

Decorative orange and yellow shapes in the top-left corner.

# Building a Better Higher Ed Marketing Team 2021

June 9, 2021

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# Agenda

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Survey Methodology

Team Reporting & Composition

Responsibilities & Skills

Service-Oriented vs. Strategically Focused Teams

Metrics Shared with Leadership

Team Success Factors

Pandemic Impact

Demographics



# SURVEY METHODOLOGY



# Methodology

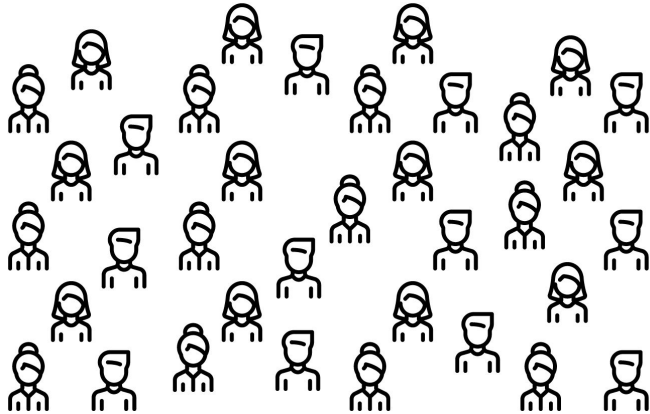
- Confidential, online survey fielded April 22 – May 12, 2021
- Sample included contacts from OHO's proprietary database of U.S. and international higher ed institutions
  - Additional respondents sourced via social media promotion
- Total of 163 respondents

# Survey focus areas:

- Higher education marketing teams':
  - Size and composition
  - Areas of responsibility
  - Metrics shared with leadership
  - Success factors
  - Covid-19 pandemic impacts

# Respondent characteristics

163 Survey Participants



Where they work at the institution:

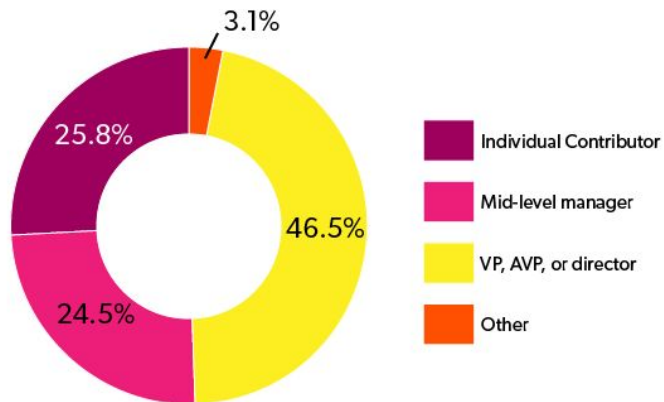


**61.3%** are part of a centralized marketing team

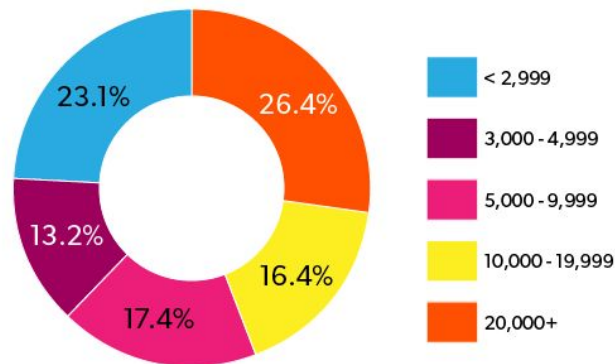
**32.5%** work in marketing communications, but not a part of the centralized team

# Respondent characteristics

Role

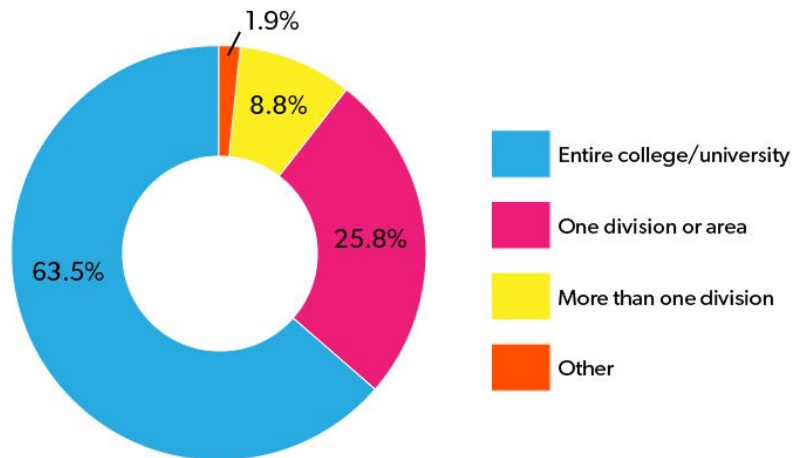


Total Enrollment of College/University

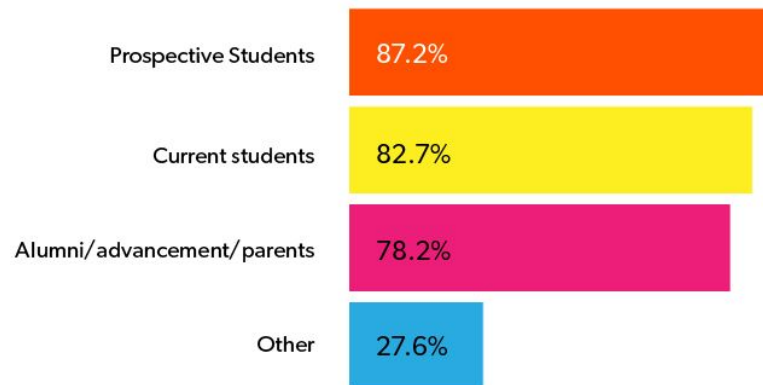


# Respondent characteristics:

## Areas Served By Respondents



## Respondent's Team's Work Supports





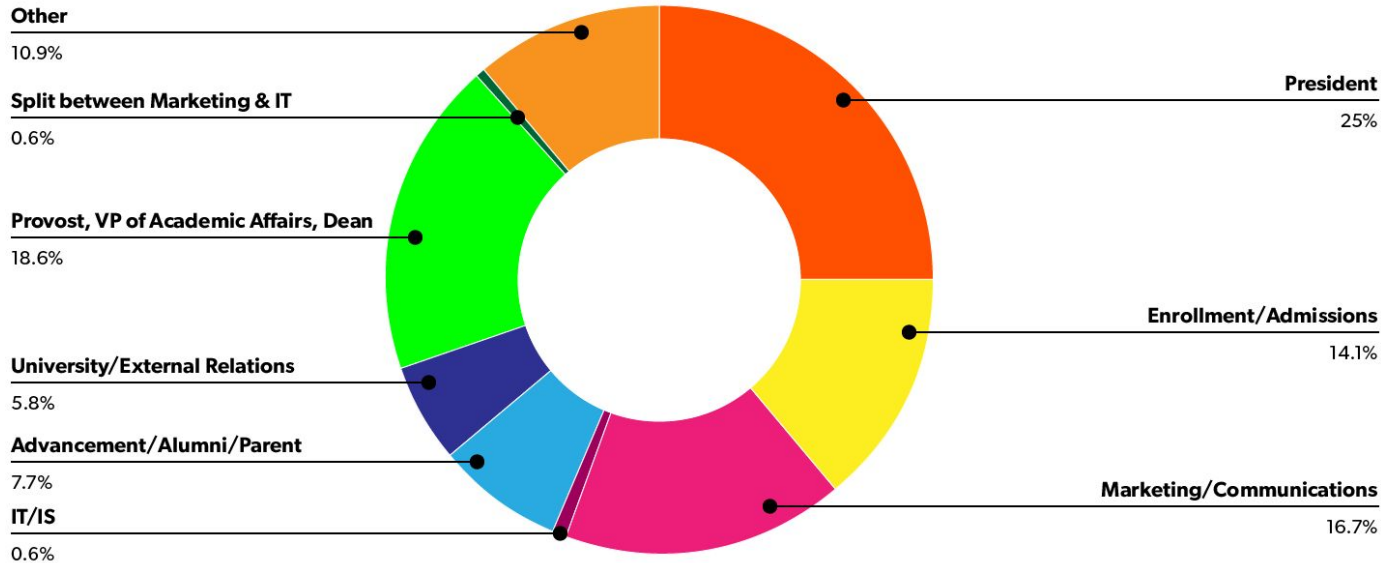


# REPORTING & COMPOSITION



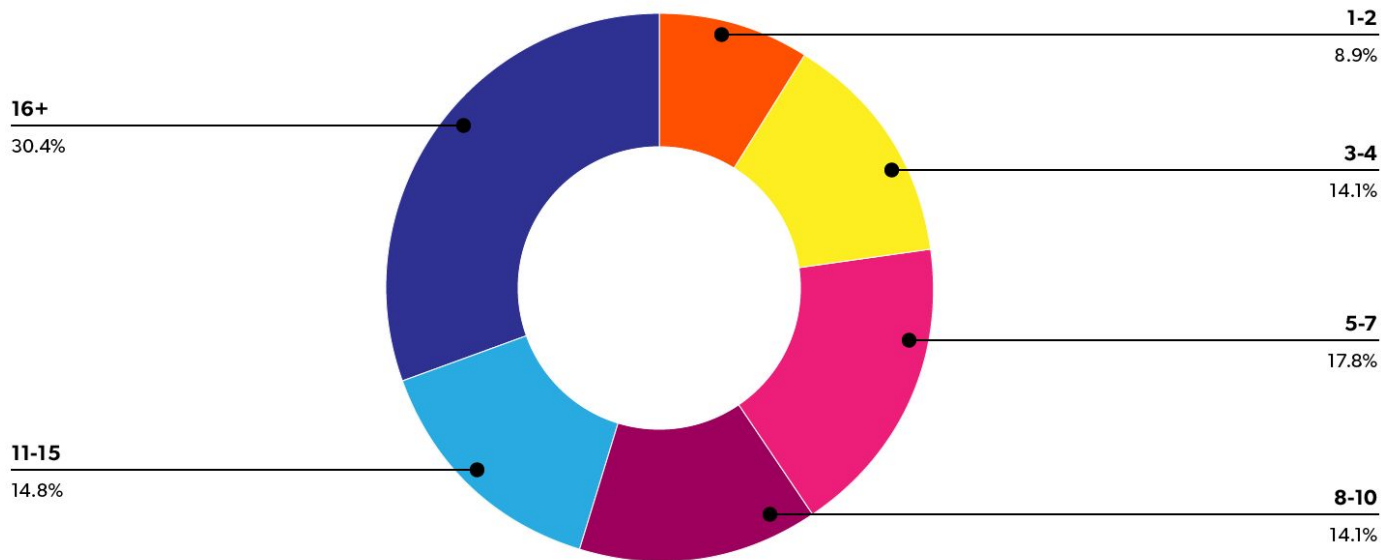
# Team Reporting

What primary leadership group does your team report to?



# Team Size

How many full-time employees are in your department?



# 46.7%

of marketing teams had 11 FTE or more

# FTE by Size of Institution



**5-10 FTE**

> 5,000  
Enrollments



**5-10 FTE**

5,000 - 9,999  
Enrollments



**16+ FTE**

10,000+  
Enrollments

# Roles in the Department

## 5 MOST COMMON ROLES (BY %)

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- Manager/Director (88.2)
- Social media coordinator/Mgr (88.2)
- Graphic designer (81.6)
- Writer/storyteller (80.9)
- Digital marketer (74.3)

## 5 LEAST COMMON ROLES (BY %)

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- System administrator (12.5)
- Community and government relations (21.3)
- UX designer (22.8)
- SEO specialist (22.8)
- Back-end/CMS developer (23.5)

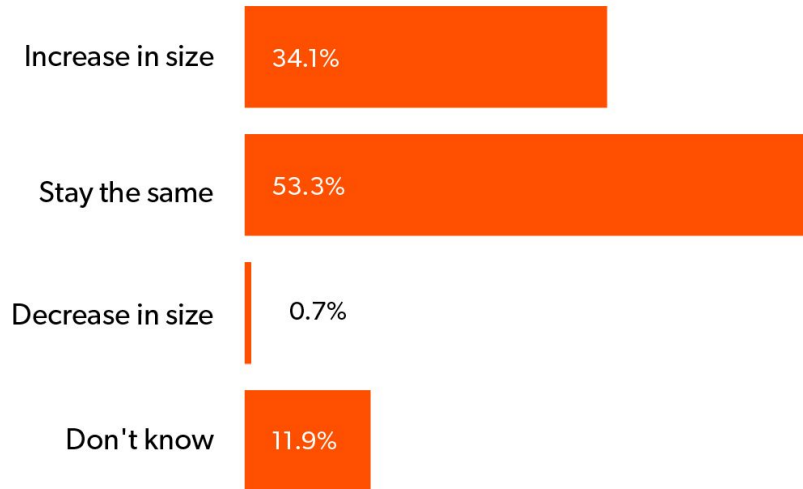
# 88.2%

of departments reported having these two roles:

**manager/director &  
social media coordinator/manager**

# Anticipated Changes in FTE

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





# 53.3%

are not anticipating the size of their teams will  
change in the next year or so

# RESPONSIBILITIES & SKILLS



# Most Common System Responsibilities

**84.7%**

## Website

While always a critically important tool for prospects, during the pandemic it also served as vital communication tool for the broader community.

**57.7%**

## Marketing/email automation

Whether it's Marketo, Pardot, Hubspot, or some other tool, marketing departments are increasingly responsible for email communications.

**52.6%**

## Event calendar

With in-person events quickly shifting to a virtual format or being postponed, event calendar management was more dynamic than ever.

**43.8%**

## Digital signage on campus

Promotions, wayfinding, and campus messages are often the role of digital signage. During the pandemic, they also helped to keep campuses safe.

3.8

Avg. number of systems respondents' departments  
oversee

*“We provide admission application, CRM, marketing/email automation, website, website chatbot, and event calendar for our continuing education division only – not the entire university.”*

Survey Respondent

*“To be clear, we partner with admissions on the application and CRM and partner with IT for web but not specifically on our team.”*

Survey Respondent

# Team Top 10 Skills

## HAVE ON THE TEAM CURRENTLY (BY %)

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- Content writing (93.3)
- Social media (92.5)
- Graphic design (88.9)
- Marketing strategy (88.1)
- Web strategy (83.5)
- Web analytics (82.8)
- Public/media relations (81.1)
- Content strategy (80.5)
- Project management (75.9)
- Digital strategy (72.6)

## PLAN TO ADD TO THE TEAM (BY %)

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- CRM/marketing automation admin (12.1)
- Content strategy (9.8)
- Email marketing drip campaigns (9.7)
- Digital marketing campaign measurement (8.8)
- Marketing analytics (8.8)
- Project management (7.5)
- UX design (6.2)
- SEO (6.0)
- Digital strategy (5.9)
- Web strategy (4.5)

# Top 10 Partnership Areas

## HAVE THROUGH PARTNER CURRENTLY (BY %)

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- Digital marketing campaign measurement (40.4)
- CMS development (39.5)
- SEO (38.3)
- Digital strategy (32.6)
- Web design (32.1)
- Web applications/integrations (31.8)
- UX design (30.0)
- HTML/CSS (26.9)
- Web strategy (25.6)
- CRM/marketing automation admin (23.5)

## PLAN TO ADD TO THROUGH PARTNER (BY %)

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- Marketing analytics (6.6)
- SEO (5.3)
- Digital marketing campaign measurement (5.1)
- CRM/marketing automation admin (4.5)
- UX design (3.8)
- CMS development (3.1)
- Email marketing drip campaigns (3.0)
- Web strategy (2.3)
- HTML/CSS (2.3)
- Web analytics & Marketing Strategy (Tied) (2.2)



# Top 10 Areas Not a Part of Future Strategy

## DON'T PLAN ON HAVING IN FUTURE (BY %)

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- UX design (17.7)
- Email drip campaigns (11.2)
- CRM/email admin (9.8)
- Project management (9.8)
- Web applications/integrations (9.3)
- CMS development (7.8)
- Public/media relations (7.6)
- Marketing analytics (6.6)
- SEO (6.0)

## DON'T KNOW (BY %)

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- Email drip campaigns (12.7)
- Web applications/integrations (12.4)
- UX design (10.8)
- SEO (9.0)
- CMS development (8.5)
- CRM/marketing automation admin (7.6)
- HTML/CSS (6.2)
- Marketing analytics (5.1)
- Content strategy, Marketing strategy, Project management (tied) (3.0)

**SERVICE-ORIENTED VS.  
STRATEGICALLY FOCUSED  
TEAMS**



# Service-oriented vs. Strategic

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

## Service-oriented

We “take orders” from other groups

## Strategically focused

We have a seat at the table and drive strategy



Average Response (61)

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**Service-oriented &  
strategic teams are  
similar in many  
respects.**

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# Service-oriented vs. Strategic

## SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES

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- Title: more likely to describe work as strategic if VP, AVP, or director.
- More likely to describe work as service-oriented if reporting up to marketing communications or external relations.
- Service-oriented less likely to have content or marketing strategists on their team.
- Strategic more likely to expect their institution to be open to remote employees.

## NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES

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- If they are a part of a centralized marketing team or not.
- By # of FTEs in their group/size of team.
- Size of institution.
- If they serve the entire institution or just a part of it.
- By audience (e.g, prospects, current students, faculty) they support.
- If they have or support fully online programs at their institution.

*“We have a huge information gap regarding conversions and can’t sync the website data with the enrollment data (people problems).*

*The institution still seems to think the viewbook is the primary touchpoint for prospective students, so metrics tend to be extremely siloed.”*

Survey Respondent

# Service-oriented vs. Strategic

## STRATEGIC TEAMS MORE LIKELY TO AGREE\*

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- 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.

## NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN AGREEMENT

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- Size of team needed to do the work.
- Budget needed to deliver results expected.
- Leadership commitment to digital-first approach.
- Communication is timely and clear.

\*Differences are statistically significant.

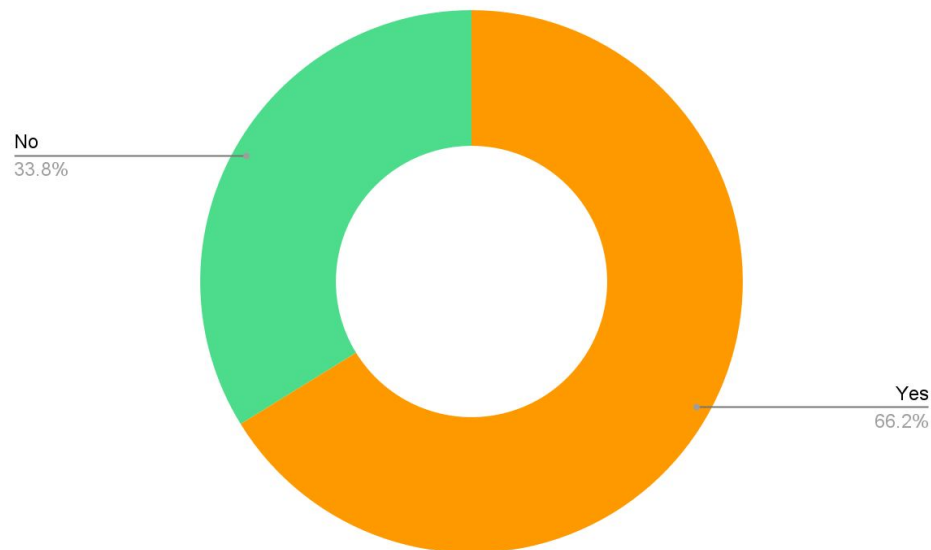
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# **METRICS SHARED WITH LEADERSHIP**





# Responsibility for reporting metrics to leadership



# 31.8%

provide website and digital marketing data  
quarterly to leadership.

# Metrics as Activities/Output vs. Outcomes

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

## Activities/Output

(e.g., number of pages published, views, social media posts)

Equal parts  
Output/Outcomes

## Outcomes

(e.g., number of conversions, leads, form completes)



Average Response (51)

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

“Because they lack depth of understanding about what data is truly meaningful, they typically are interested in visits/clicks (because that's a data point they've been seeing in reports for years).”

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**Conversions/requests for information (RFI)  
(26 mentions)**

“Conversions because they equal revenue.”

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**Admission funnel/application data  
(18 mentions)**

“Number of applications, quality of applicants, and number of enrollments are ultimately how exec leadership is evaluating return on marketing spend.”

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*“For advancement leadership—team culture/happiness/satisfaction, alumni engagement, dollars raised, annual donors.*

*We track these monthly on a division-wide growth dashboard.”*

Survey Respondent

*“Pageviews and sessions. We have not set up real goals (from leadership) in Google Analytics yet.”*

Survey Respondent

# Most Important Metrics to Leadership

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**Other website user behavior/data mentions)**

**(15**

“Pageviews; length of time on page; % of videos watched. They are mostly concerned with number of people who are engaging with our content, especially video content at this point in time.”

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**Deposits/enrollment (15 mentions)**

“The one thing that counts is the number of students who enroll. Yield, from apply to enroll, is another important metric.”

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**Costs/ROI (15 mentions)**

“ROI. Leadership doesn't typically understand the strategy or nuance to marketing, but is always concerned with our team.”

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*“[We report on] most viewed content (themes, stories, what is important to our audience) and KPI for strategic goals/plans (e.g., increase conversion of X audience through A, B, and C areas).”*

Survey Respondent

# TEAM SUCCESS FACTORS

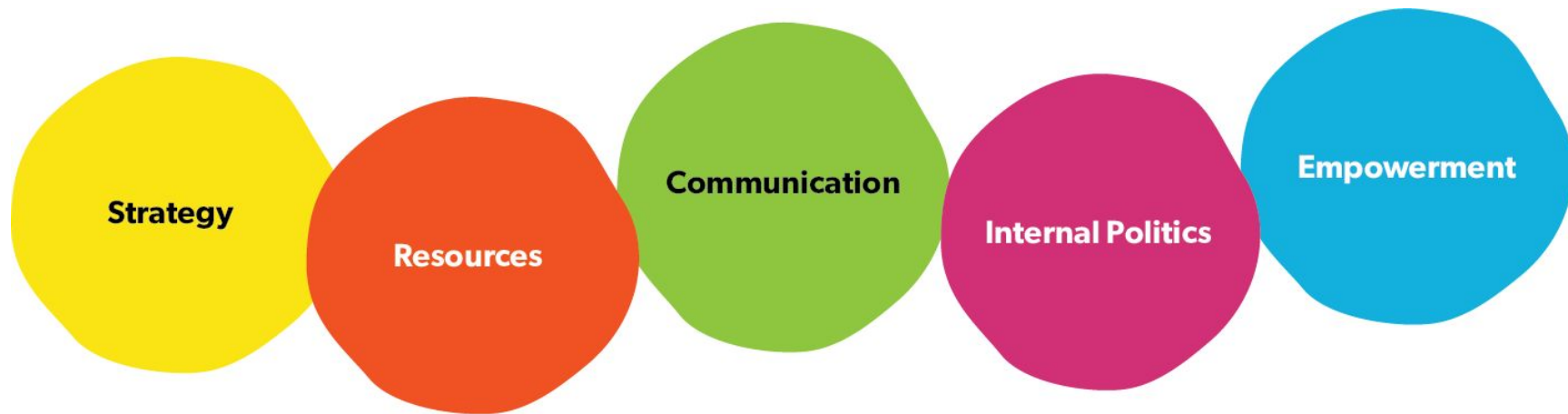




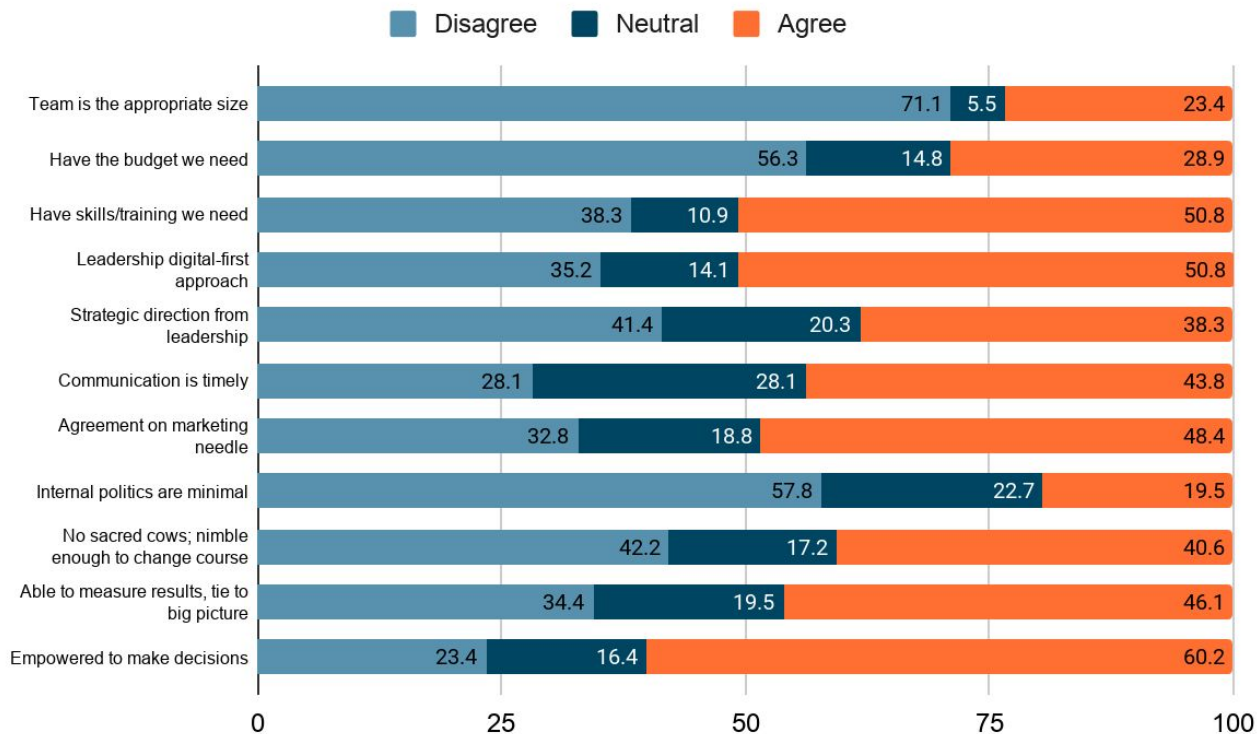
**It takes more than  
talent and drive to  
build a better  
marketing team.**



# Team Success Factors

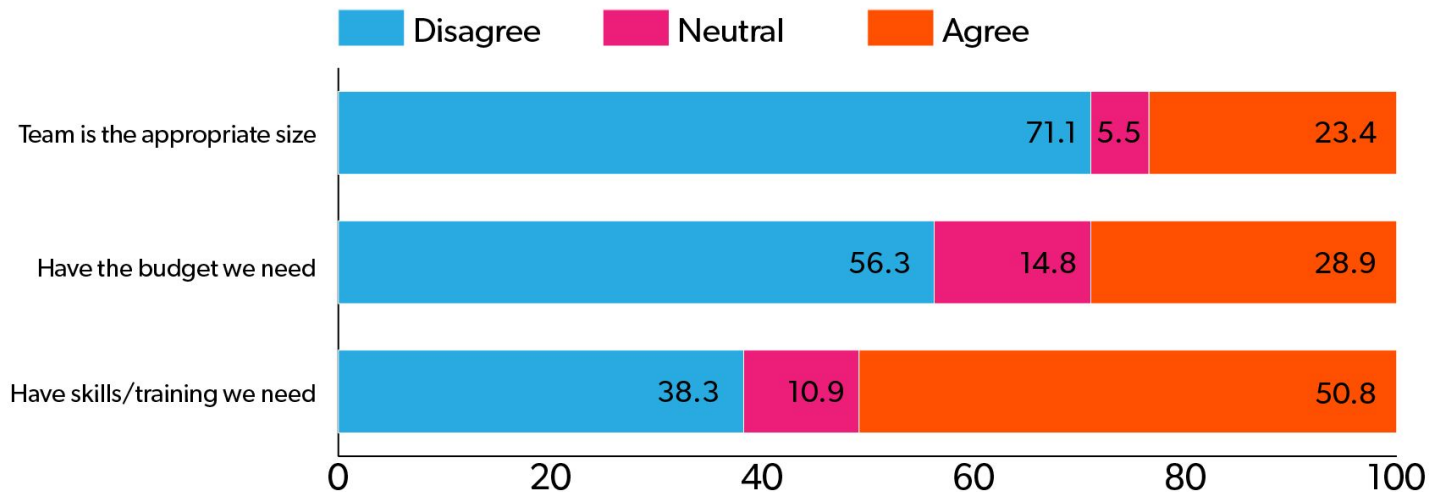


# Success Factor Summary



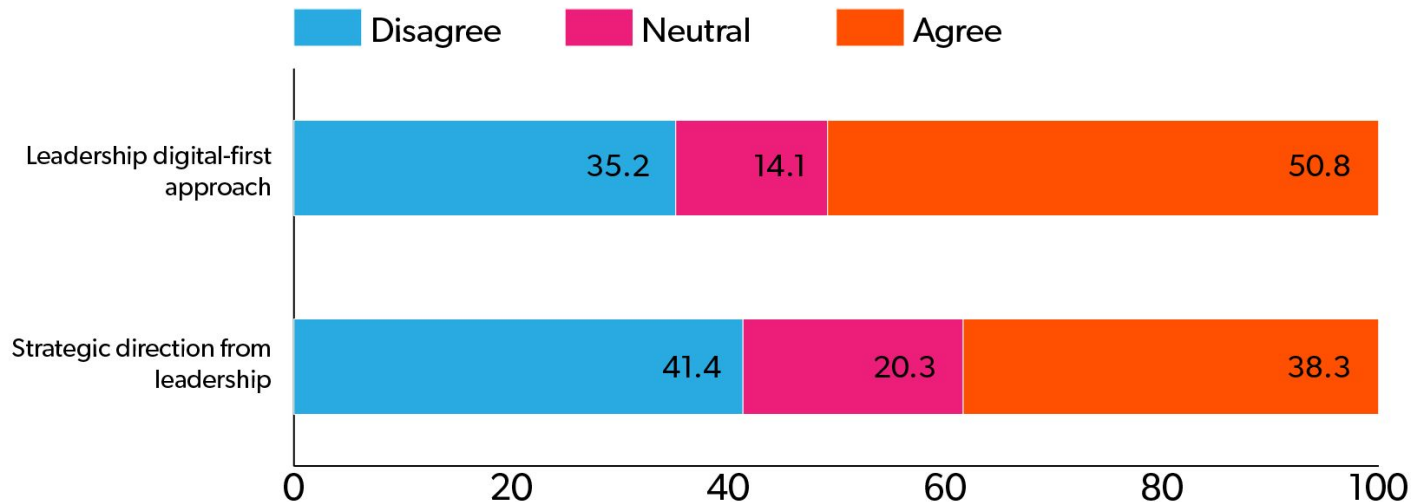
\*Due to rounding, some of the items add up to slightly more than 100%.

# Success Factor: Resources



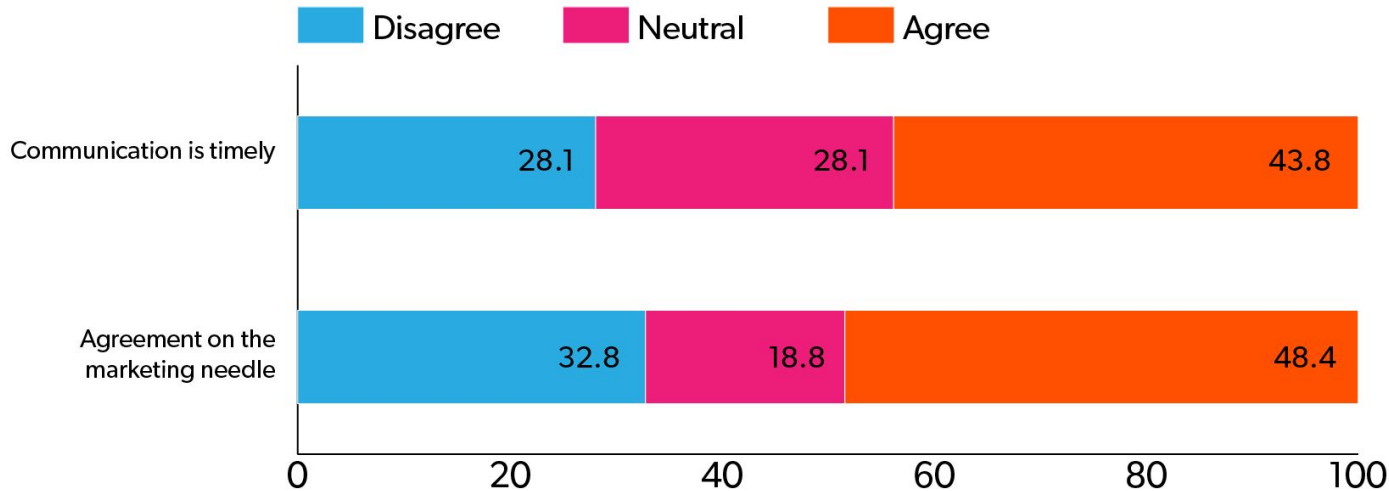
\*Due to rounding, some of the items add up to slightly more than 100%.

# Success Factor: Strategy



\*Due to rounding, some of the items add up to slightly more than 100%.

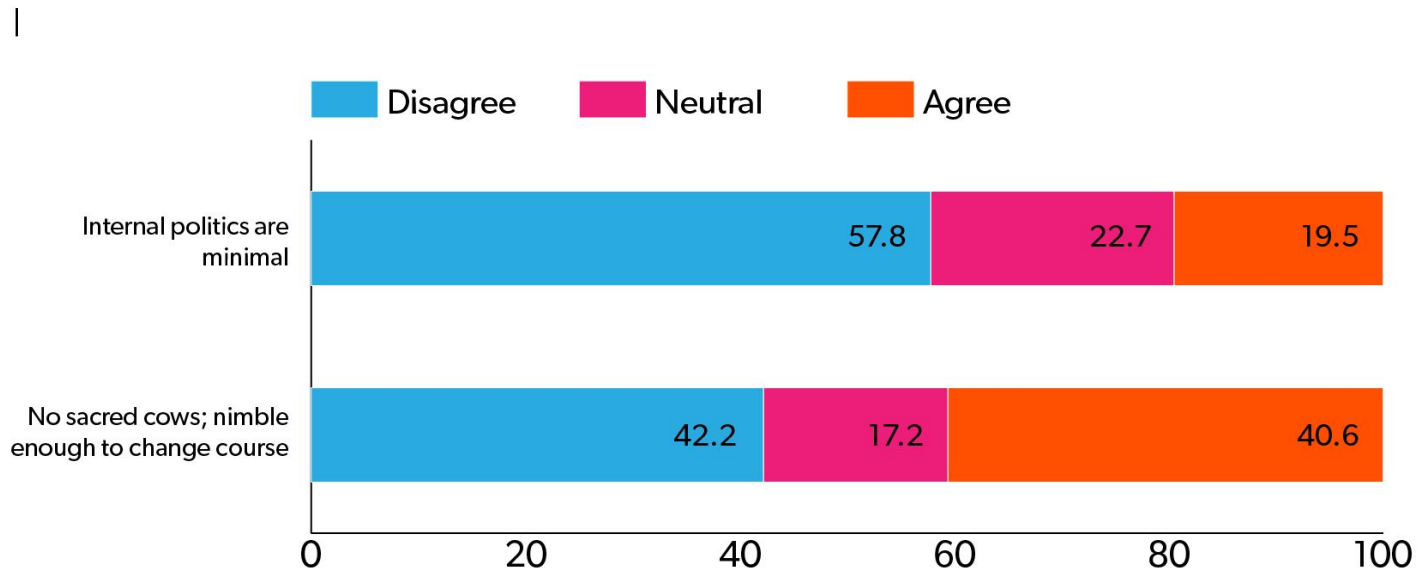
# Success Factor: Communication



\*Due to rounding, some of the items add up to slightly more than 100%.



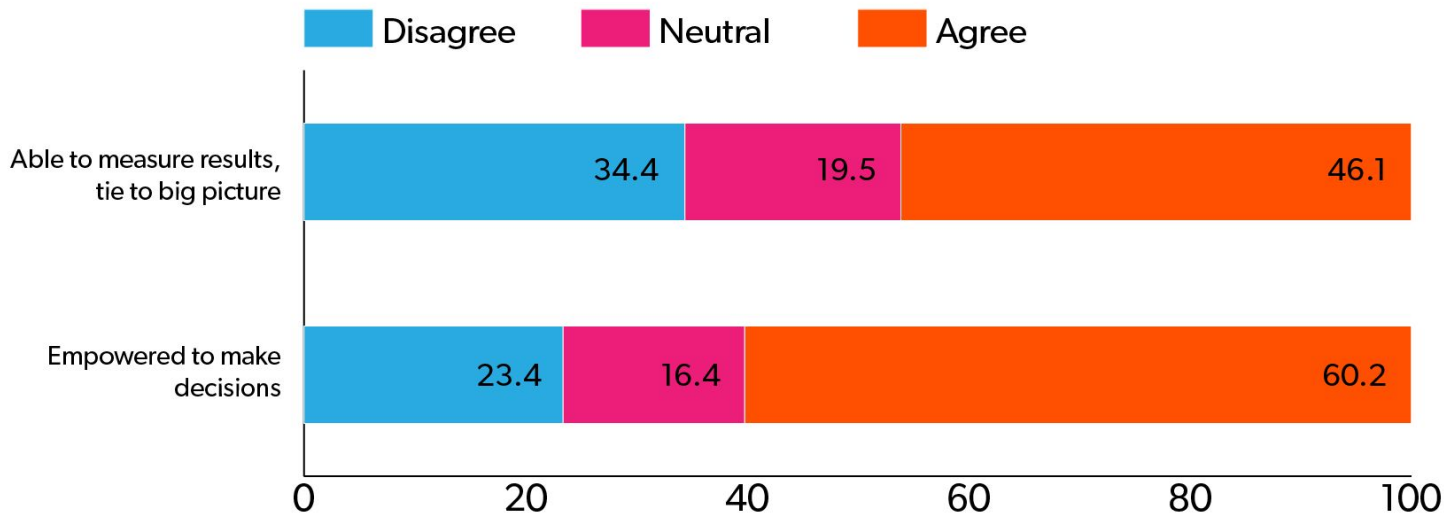
# Success Factor: Internal Politics



\*Due to rounding, some of the items add up to slightly more than 100%.

# Success Factor Summary

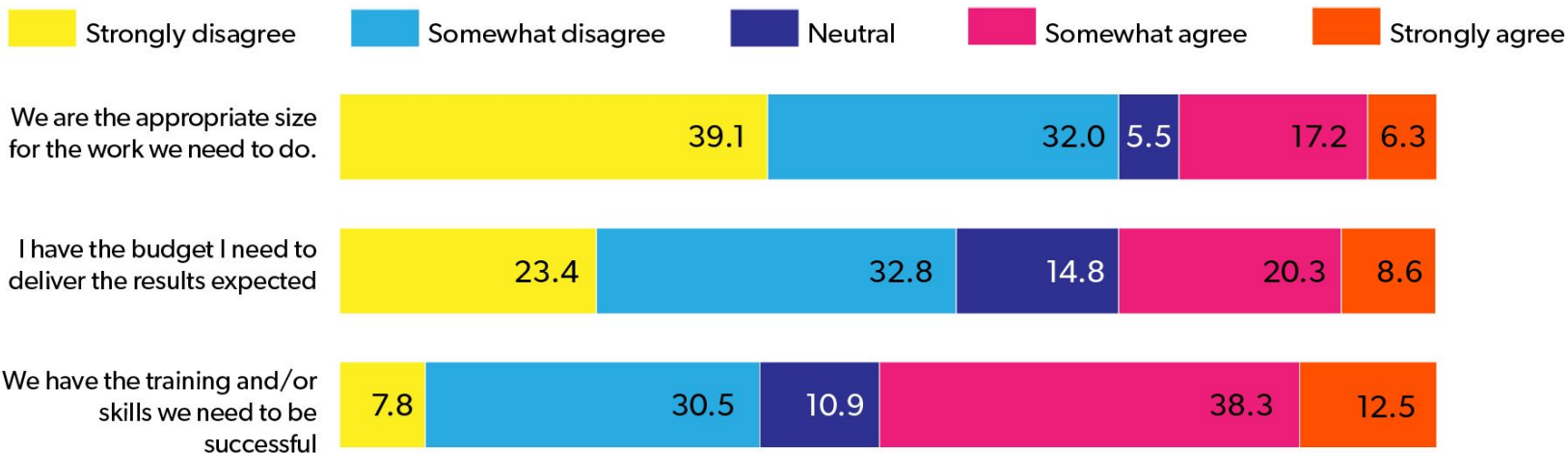
## Empowerment



\*Due to rounding, some of the items add up to slightly more than 100%.

# 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.

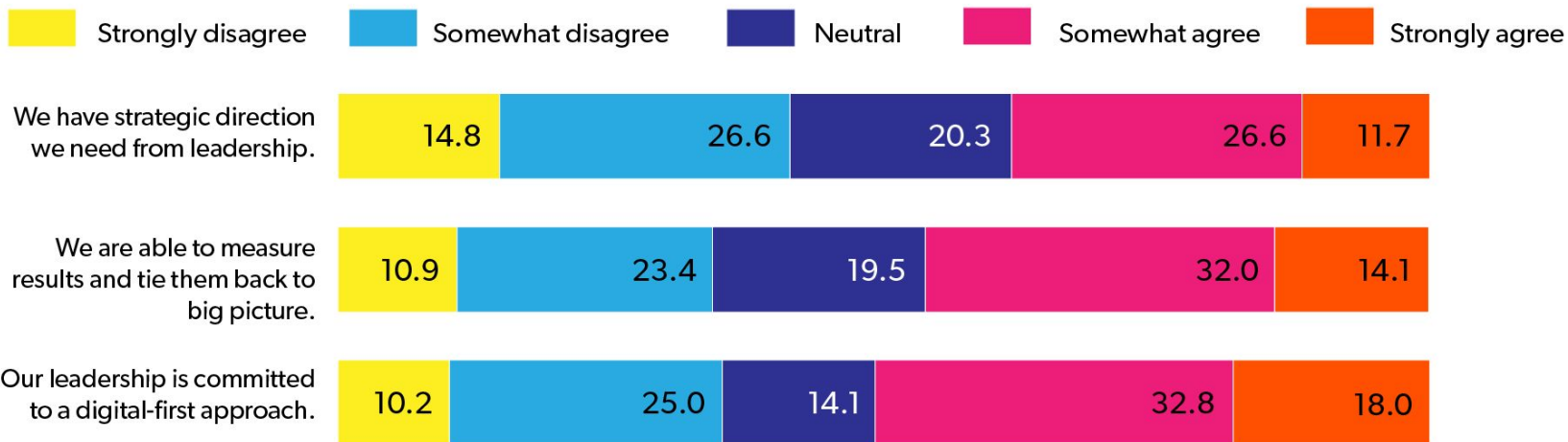


# 39.1%

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

# 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.

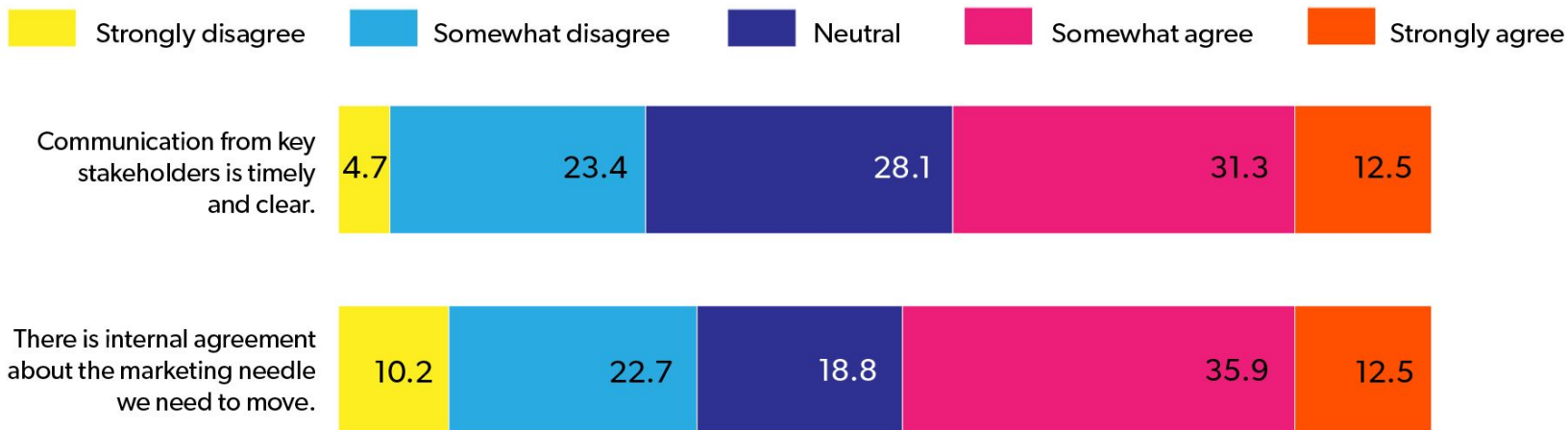


# 41.4%

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

# 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.



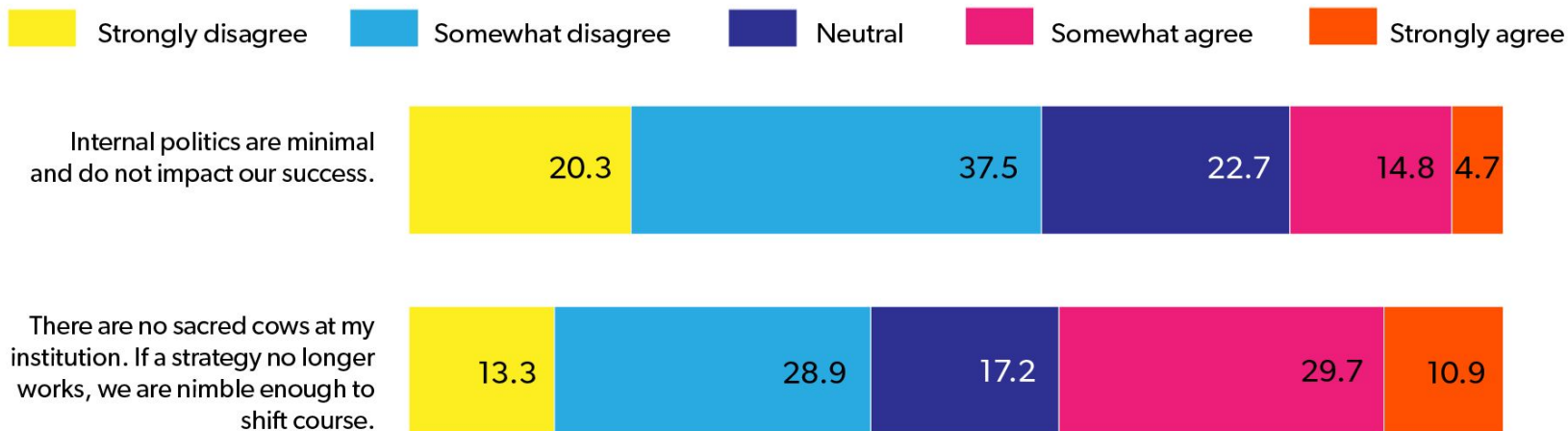
# 48.4%

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



# 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.



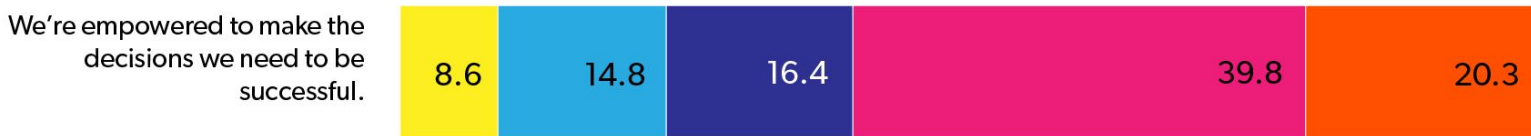
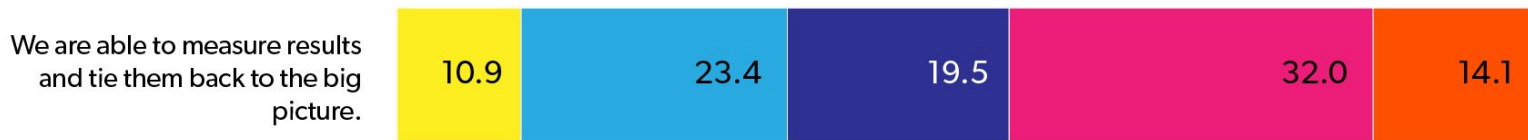
# 57.8%

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

# 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.

Strongly disagree    Somewhat disagree    Neutral    Somewhat agree    Strongly agree



# 14.1%

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

*“Leadership is looking for outcomes but systems aren't in place yet to easily report.”*

Survey Respondent

# PANDEMIC IMPACT



# COVID-19: Thriving vs. Reacting

At many institutions, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the work of higher education staff. Which of the following best describes how your department is doing, overall? On most days, are you...?

**Thriving and  
adapting**

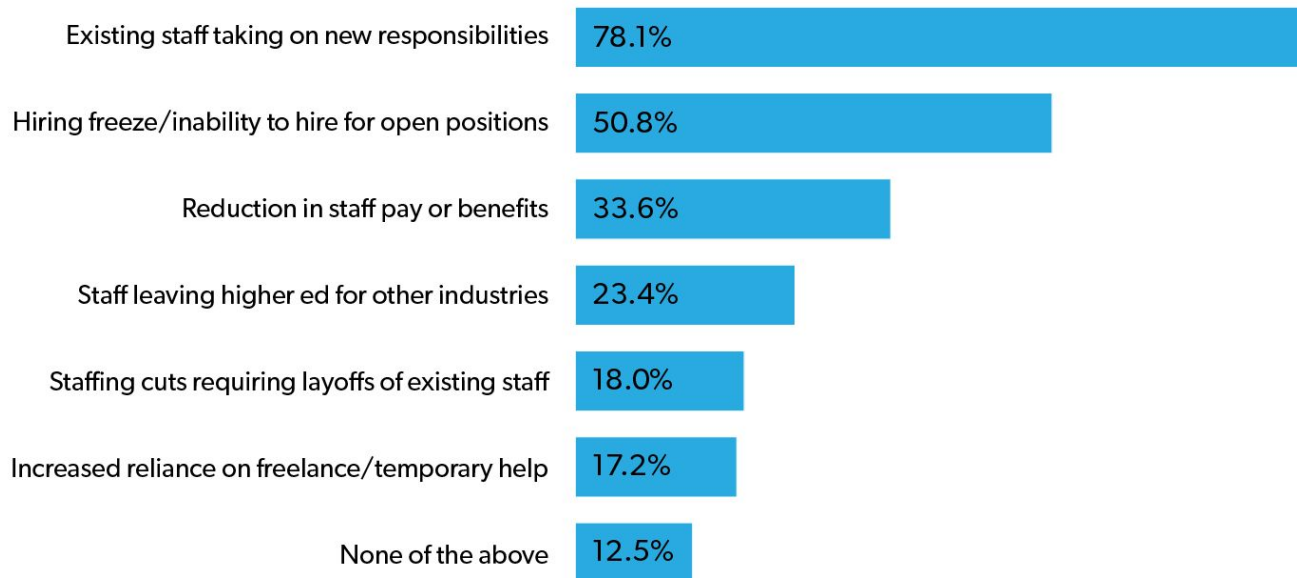
**Reacting and  
overwhelmed**



Average Response (51)

# Metrics: Staffing & Pay

In the 2020-2021 academic year, which of the following staffing impacts has the COVID-19 pandemic had on your department?



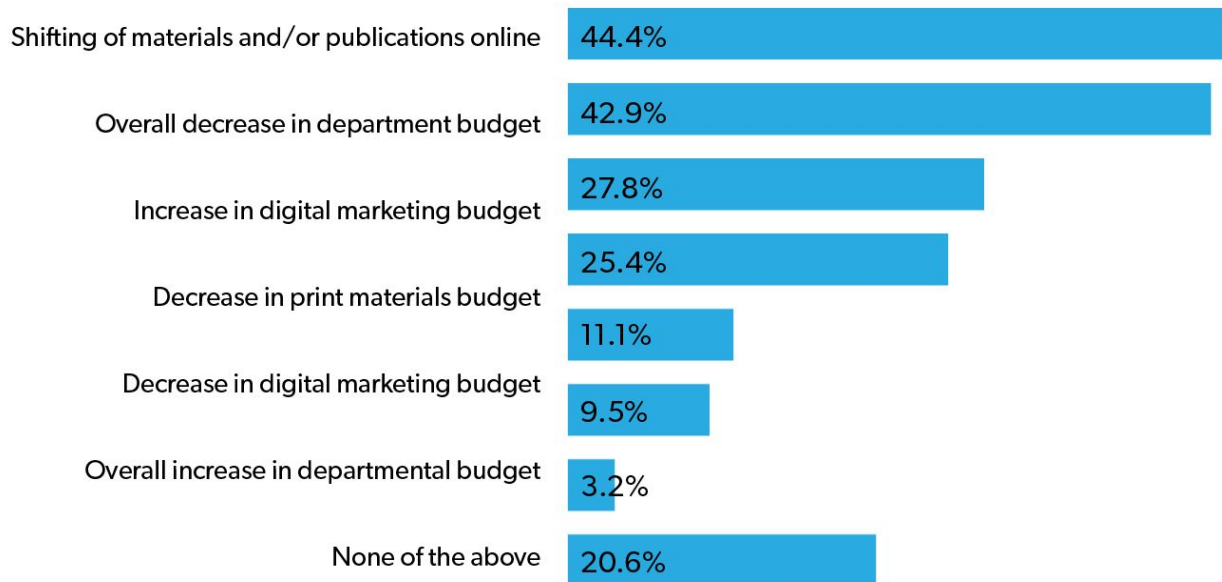


# 78.1%

of marketing staff took on new responsibilities  
during the COVID-19 pandemic.

# Metrics: Budget

In the 2020-2021 academic year, which of the following budgetary impacts has the COVID-19 pandemic had on your department? Check all that apply.



# 44.4%

of institutions shifted materials and/or  
publications online.

# Remote work?

44.5% said “yes,” their institutions are now more open to hiring remote employees.

# — DEMOGRAPHICS



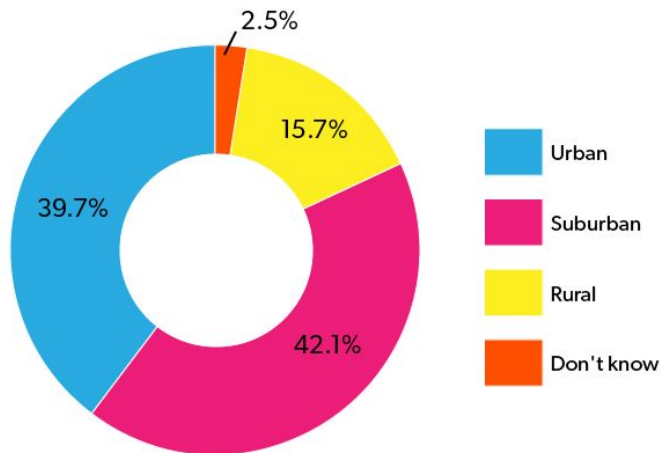
# Geography



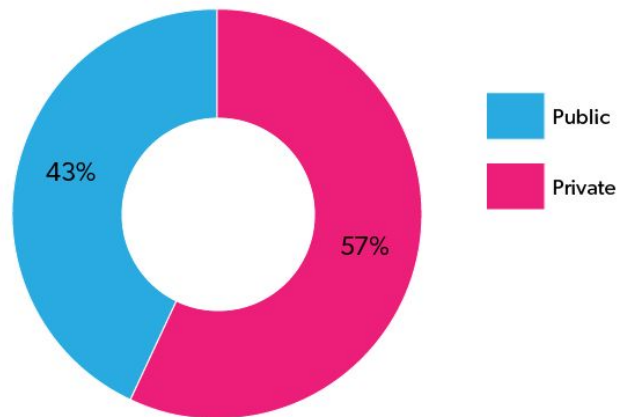
**35** states

**5.0%** international respondents

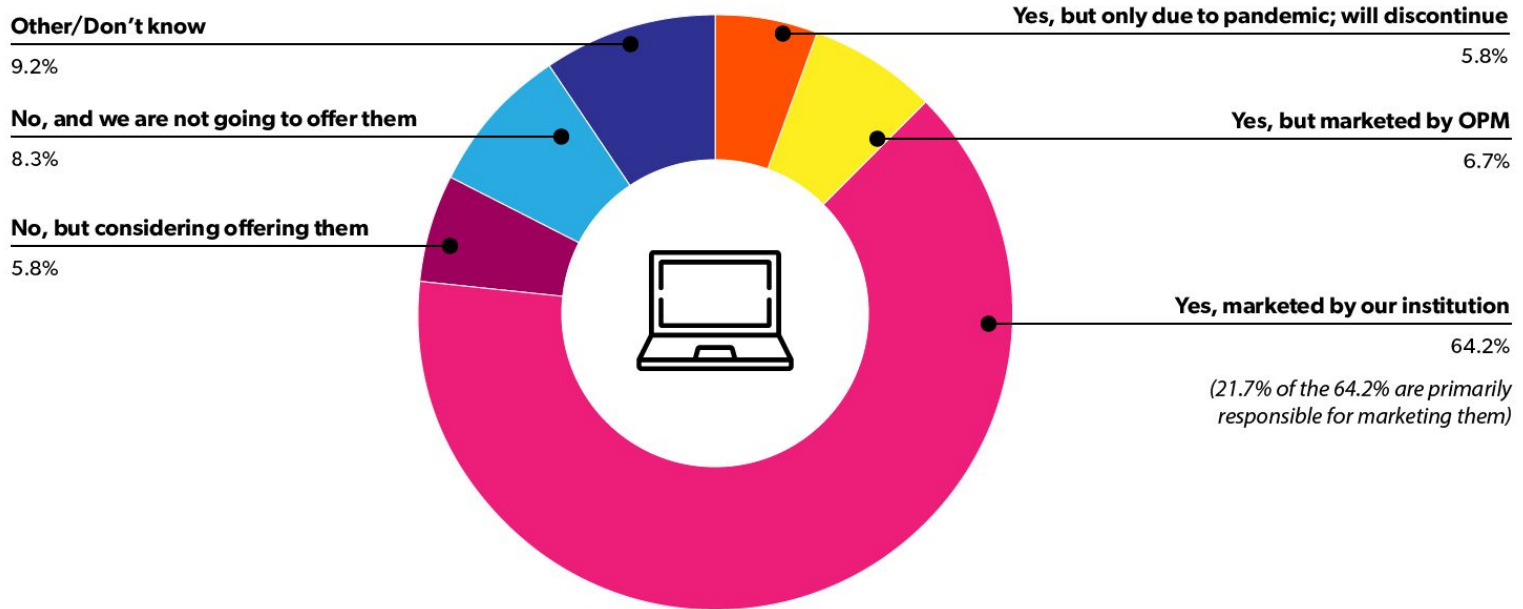
### Setting of Institution's Main Campus




### Type of Institution




# Offer Fully Online Programs



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**Thank you to all  
who participated  
in this survey!**

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