

Decorative graphic in the top-left corner consisting of overlapping orange and yellow circles.

# Building a Better Higher Ed Marketing Team 2023

February 2023

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# Methodology

- Confidential, online survey fielded October 18 – November 21, 2022
- Sample included contacts from OHO's proprietary database of U.S. and international higher ed institutions
  - Additional respondents sourced via social media promotion
- Total of 160 respondents
  - 73% of respondents cover the entire school
  - 77% were manager or above

*Additional demographics available in the appendix.*

# Survey focus areas

- Size and composition of marketing teams
- Areas of responsibility
- Metrics shared with leadership
- Success factors – are teams appropriately resourced for expected work?
- Staffing impacts

# Key Findings



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# The brain drain is real

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**No significant  
changes in marketing  
team size or  
composition**





**What do we want?**

***Outcomes!***

**When do we want them?**

***Now!***

***But... how?***





# Still a slow move from tactical to strategic



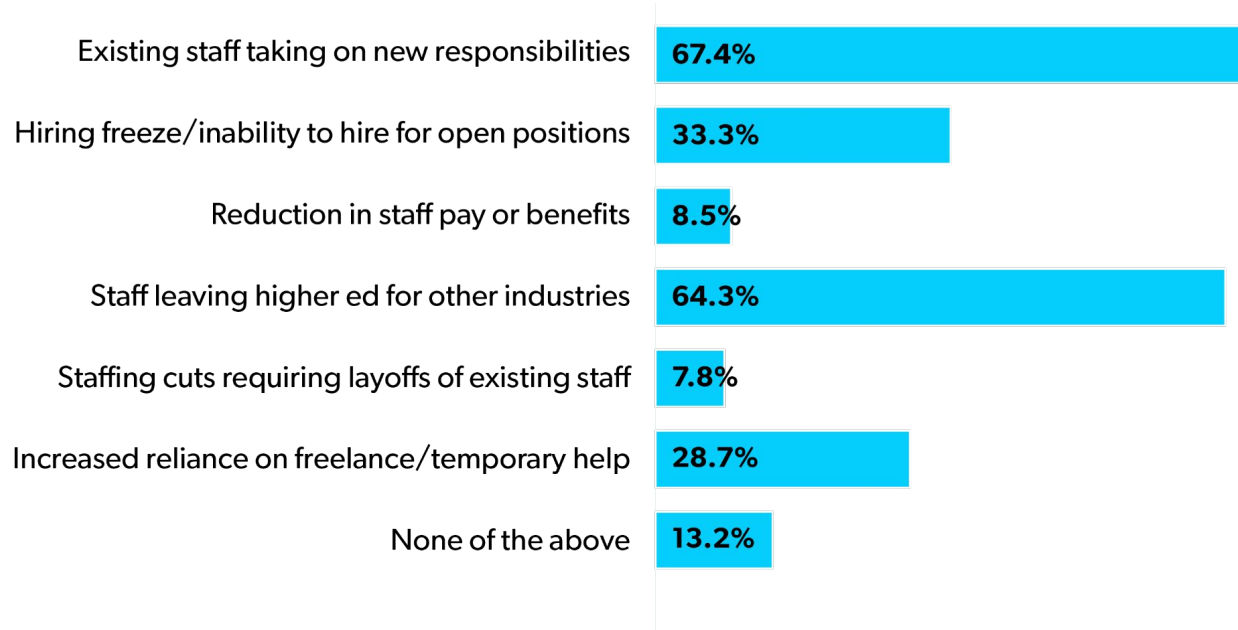
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# Staffing + Budget Health



# Staffing & Pay

In the 2021-2022 academic year, which of the following staffing impacts has the pandemic had on your department?



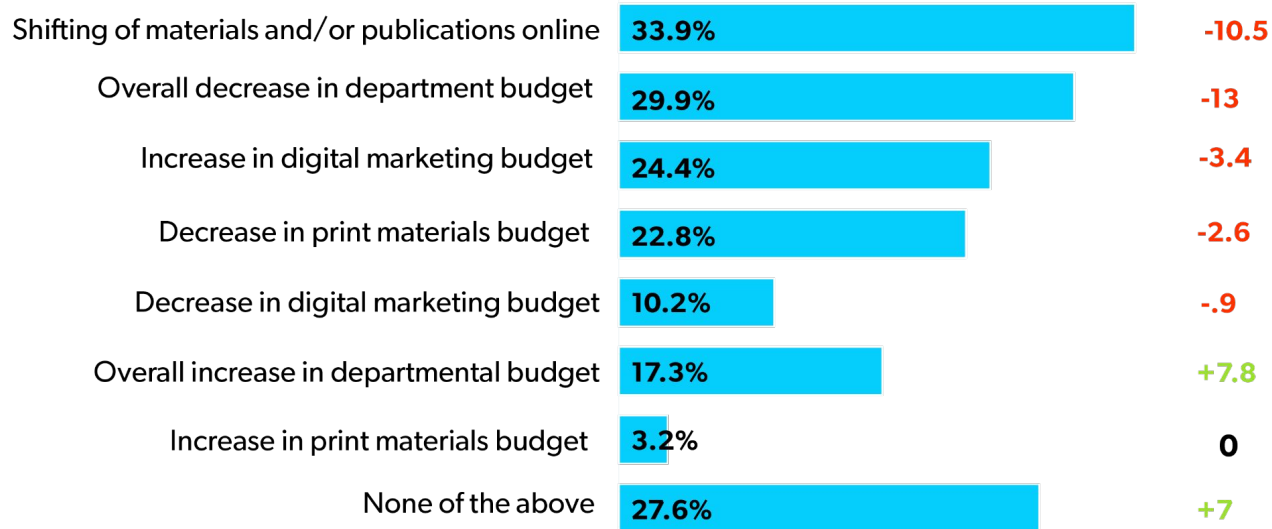


# 64%

of respondents saw team members leave higher ed  
for other industries **vs. 23% in 2021.**

# Budget

In the 2021-2022 academic year, which of the following budgetary impacts has the pandemic had on your department? Check all that apply.



# Remote work?

No big change.

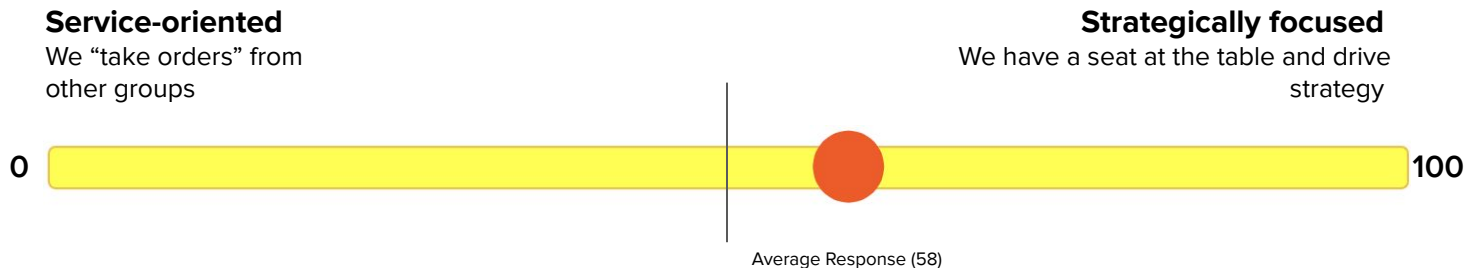
47% said their institutions are now more open to hiring remote employees, up slightly from 45% in 2021.

# Kinkos vs. Strategic Partner



# Service-oriented vs. Strategic

Would you define your department as a **service-oriented** or a **strategically focused** group?



# Why?

Why are marketing teams not more strategic?



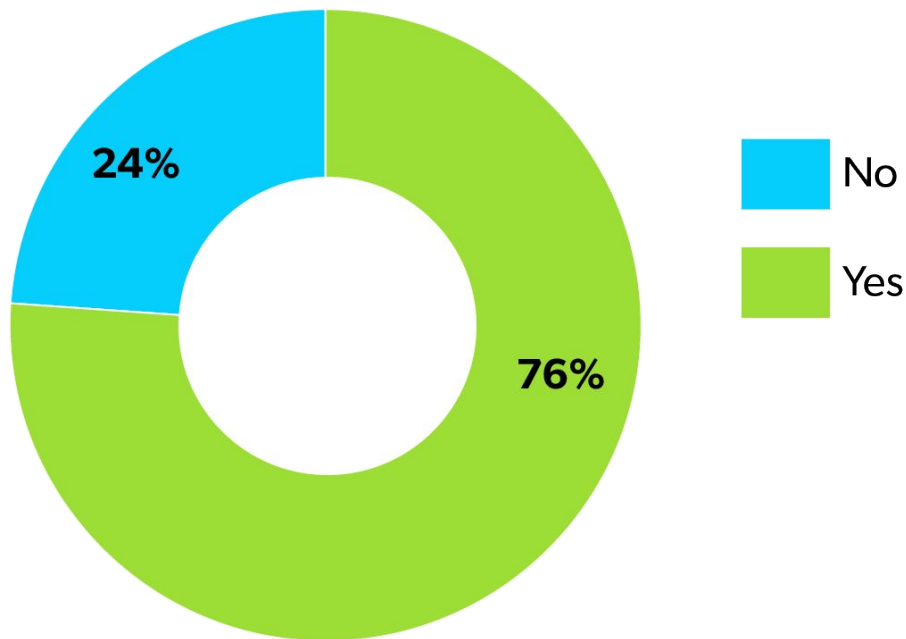
# What do more strategic teams do?

## Strategic teams more likely to agree\*

- They have strategic direction from leadership.
- They have the ability to measure results and tie back to big picture.
- There is internal agreement about what is needed to move the marketing needle.
- Internal politics are minimal; No sacred cows, and can shift course.
- They have skills/training needed to be successful.
- They're empowered to make decisions needed to be successful.

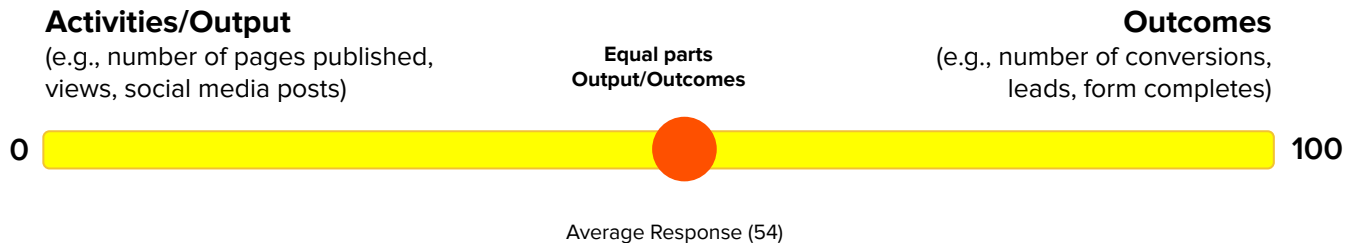
*\*Differences are statistically significant.*

# Responsibility for reporting metrics to leadership increased in 2022



# Metrics as Activities/Output vs. Outcomes

How would you characterize the information you provide in reports you provide about the website and digital efforts?



# 28%

provide website and digital marketing data  
**quarterly** to leadership.

## Open-ended metrics question

What **metrics** do you believe are most **important** to leadership **and why?**

# Most Important Metrics to Leadership

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## **Conversions/requests for information (RFI) (29 mentions)**

“Conversions: applications, inquiries (new leads), visits scheduled, deposits (enrollment confirmations). These are the key milestones that move someone through the enrollment funnel.”

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## **Enrollments (24 mentions)**

“Enrollment first, then KPIs supporting it down through the funnel: accepted offers, applications, campus visits, student inquiry forms, etc.”

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## **Outcomes (16 mentions)**

“Outcomes. Because we're making data-informed decisions about what's successful and what isn't so that we can work more strategically.”

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# Most Important Metrics to Leadership

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**Number of page views/web visitors/sessions  
(16 mentions)**

“Users, new users, bounce rate, acquisition, top pages viewed, keyword query”

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**Completed applications (14 mentions)**

“Submitted applications because it gives a good indicator to enrollment trends.”

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**Engagement (9 mentions)**

“Views and engagement, conversions”

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*“I think our institution is focused on pushing content versus looking at outcomes and metrics. But, hopefully that will start changing.”*

Survey Respondent



*“While still consumed with vanity metrics, they're slowly learning the importance of more goal-based metrics”*


Survey Respondent

*“Outcomes are more important IMO, but leadership seems more interested in activities. Outcomes are what drives revenue, but activities are easier for them to understand.”*


Survey Respondent

# Team Success Factors

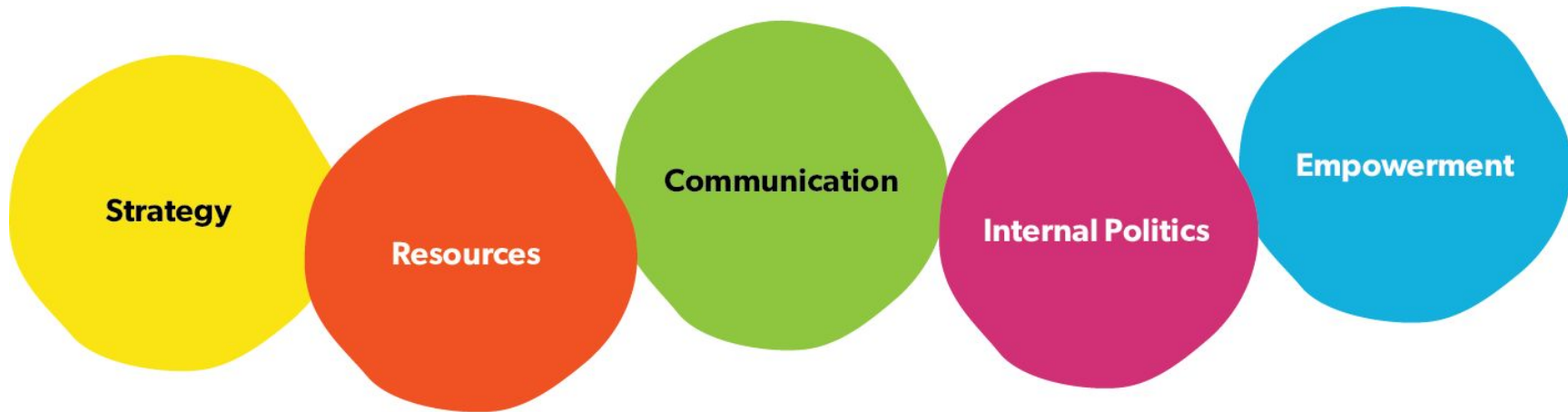




**It takes more than  
talent and drive to  
build a better  
marketing team.**



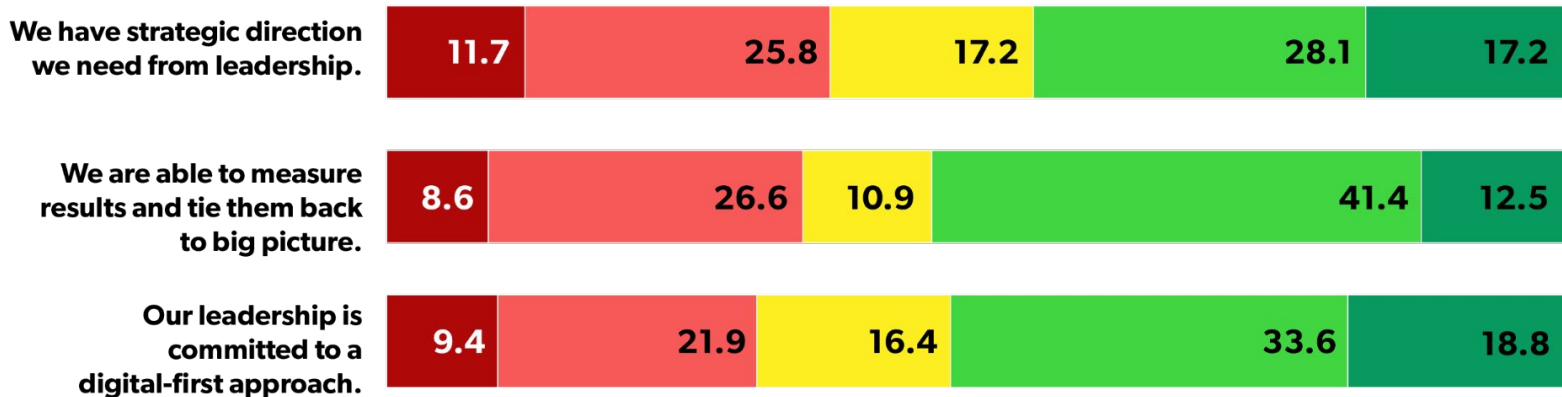
# Team Success Factors



# Success Factor: Strategy

We're interested in understanding factors that may be impacting your department's success. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

Strongly disagree
  Somewhat disagree
  Neutral
  Somewhat agree
  Strongly agree



# Over one third of teams lack strategic direction.

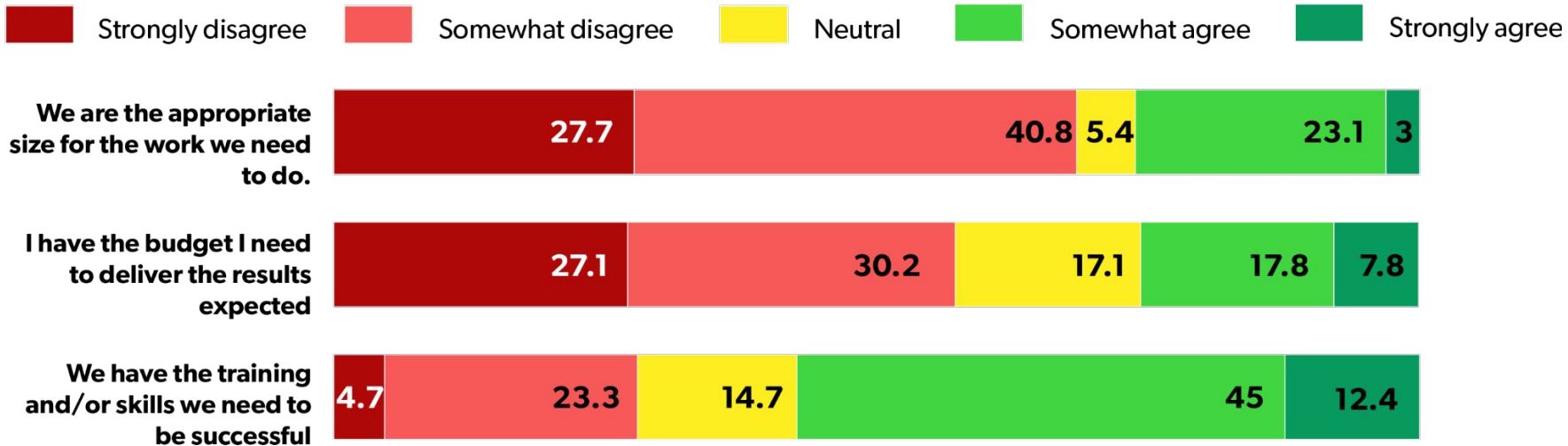
# 38%

of respondents “disagree” that they have the strategic direction they need from leadership.

This is down from **41% in 2021**  
meaning slightly more are reporting getting strategic direction from leadership than in 2021

# Success Factor: Resources

We're interested in understanding factors that may be impacting your department's success. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.





# Respondents still feel under resourced.

# 69%

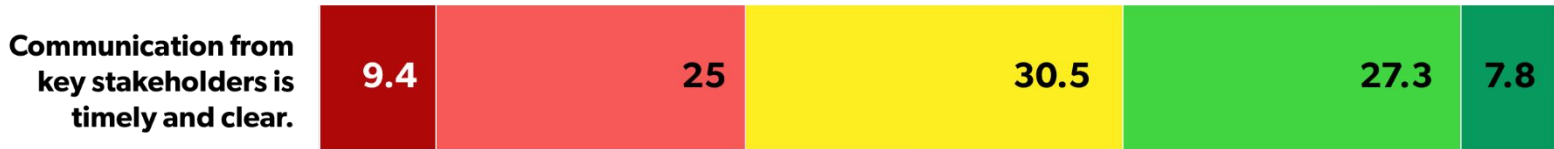
of respondents “strongly disagree” and “somewhat disagree” that their team is the appropriate size for the work they do.

This is down from 71% in 2021

# Success Factor: Communication

We're interested in understanding factors that may be impacting your department's success. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

**Strongly disagree**   **Somewhat disagree**   **Neutral**   **Somewhat agree**   **Strongly agree**



19.5

# Half are clear on what marketing should accomplish.

# 53%

of respondents “agree” there is internal agreement about the marketing needle they need to move.

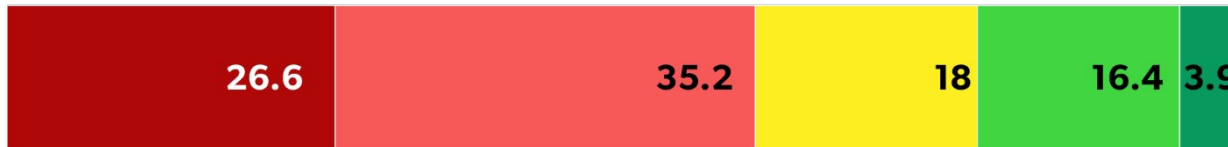
**This is up from 48% in 2021 – meaning there is more agreement**

# Success Factor: Internal Politics

We're interested in understanding factors that may be impacting your department's success. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

**Strongly disagree**   **Somewhat disagree**   **Neutral**   **Somewhat agree**   **Strongly agree**

**Internal politics are minimal and do not impact our success.**



**There are no sacred cows at my institution. If a strategy no longer works, we are nimble enough to shift course.**



# Politics hold back marketing and progress.

# 62%

of respondents “disagree” that internal politics are minimal and don’t impact their success. (In other words, internal politics still greatly impact success.)

**This is up from 58% in 2021**

# Success Factor: Empowerment

We're interested in understanding factors that may be impacting your department's success. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.



**We are able to measure results and tie them back to the big picture.**



**We're empowered to make the decisions we need to be successful.**



19.5

# 13%

of respondents “strongly agree” they are able to measure results and tie them to the big picture.

**Unchanged since 2021 (14%)**

# Reporting + Composition





# Team Reporting

What primary leadership group does your team report to?

**Provost, VP of Academic Affairs, Dean**

14.1% -4.5

**Other**

10.7% +.7

**President**

27.5% +2.5

**University/External Relations**

4% -1.8

**Enrollment/Admissions**

9.4% -4.7

**Advancement/Alumni/Parent**

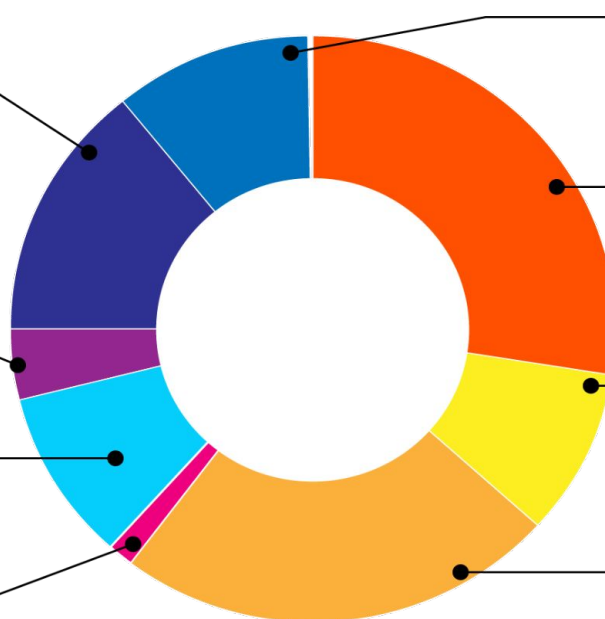
9.4% +1.7

**Marketing/Communications**

23.5% +6.8

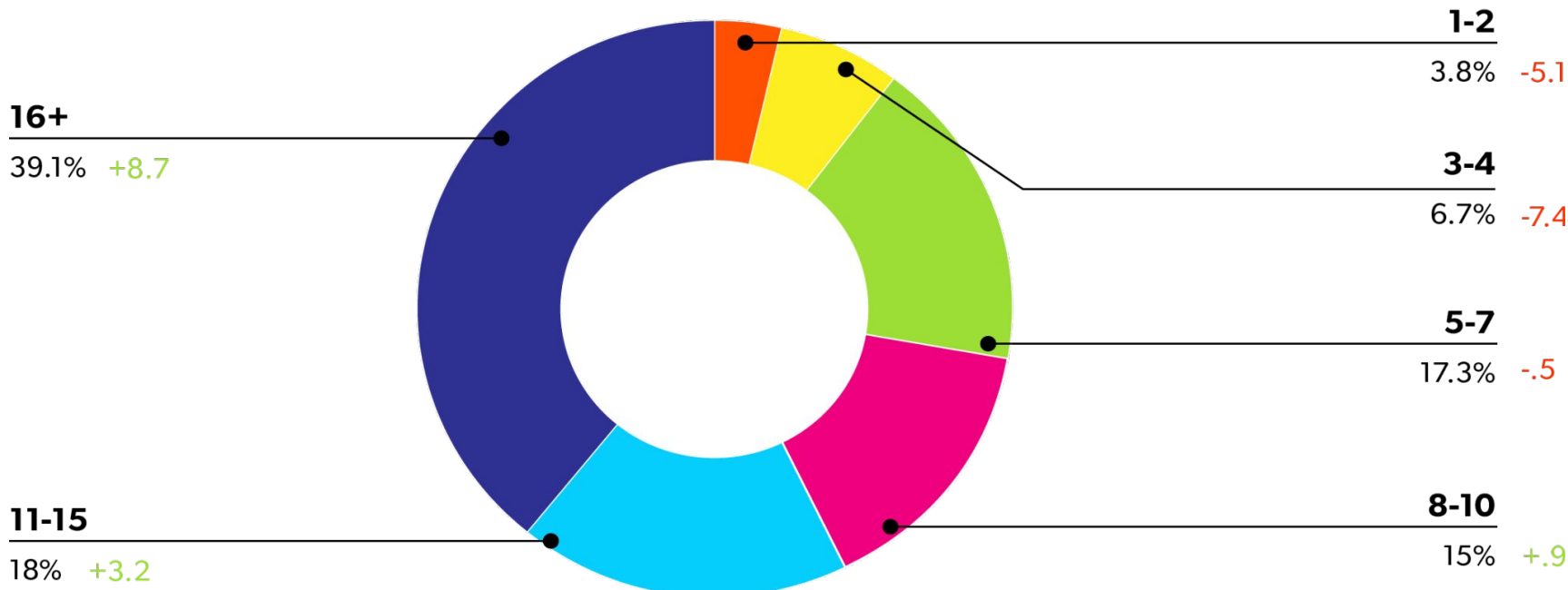
**IT/IS**

1.3% +.7

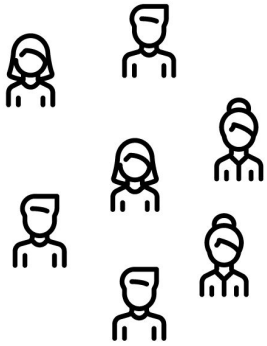


# Team Size

How many full-time employees are in your department?

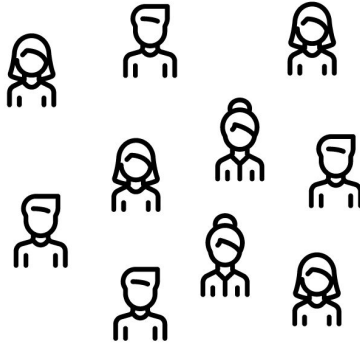


# FTE by Size of Institution



**5-10 FTE**

> 5,000  
Enrollments



**5-10 FTE**

5,000 – 9,999  
Enrollments



**16+ FTE**

10,000+  
Enrollments

# 20 Roles

**+87%**

of departments reported having these two roles:

**manager/director &  
writer/storyteller**

# 5 Most Common Roles in Department



MOST COMMON ROLES	2022
Manager/director	87%
Writer/storyteller	87%
Social media coordinator/manager	84%
Graphic Designer	84%
Marketing Strategy	75%

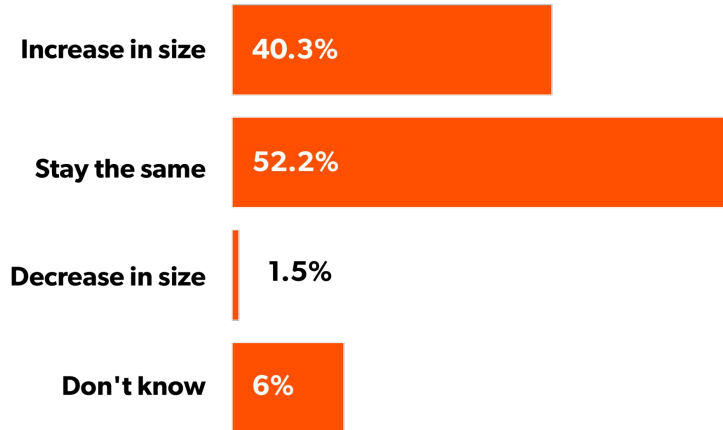
# 5 Least Common Roles in Department



LEAST COMMON ROLES	2022
System administrator	11%
Community & government relations	17%
SEO specialist	25%
UX designer	32%
Marketing analyst	35%

# Anticipated Changes in FTE

In the next year or so, do you expect your department will...

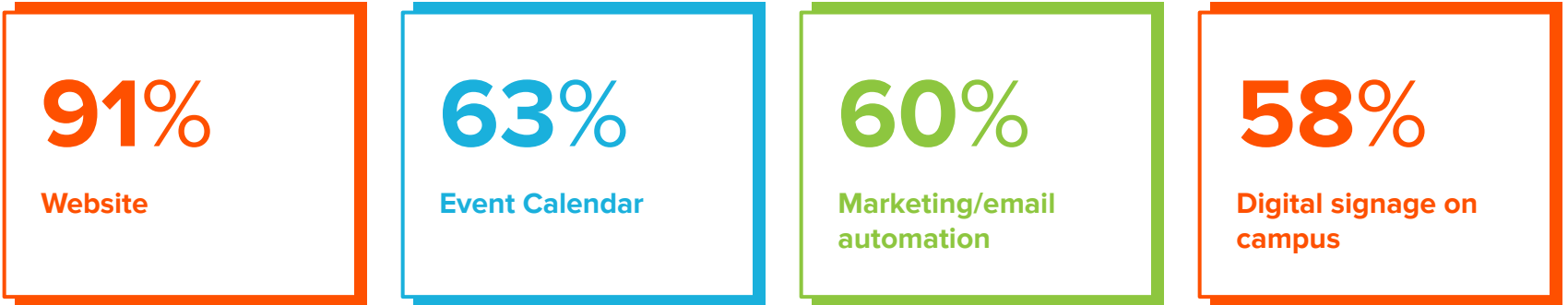




# Responsibilities + Skills



# Most Common System Responsibilities



*“We handle the following items  
for Extension but not for the entire  
university: event calendar,  
directory, intranet,  
marketing/email automation,  
website”*

Survey Respondent

*“Design solutions, primarily print design, for all the schools and colleges of our institutions.”*

Survey Respondent

# 20 Skills

# What Skills Do Teams Already Have?



SKILL	2022	2021	% Change
Content writing	94%	93%	+1%
Social media	90%	93%	-3%
Marketing strategy	89%	88%	+1%
Content strategy	88%	81%	+7%
Graphic design	88%	89%	-1%
Web strategy	86%	84%	+2%
Web analytics	81%	83%	-2%
Public/media relations	80%	81%	-1%
Digital strategy	77%	73%	+4%

# What Skills Are You Planning to Add?



WE ARE PLANNING TO ADD ...	2022	2021	% Change
Marketing analytics	13%	9%	+4%
SEO	10%	6%	+4%
UX design	10%	6%	+4%
Web analytics	8%	2%	+6%
Email marketing drip campaigns	7%	10%	-3%
CRM administration and/or marketing automation	7%	12%	-5%
Content strategy	5%	10%	-5%
Digital marketing campaign management	2%	9%	-7%
Social media	6%	5%	+1%

# What Top Skills Are Outsourced to a Partner?



SKILL	2022	2021	% Change
Digital marketing campaign management	45%	40%	+5%
Web applications/integrations	41%	32%	+9%
CMS development	35%	40%	-5%
SEO	31%	38%	-7%
Digital strategy	28%	33%	-5%



# Top skills not planning to add in the future



WE HAVE NO PLAN TO ADD ...	2022	2021	% Change
CRM/email admin	15%	10%	+5%
Web applications/integrations	12%	10%	+2%
Email drip campaigns	12%	11%	+1%
UX design	11%	18%	-7%
Project management	10%	10%	0%
CMS development	10%	8%	+2%
Digital marketing campaign management	8%	5%	+3%

While no single survey can measure all of what you've accomplished, and where you're headed strategically, our aim was to **tell your story**, and the story of **what it takes to build a better marketing team.**



**Q&A**



# Feedback polls

# Upcoming Webinar



## Digital Marketing Strategies, Trends & Tactics for 2023

March 15, 2023 at 2pm ET





**Thank you for joining us!**

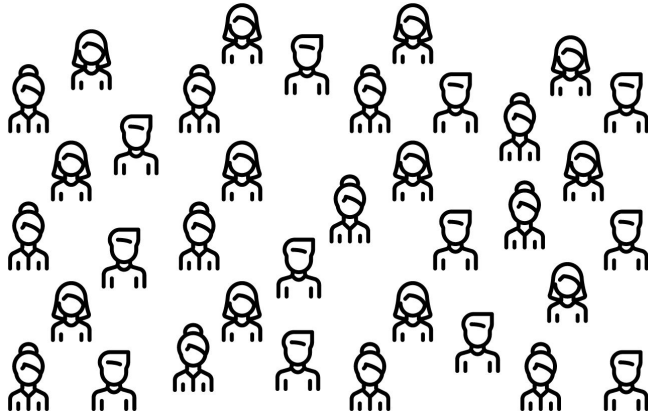
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# Appendix: Survey Respondents

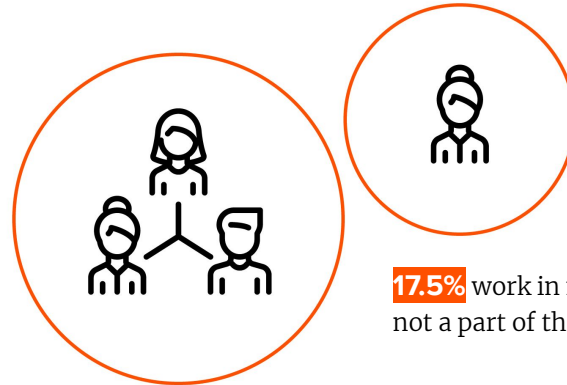


# Respondent characteristics

160 Survey Participants



Where they work at the institution:



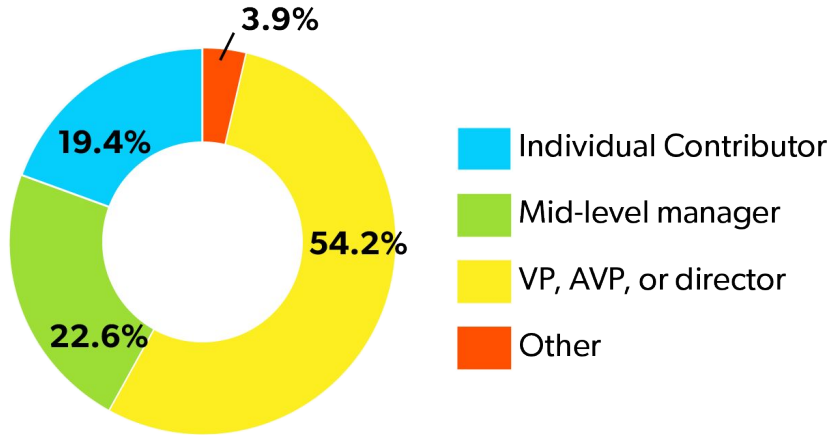
**17.5%** work in marketing communications, but not a part of the centralized team

**76.3%** are part of a centralized marketing team

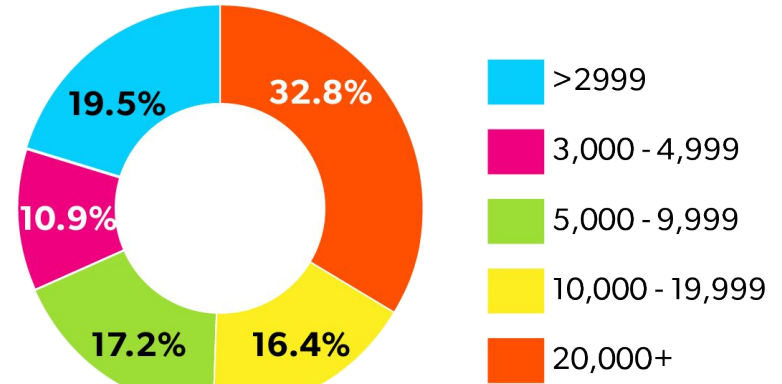


# Respondent characteristics

Role

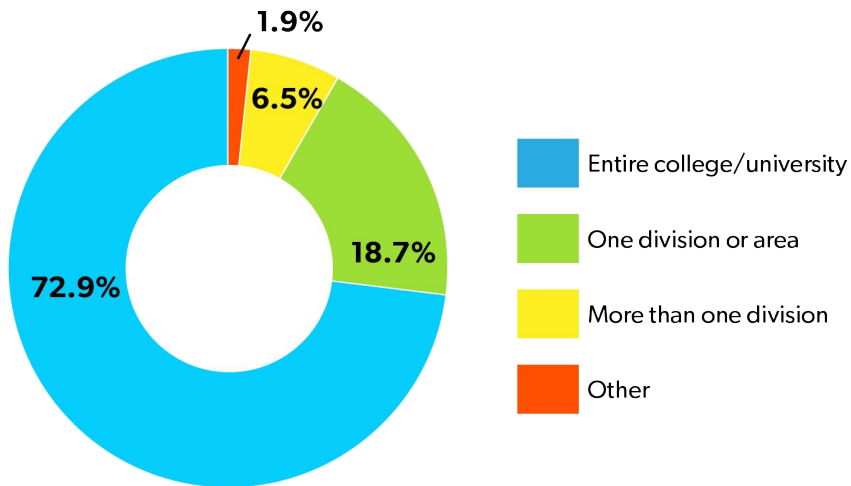


Total Enrollment of College/University

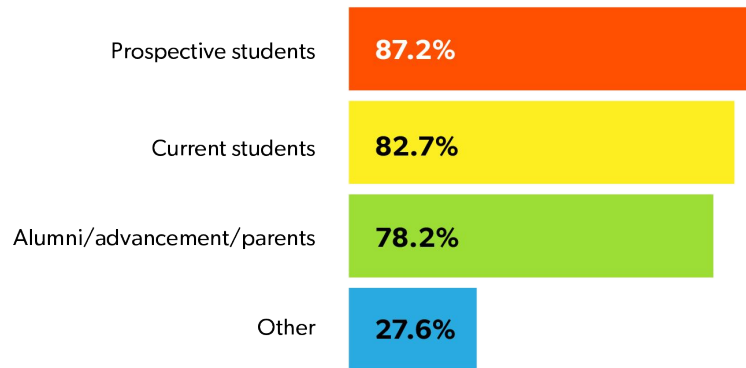


# Respondent characteristics:

### Areas Served By Respondents



### Respondent's Team's Work Supports

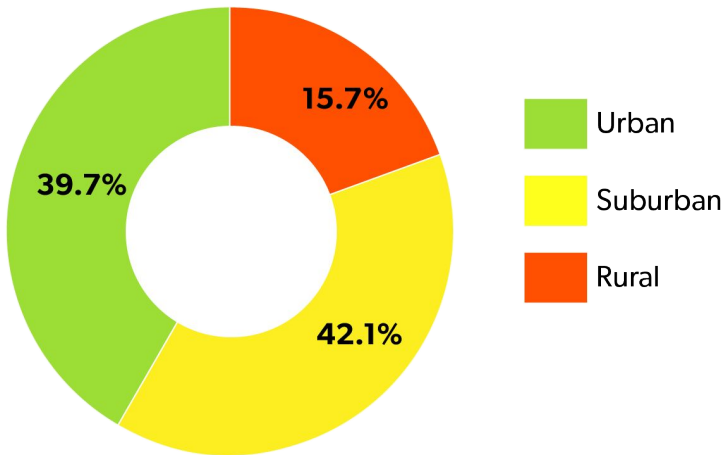


# Geography



**37** states

### Setting of Institution's Main Campus



### Type of Institution

