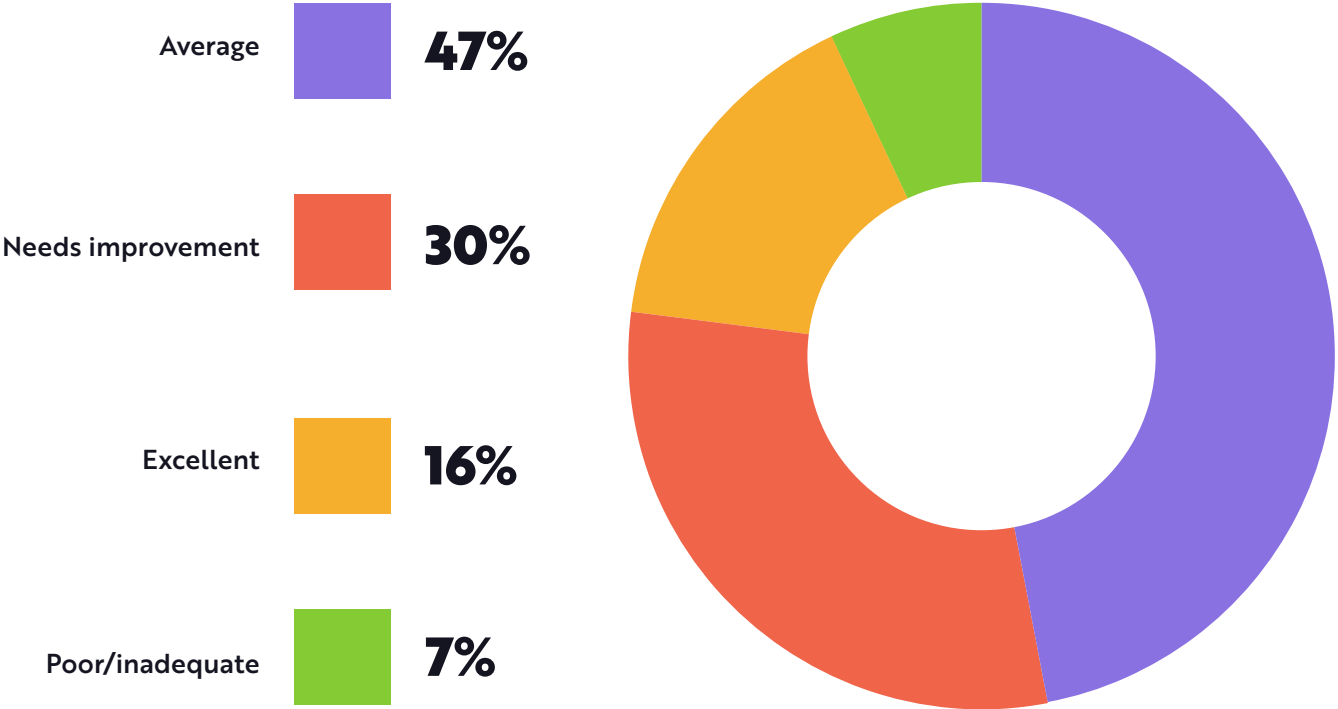
Converting B2B prospects into buyers can be a complicated, lengthy process. Essential to its success is a strong lead nurturing strategy, with data-driven touchpoints that provide personalized content for each stage of the buyer's journey. But while most marketers agree on the importance of lead nurturing, few have perfected the process.

According to the "2022 Lead Nurturing & Acceleration Benchmark Survey," only 16% of B2B marketers rate their current lead nurturing initiatives as excellent. It's worth noting this number is double that of [last year's survey](#), when a meager 8% gave their programs the highest marks. Nevertheless, the findings show that marketers still have much work ahead. Nearly half of the respondents (47%) said their programs are average, while 37% said their lead nurturing strategies need improvement or are poor/inadequate.

This report will provide a deeper look at current lead nurturing initiatives, including the biggest roadblocks to success and new tactics that are being tested to better attract, engage and convert prospective buyers. Other topics of discussion include:

- How B2B teams are developing more advanced, account-based segmentation strategies;
- New nurturing tactics that are gaining steam;
- The metrics marketers use to measure success; and
- Top goals and priorities as marketers look to improve their nurturing campaigns in the future.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR CURRENT LEAD NURTURING INITIATIVES?



TARGETED CONTENT, PROPER TIMING BECOME BIGGEST CHALLENGES FOR B2B TEAMS

A strong lead nurturing strategy requires careful craftsmanship and a data-first approach in order to deliver the right content on the right channels at the right time. But doing so has become increasingly difficult as many buyers now want to self-navigate their purchasing process.

In fact, findings from the survey reveal that nearly two-thirds of respondents (65%) said it has become more challenging to generate responses from their lead nurturing programs over the past 12 to 18 months.

When asked about their troubles, marketers cited building the right timing/workflows for campaigns (49%) and developing targeted content for each buyer stage/interest (48%) as their top two issues — on par with last year's results. Other difficulties include:

- Shortage of data on which leads to nurture (41%);
- Lack of support from sales team in following up on nurtured leads (38%);
- Insufficient insights into best practices on lead nurture frameworks (34%); and
- Declining response rates (33%).

But when properly executed, lead nurturing campaigns can reap big rewards. The majority (62%) said lead nurturing programs can help segment prospects based on interests/behaviors, as well as drive better response rates to campaigns and offers with targeting. In addition, just over half of respondents noted that lead nurturing can help generate warmer, sales-ready leads that move through the funnel more quickly. A higher acceptance of leads from sales (45%) and lower costs for qualified leads (28%) are other noteworthy benefits.

WHAT ARE YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGES WHEN IT COMES TO LEAD NURTURE PROGRAMS?



WHAT HAVE YOU SEEN AS THE BIGGEST BENEFITS OF LEAD NURTURE PROGRAMS?



MARKETERS TURN TO MULTICHANNEL CAMPAIGNS, NEW METRICS FOR SUCCESS

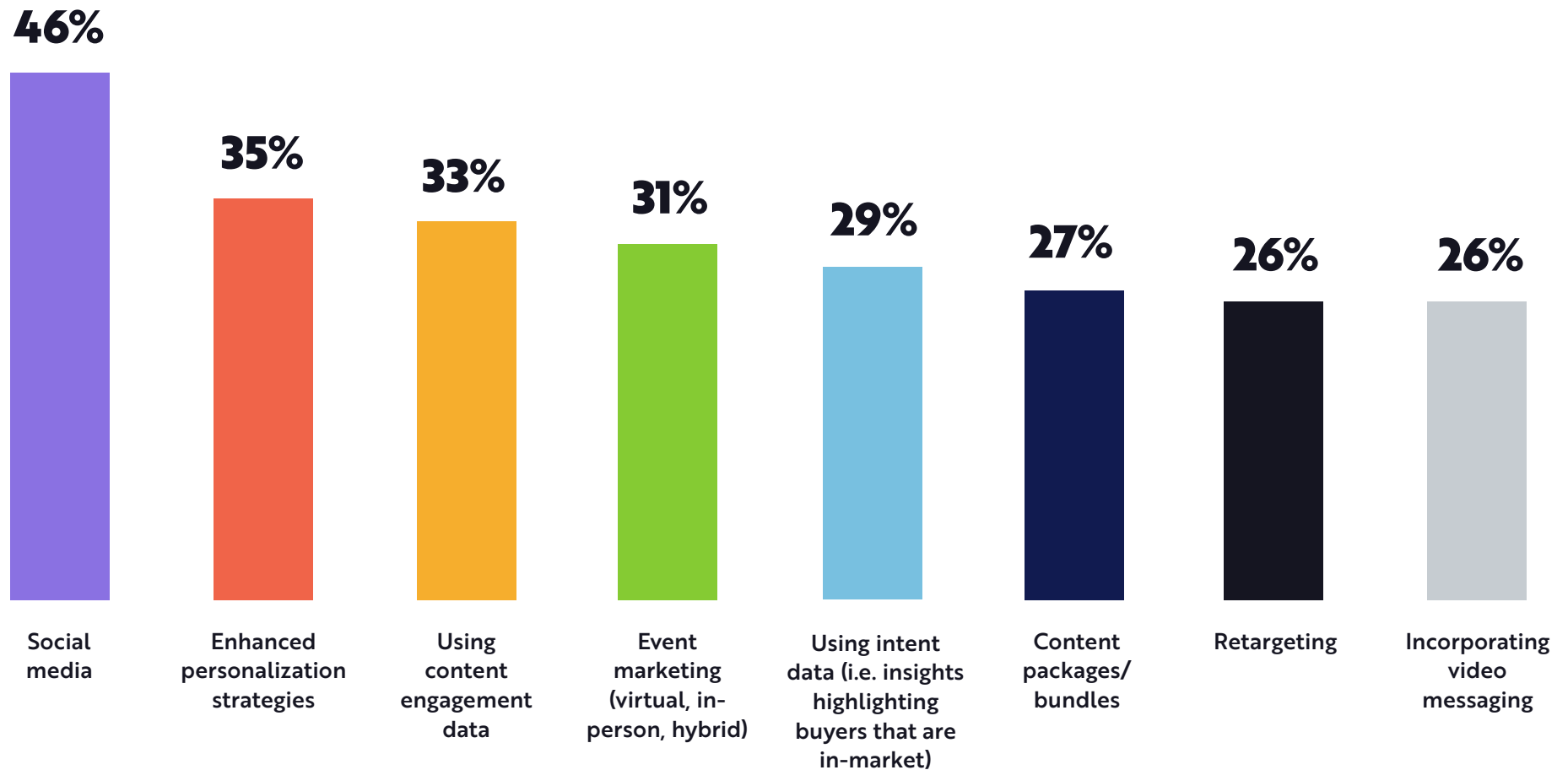
As B2B teams look to level up their lead nurturing strategies, many marketers are embracing a multichannel approach and experimenting with new tactics to better engage prospective customers. In line with last year's results, social media took the lead as the top tactic, as cited by 46% of respondents. This was closely followed by enhanced personalization strategies (35%), the use of content engagement data (33%) and event marketing (virtual, in-person or hybrid) (31%).

Success metrics, however, have shifted slightly. According to the survey results, 43% of marketers rely on revenue to evaluate their lead nurturing programs — up from 39% the year prior. Meanwhile, email click-through-rates, which previously held the top spot, slipped from 45% to 34%. Other popular metrics include:

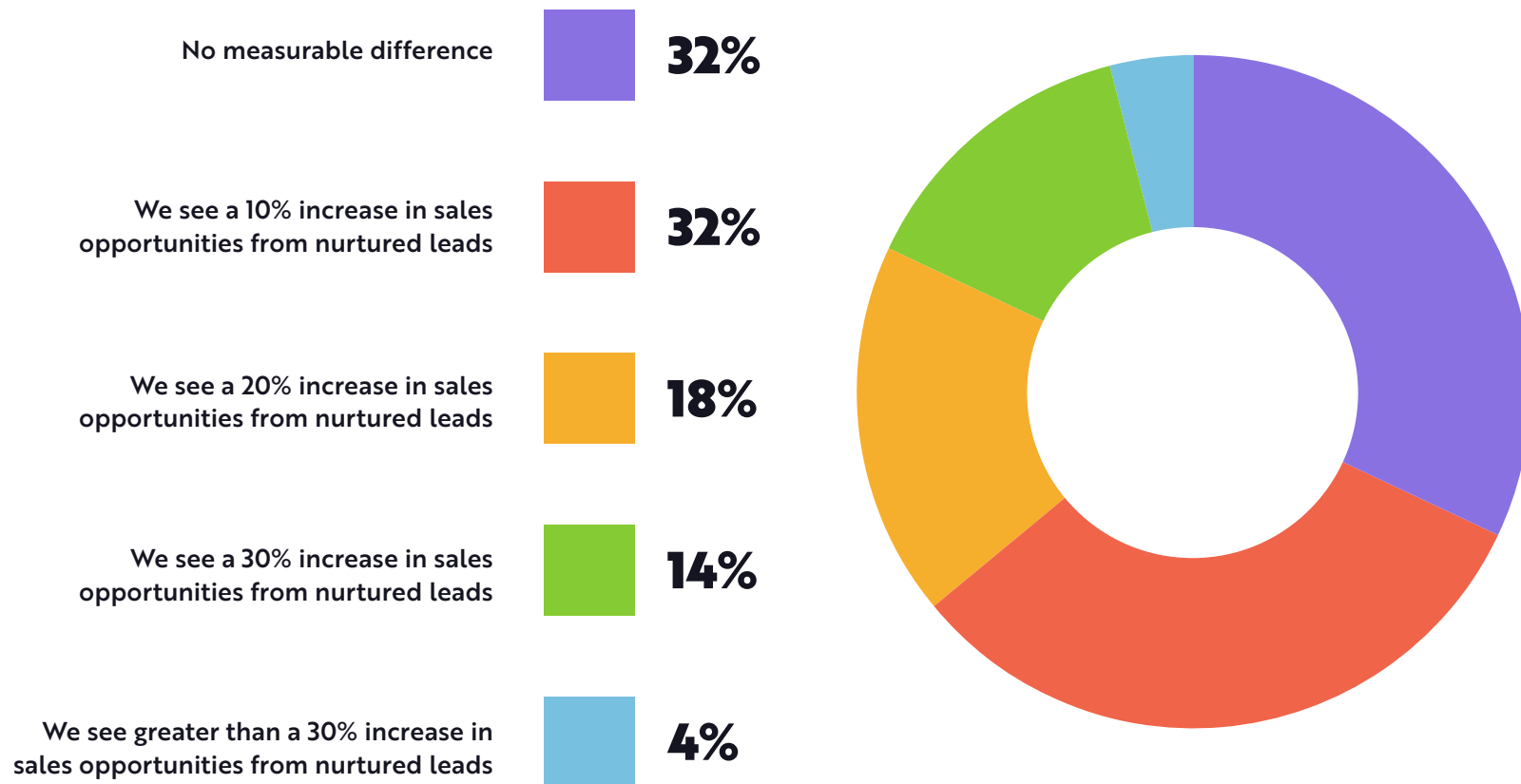
- Email open rates (32%);
- Conversion rate (31%);
- Cost-per-lead (28%);
- Engagement score (28%);
- Average deal size (24%); and
- Time-to-customer acquisition (23%).

A whopping 83% said they have seen a measurable difference in sales opportunities from nurtured leads versus non-nurtured leads — a significant jump from 57% in 2021. Specifically, 32% noted a 10% change in conversion. An equal number said they saw a 20% difference in performance, while 19% witnessed boosts of 30% or greater for their nurtured leads.

WHAT NEW APPROACHES/TACTICS HAVE YOU TAKEN WITH YOUR NURTURE PROGRAM?



HOW HAVE NURTURED LEADS PERFORMED WITHIN YOUR FUNNEL VERSUS NON-NURTURED LEADS?



GROWING FOCUS ON TAILORED STRATEGIES THAT TARGET THE ENTIRE BUYER'S JOURNEY

In addition to testing new channels, marketers are also turning their attention to a wider breadth of more tailored nurture campaigns. The survey results show that many B2B organizations now create specific nurturing strategies for the various stages of the buyer's journey – from first touch to onboarding or lost opportunity.

Specifically, 43% of respondents currently have early-stage campaigns focused on new leads and 42% have specific campaigns for new customers and onboarding. Additional nurturing programs that are becoming more common are:

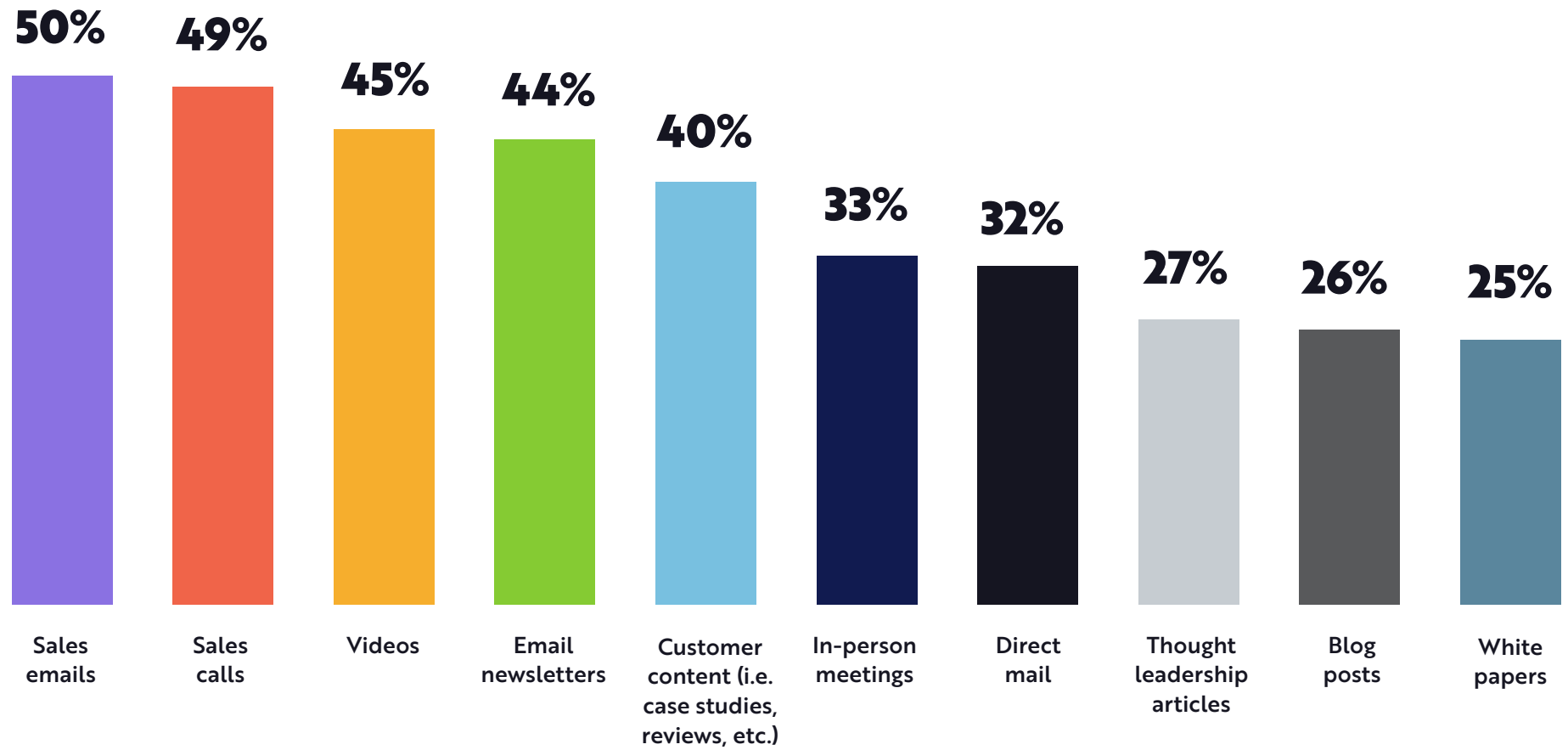
- Advanced-stage (specific to role/title/industry/company) (34%);
- Current client (upsell/cross-sell) (34%);
- Touch campaign (sales owner reached SQL) (30%);
- Marketing qualified (29%);
- Warm-up campaign (28%);
- Trial nurture – following free trial request (24%); and
- Lost opportunity (24%).

When asked which tactics have worked best within their nurture initiatives, sales emails (50%), sales calls (49%), videos (45%), email newsletters (44%) and customer content, such as reviews and case studies (40%), came out on top. By contrast, webinars and thought leadership articles held the top two spots last year but have leveled off as in-person events and other tactics have picked up from a pandemic slump.

WHICH TYPES OF LEAD NURTURING CAMPAIGNS DO YOU CURRENTLY HAVE?



WHICH TACTICS HAVE WORKED BEST WITHIN YOUR NURTURE INITIATIVES?



IMPROVING DATABASE SEGMENTATION WITH ACCOUNT-BASED APPROACHES

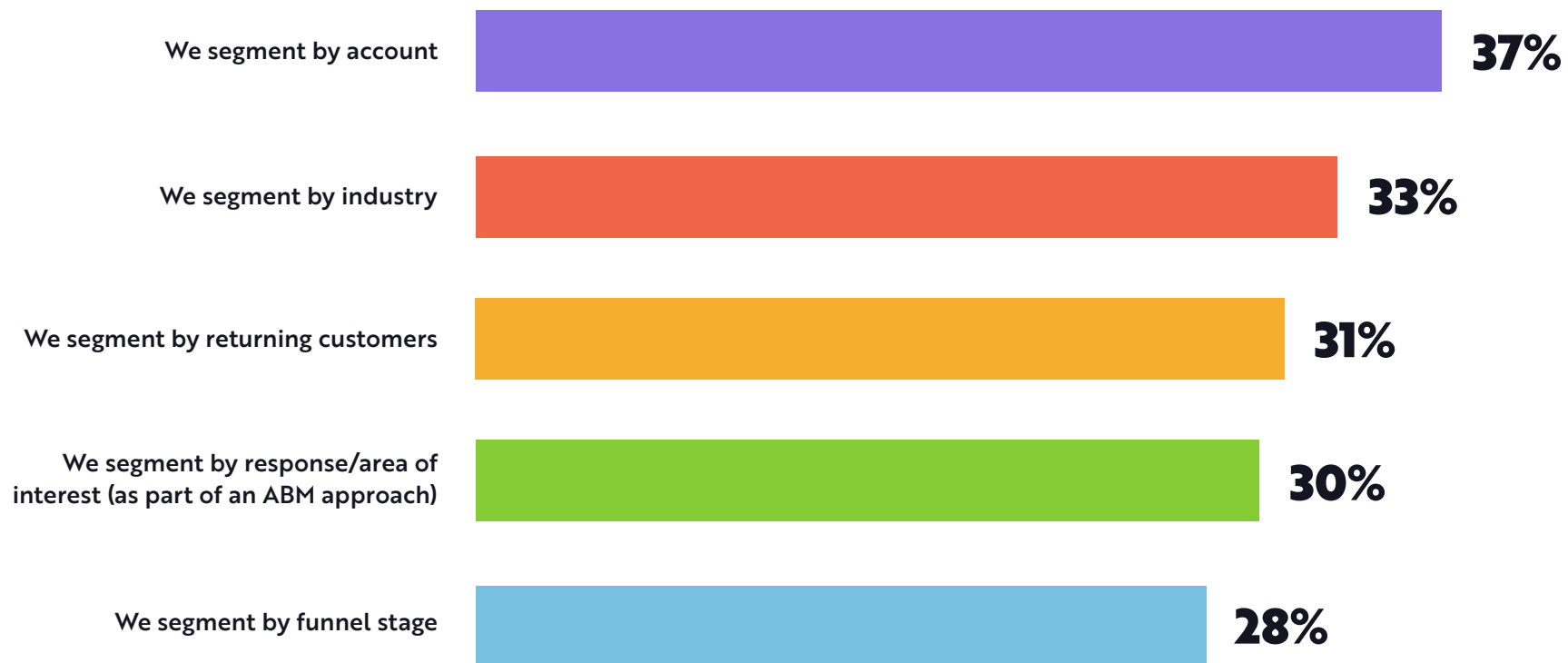
In an effort to create more targeted campaigns that deliver the customized experiences that today's buyers crave, marketers are increasingly looking to get more granular with their database segmentation strategies. In fact, the survey findings show B2B teams are now primarily segmenting their databases by account (37%), followed by industry (33%), returning customers (31%) and response/area of interest as part of an ABM approach (30%). Other segmentation strategies include:

- Funnel stage (28%);
- Company size (27%);
- Role (25%); and
- Personas (23%).

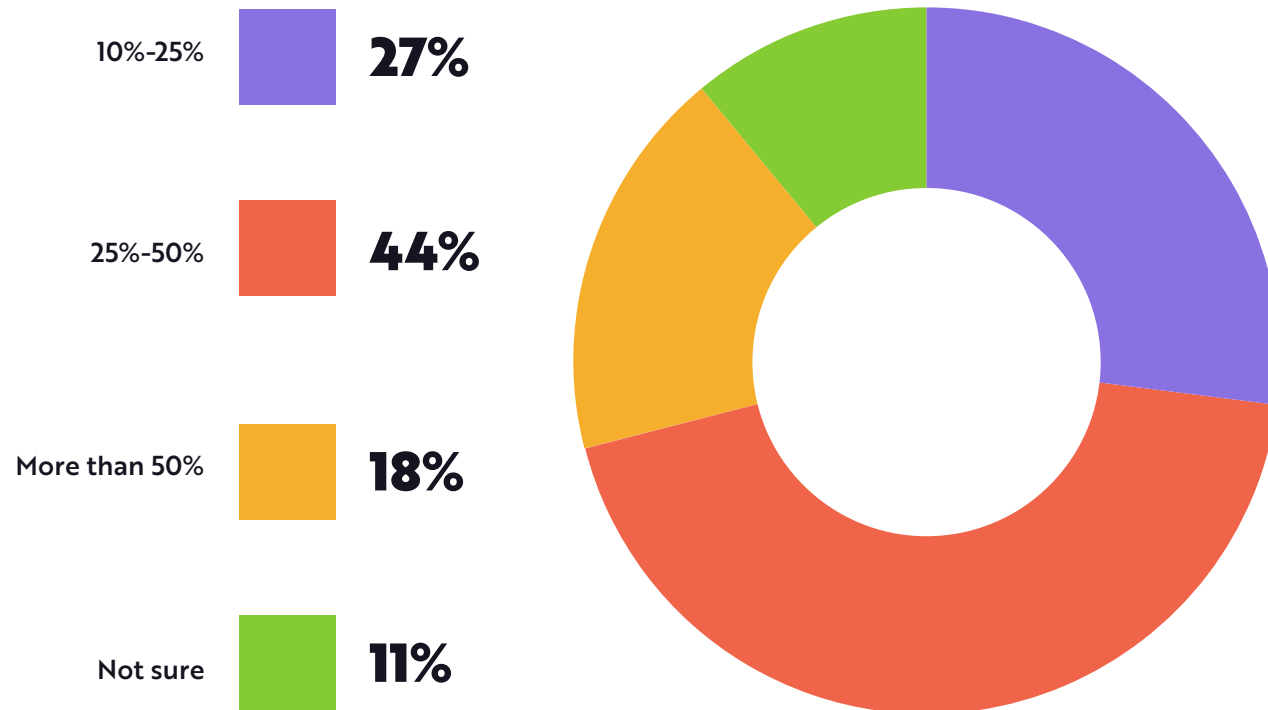
The results also reveal a rise in the number of leads that are returned for additional nurturing. This finding is consistent with the increased emphasis on advanced-stage and warm-up campaigns prior to the sales handoff, as well as the growth of lost opportunity campaigns.

According to the survey, the number of marketers who have 25%-50% of their leads returned for additional nurturing increased from 28% to 44% over the past year. An additional 27% have between 10%-25% of their leads returned for additional nurturing, while 18% provide extra nurturing for more than 50% of their leads.

HOW DO YOU SEGMENT YOUR DATABASE FOR LEAD NURTURE PROGRAMS?



WHAT PERCENTAGE OF YOUR LEADS ARE RETURNED FOR ADDITIONAL NURTURING?



TRENDS IN CAMPAIGN CONTENT, CADENCE & MORE

Another sign of lead nurturing maturity is that nearly half of all marketers (46%) now create content offers that are used exclusively for nurture programs, rather than relying on multi-purpose assets – a significant jump from 25% in 2021. Another 9% of respondents said they have plans to develop exclusive nurture content over the next 12 months.

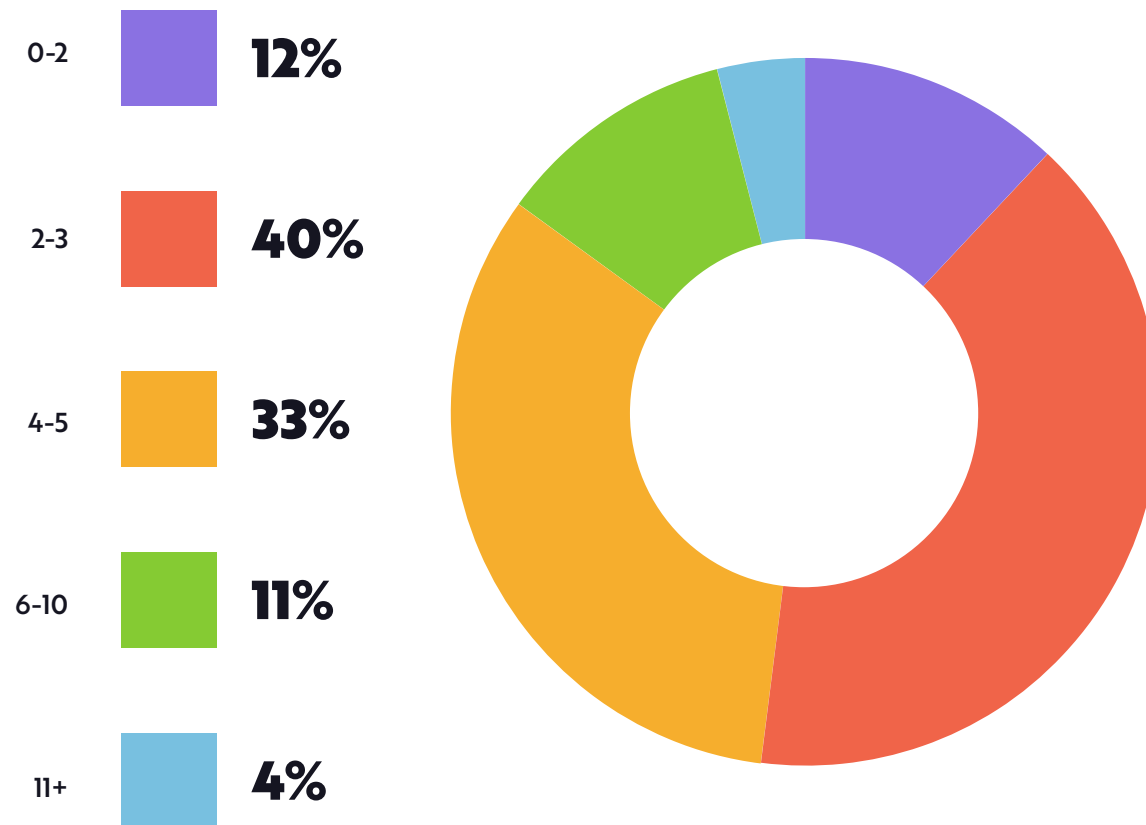
Weekly nurturing remains the most popular cadence amongst marketers, as cited by 31% of respondents. But a significant number of teams abide by a more frequent cadence, including every three days (25%), every other day (17%) and daily (12%).

When asked about the total number of lead nurturing programs they currently run per year, just under half (40%) said they oversee one to 10 programs. Meanwhile, 34% run 11 to 20 programs per year, and 26% manage more than 20 programs.

A majority of marketers (73%) include between two to five touches in their typical lead nurture program. Only 14% include six or more touches – a slight drop from 25% the year prior.



HOW MANY TOUCHES DO YOU INCLUDE IN YOUR TYPICAL LEAD NURTURE PROGRAMS?



CONCLUSION

Lead nurturing campaigns, when well-crafted and executed, can be used to capture better data on prospective customers, deliver more sales-ready leads and ultimately boost conversions. While perfecting the process remains a major challenge for most marketers, the research shows that a rising number of B2B teams are rethinking and refining their lead nurturing strategies to meet modern buyer expectations. In particular, many are turning their attention to using deeper, account-based segmentation to build more targeted, multichannel campaigns.

Looking ahead, marketers shared a desire to balance evergreen nurturing goals with new, emerging tactics. Just under half of the respondents (46%) cited increasing the number of opportunities entering the pipeline as their top priority for future lead nurturing programs. This was closely followed by other traditional goals, such as boosting campaign responses (43%), generating warmer, sales-ready leads (43%) and increasing conversion rates (42%).

It is encouraging to see that new goals around enhanced data and targeting are also taking hold: 37% of marketers are focusing on developing deeper engagement data on customers and prospects, and 35% are improving segmentation of prospects based on interests/behaviors – both top priorities for future programs. The use of more data-backed strategies and better segmentation will allow B2B teams to create more mature lead nurturing campaigns, as well as tackle top challenges related to targeted content and campaign timing.

ABOUT SURVEY

The *2022 Lead Nurturing & Acceleration Benchmark Survey Report* includes responses from 228 B2B marketers representing a mix of industries, including retail (18%), software/technology (15%), business services/consulting (11%), financial services (11%) and manufacturing (9%). Nearly half (40%) of respondents are managers, 23% are at the director level, 16% occupy C-suite positions and 14% are VPs. The annual company revenue of the respondents ranges from less than \$10 million (26%), \$10-\$50 million (29%), and greater than \$50 million (45%).





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