

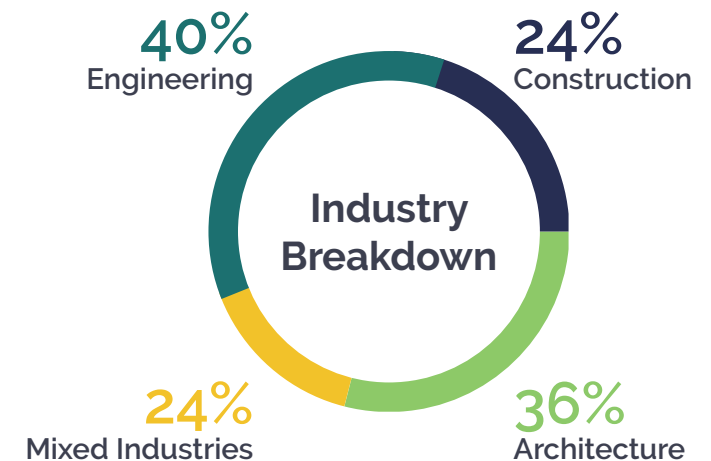
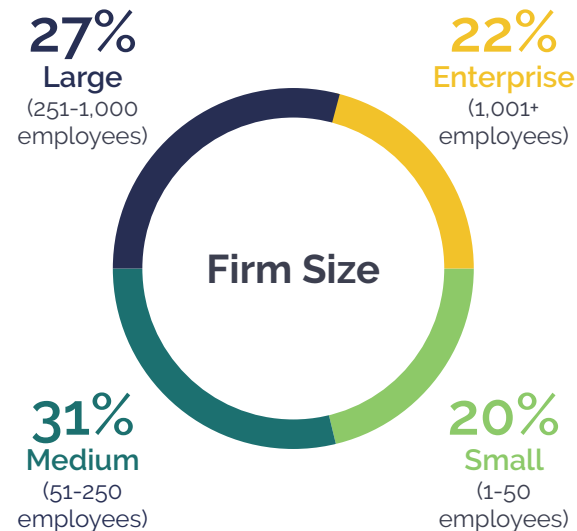
The 2024 State of AEC Marketing

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In the competitive AEC (Architecture, Engineering, and Construction) industry, marketing teams are under pressure to generate leads, nurture relationships, and build a strong brand reputation. However, with limited resources and fast-moving industry trends, knowing where to focus your team's efforts can be challenging.

This report dives into the results of a recent survey we conducted among AEC marketing professionals, spanning firms of all sizes. By understanding the activities they prioritize, the challenges they face, and the tools they utilize, we can gain valuable insights to help marketing teams across AEC thrive.

Survey Parameters: **360 Total Participants**



Note: The majority of participants reported they work in both the Public and Private sectors (**85%**) and some questions allowed respondents to select multiple answers.

**We have rounded all percentages to the nearest whole number. Rounding means some totals will not equal 100.*

Big Picture: 2024 Key Themes of the AEC Marketer

- 1 Marketing teams are small relative to the size of the firms they support: **69%** of participants reported their marketing team is **fewer than 10 people**.
- 2 Lean teams and a deadline-driven industry with competing priorities mean individuals may be **required to wear many hats** and have the potential to be understaffed and overworked.
- 3 Onboarding new technology and workflows is **difficult for small teams** that do not have interns, project managers, or additional headcount to help assist with the implementation process.
- 4 **Thoughtful resource allocation and ongoing leadership support** are vital for teams to overcome obstacles in AEC marketing workflow efficiency



Most Important AEC Marketer Activities

As part of our survey, we asked AEC marketers to rank their work activities in order of importance.

Here's what we found:

The Top 4 Most Important AEC Marketer Activities:

1. Pursuit Prepositioning & Business Development (BD) Support
2. Brand Building Strategy & Content Creation
3. Content Distribution & Unplanned Activities
4. Managing Data





**We then asked
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**Here's what we
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The Top 4 Most Frustrating AEC Marketer Activities

We then asked the same group to rank their most frustrating work activities. Here's what we found:

The Top 4 Most Frustrating AEC Marketer Activities:

1. Pursuit Prepositioning & Business Development (BD) Support
2. Brand Building Strategy & Content Creation
3. Content Distribution & Unplanned Activities
4. Managing Data

Interestingly, our data shows that the most important activities correlate with the most frustrating activities for AEC marketers. And with more than half of marketers contemplating a job change, it's vital to provide them with the proper tools and workflows to support their most important, yet also most frustrating work activities.





Now, let's break down each one of these activities to understand its impact on the AEC marketer.

Pursuit Prepositioning & Business Development (BD) Support

Pursuit Prepositioning & Business Development (BD) Support

Survey questions in this section included time allocation, tools used, types of collateral, pre-positioning activities, challenges, and potential opportunities for improvement.

Percentage of Time Devoted to Supporting Pursuit Management

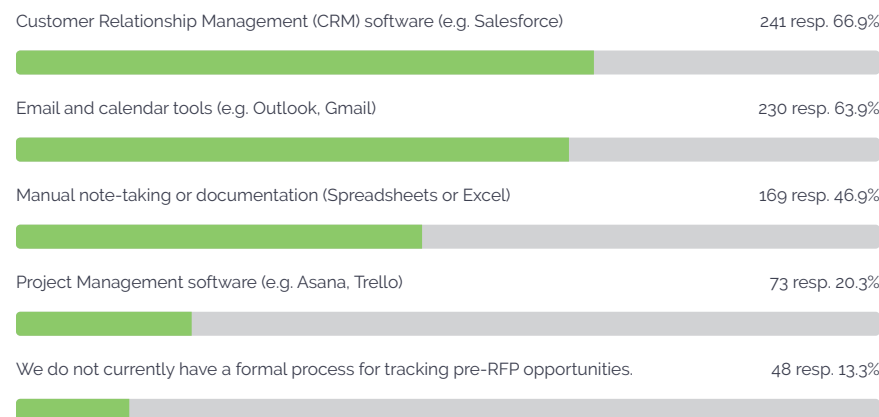
There was a diverse split across the responses reported. A lot of marketers don't spend much time on supporting pursuit management. At the same time, just as many marketers spend more than 50% of their time on this..

- The main trend to note was that large and enterprise clients consistently reported **'more than 50%'** of their time is devoted to supporting pursuit management.

Software Used to Help Manage Pursuits

When asked "What software(s) is used to help you manage pursuits, potential clients, or opportunities?" the top two types of tools mentioned were CRM software and email/calendar tools.

- **CRMs (67%)**
- **Email and calendar tools (64%)**
- The third top selection **(50%)** was manual note-taking within **spreadsheets /excel**



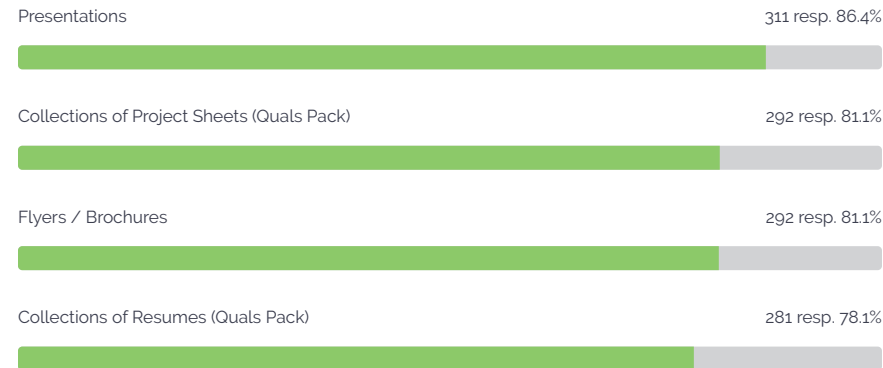
Note: OpenAsset has removed responses of "other" in the displayed data for clarity.

Key Insight: This data suggests that AEC Marketers spend considerable time in their CRM, email, and note-taking tools to manage their daily tasks.

Types of Collateral: Supporting BD/Sales Teams

When asked "What type of collateral does marketing create to support sales/BD?" the top type was **presentation support at 86%**.

- Tied at **81%** were **collections of project sheets** and **flyers/brochures**.
- **Resumes** were close behind at **78%**.



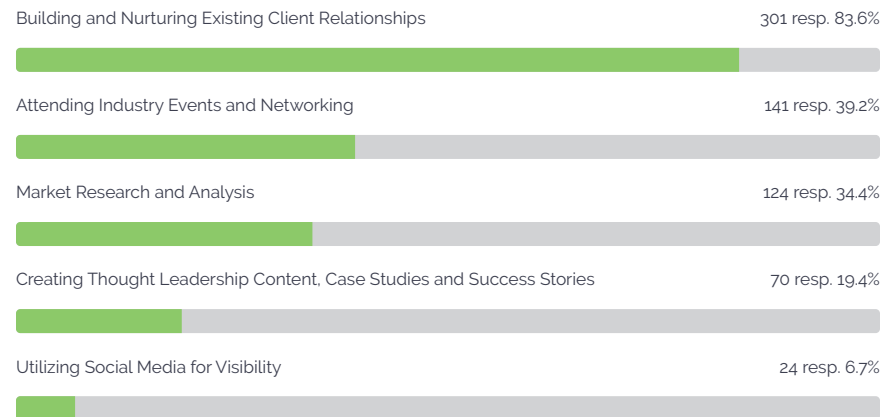
Note: OpenAsset has removed responses of "other" in the displayed data for clarity.

Key Insight: Presentations, project sheets, flyers/brochures, and resumes are the top collateral used to support BD and sales teams. This suggests a multi-faceted approach to communication and branding.

Most Important Pre-Positioning Activities

When asked “What are the most important activities involved in pre-positioning work?” respondents said **building and nurturing existing client relationships (84%)**.

- Second and third top selections included **attending industry events/networking (39%)** and **marketing research and analysis (34%)**.



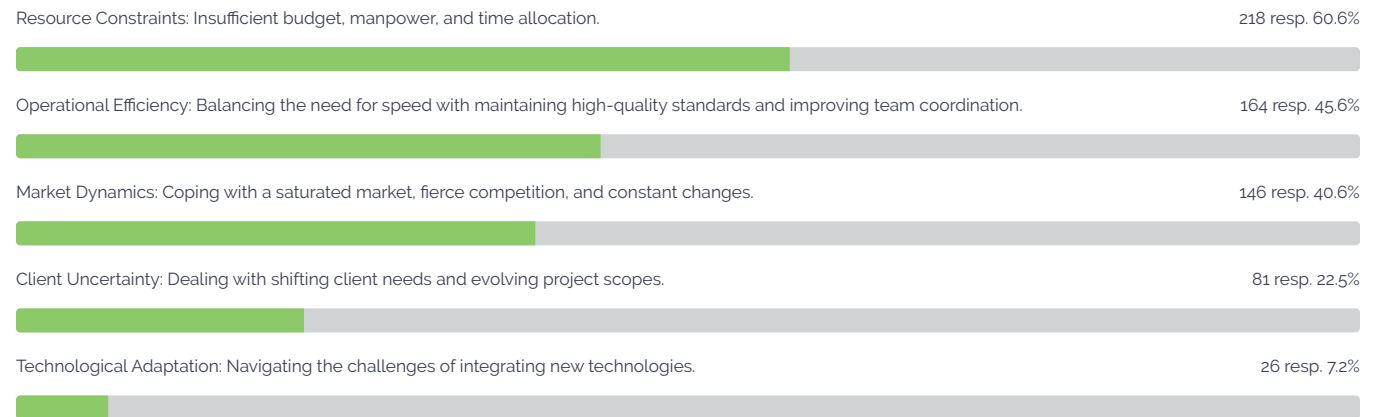
Note: OpenAsset has removed responses of “other” in the displayed data for clarity.

Key Insight: This data emphasizes the importance of networking and building relationships in the AEC space, particularly for winning more work.

Top Challenges in Managing Pursuit Work

When asked “What are your top challenges when managing pursuit work and supporting business development activities?” respondents singled out **resource constraints** as a top concern.

- The top challenges mentioned were resource constraints, managing insufficient budget resources, and time **(61% of respondents)**.
- Operational efficiency/balancing the need for speed, but producing high-quality content **(61%)** and market dynamics/competition **(41%)** were also notable challenges.



Note: OpenAsset has removed responses of “other” in the displayed data for clarity.

Key Insight: AEC marketers are expressing a lack of resources and efficiency needed to perform at their best, and it's paramount that leaders understand these challenges and look for ways to expedite and automate their processes.

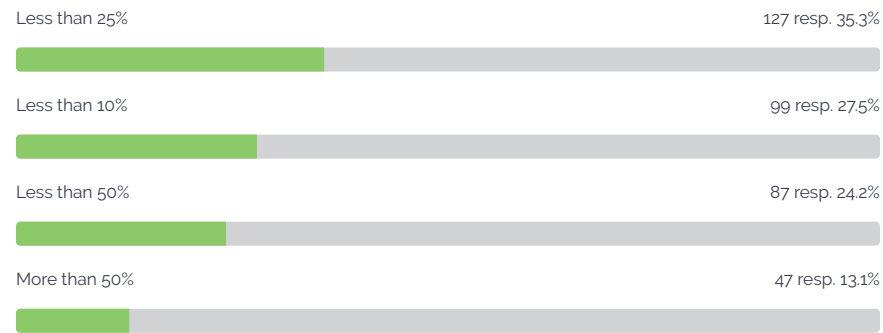
Brand Building Strategy & Content Creation

Brand Building Strategy & Content Creation

Percentage of Time Devoted to Marketing Strategy & Building Brand

When asked "What percentage of your team's time is devoted to marketing strategy/brand-building?" the majority of respondents (**35%**) reported less than 25%, with **27%** reporting that number to be less than 10%.

- This was generally consistent across all firm sizes, however, marketing teams of **only 1-5 people** were the highest group that **reported more than 50% of their time is used for pipeline generation**, suggesting a lack of resources to delegate their tasks.



Note: OpenAsset has removed responses of "other" in the displayed data for clarity.

Key Insight: Marketing teams primarily measure the success of their messaging through performance metrics, followed by brand perception and competitive edge, indicating a strategic focus on distinguishing themselves within the industry.

Percentage of Time Devoted to Creating and Writing New Content

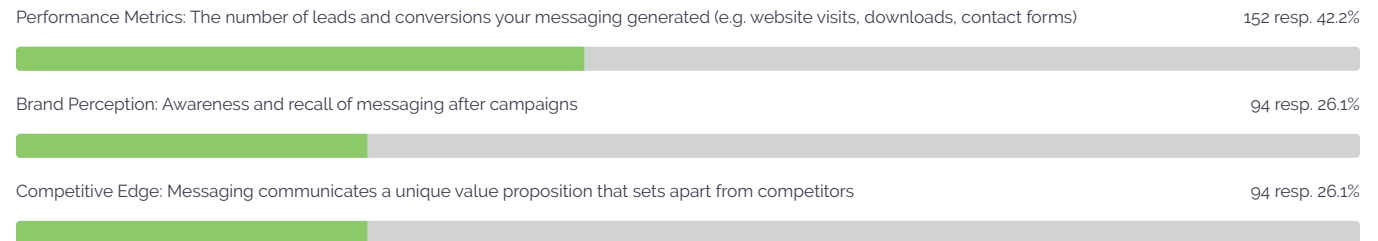
There was a diverse split across the responses reported. By a few percentage marks, just as many respondents chose 'less than 25%' and 'more than 50%' of their time is devoted to supporting pursuit management.

- The majority of respondents reported that less than 25% of their time is devoted to creating and writing new content **(40%)**.

Key Insight: The majority of respondents **(35%)** dedicate less than 25% of their time to building their brand and top-of-the-pipeline marketing strategy. Similarly, most **(40%)** spend less than 25% of their time on creating and writing new content. This suggests a lack of focus on proactive brand-building activities and content-creation efforts.

Judging Marketing Messaging

When asked "How do you judge the success of your marketing messaging?", the majority of marketing teams judge the success of their marketing messaging by 'Performance Metrics' **(42%)** with Brand Perception and Competitive Edge following in a tie at **26%**.



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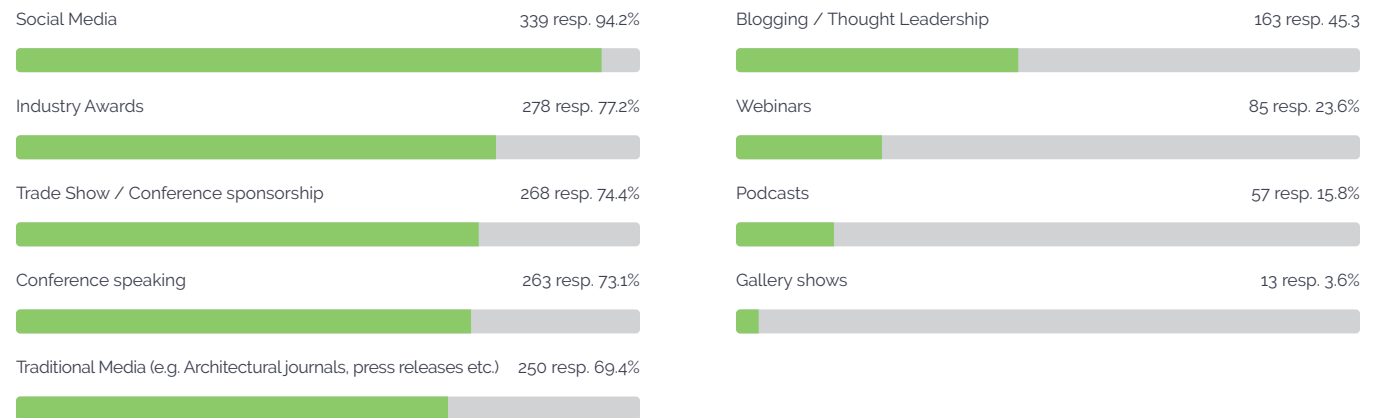
Key Insight: Social media, industry awards, trade show/conference sponsorships, conference speaking, and traditional media are the top activities selected for pipeline generation due to their ability to generate leads quickly. Blogging, webinars, podcasts, and gallery shows appear less prioritized, most likely due to their educational nature and position in the marketing funnel.

Other Activities for Pipeline Generation

When asked, "What marketing channels/activities do you engage with to build brand awareness and other pipeline generation?"

The top 5 activities selected were:

- Social Media **(94%)**
- Industry Awards **(77%)**
- Trade Show / Conference sponsorship **(74%)**
- Conference speaking **(43%)**
- Traditional Media (e.g. Architectural journals, press releases, etc.) **(69%)**



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Respondents were then asked to rank their team's marketing priorities from 1-11, with 1 being the most important, and 11 being the least.

Ranking Marketing Priorities: Top 3

1. Networking and relationship building.
2. Increasing brand visibility and recognition in the industry.
3. Generating high-quality leads for new projects

Ranking Marketing Priorities: Mid Tier

1. Enhancing digital marketing strategies for online presence
2. Improving client relationship management.
3. Developing effective content marketing showcase expertise
4. Strengthening social media engagement and outreach

Ranking Marketing Priorities: Bottom Tier

1. Implementing targeted advertising campaigns
2. Enhancing website functionality and user experience
3. Expanding networking and partnership initiatives.
4. Measuring and optimizing market ROI for better efficiency

Key Insights:

- Networking and relationship building rank highest among marketing priorities, followed by increasing brand visibility and recognition and generating high-quality leads for new projects. This underscores the importance of personal connections and industry reputation in driving business growth.
- Implementing targeted advertising campaigns, website functionality/user experience, building partnerships, and measuring and optimizing ROI are at the bottom. This could assume that AEC marketers are spread too thin to concern themselves with strategic concerns like targeted campaigns or ROI. AEC marketing leaders should assist their teams by prioritizing the ROI measurement of tools and processes where marketers do not have the bandwidth to do so.

Top Challenges When Implementing Successful Marketing Campaigns

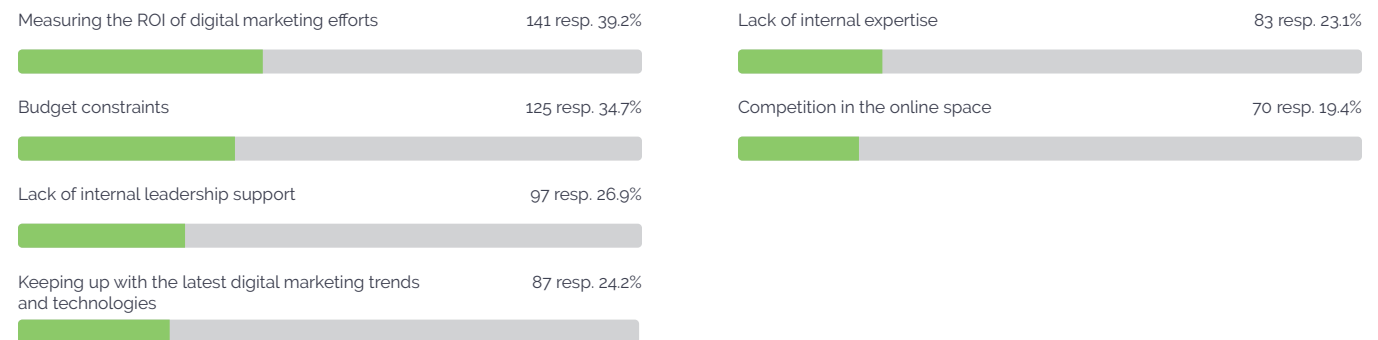
When asked “What are your top challenges when implementing successful marketing campaigns for your AEC firm?” respondents shared the following:

Top challenges when implementing marketing campaigns:

- Measuring the ROI of digital marketing efforts **(39%)**
- Budget constraints **(35%)**

The second tier of challenges included:

- Lack of internal leadership support **(27%)**
- Keeping up with the latest digital marketing trends and technologies **(24%)**
- Lack of internal expertise **(23%)**



Note: OpenAsset has removed responses of “other” in the displayed data for clarity.

Key Insight: Measuring the ROI of digital marketing efforts and budget constraints emerge as the top challenges, followed by a lack of internal leadership support and keeping up with digital marketing trends. These challenges reflect the complexities of modern marketing landscapes and resource limitations faced by AEC marketing teams.

Most Important Software Tools for Building Brand / Creating Content

The largest callouts of important software for branding building and content creation in AEC marketing were:

- Adobe Creative Suite / Cloud **(24%)**
- InDesign - **(14%)**
- Canva **(12%)**

Key Insight: Adobe Creative Suite/Cloud, InDesign, and Canva are the most commonly cited software tools for building brands and creating content, highlighting the reliance on design and editing tools for marketing endeavors.

Overall, these results suggest a need for marketing teams in the AEC industry to prioritize proactive brand-building activities, content creation efforts, and strategic measurement of marketing effectiveness. Additionally, there is an opportunity to leverage tools to overcome budget constraints, improve outcome measurement, and enhance storytelling capabilities.

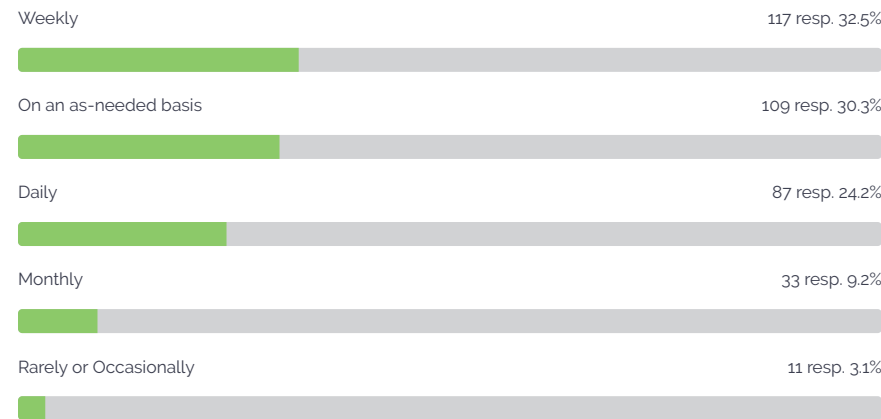
Content Distribution & Unplanned Activities

Content Distribution & Unplanned Activities

How Often Internal Teams Pull Existing Content

When survey participants were asked about content management tasks, they reported that they pull existing content for internal teams either on a weekly **(32%)** or on an as-needed basis **(30%)**.

- **24%** of respondents claim they provide content **daily** for their internal teams.

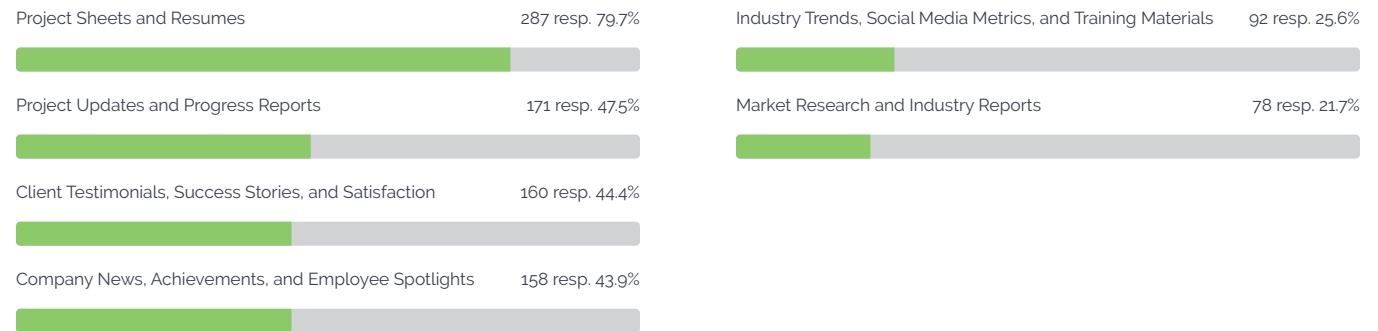


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Type of Content Being Pulled for Internal Teams

When asked about the type of content being pulled most frequently, respondents told us the following:

- Project sheets and resumes were the highest selected choice **(80%)**.
- Second was **project updates and progress reports (47%)**, with client testimonials, success stories **(44%)** and Company News third, Achievements, and employee spotlights a close fourth **(44%)**.
- Trends, market research, and industry reports were the least selected out of the options.



Note: OpenAsset has removed responses of "other" in the displayed data for clarity.

Key Insights:

- Marketing teams mainly provide existing content to internal teams on a weekly or as-needed basis. Interestingly, larger firms, particularly enterprises, tend to pull content daily, suggesting higher demand or more extensive internal communication needs.
- Project sheets and resumes are the most requested content, followed by project updates, client testimonials, success stories, and company news. Trends, market research, and industry reports are less frequently requested. To address both sets of common requests, marketing teams should focus their efforts on creating self-serve environments for the teams they support; freeing them up for more complex tasks and projects while ensuring brand consistency.

Access and Internal Requests

When asked about internal access to content and associated processes, respondents noted the following:

- **64%** of respondents claim that those who ask for content **have the access they need**.
- However, the majority of respondents report that there is no system or process in place when it comes to these types of internal requests for collateral (**54%**). Many of the 'other' fill-in options highlighted that this may differ across offices or there may be one in place, but it may not be adhered to.
- **33%** report that content requests are submitted according to guidelines set by the marketing team (which is not a centralized software system).
- Smaller firms and smaller marketing teams (1-5) are more likely to **not have a formalized process**, and larger firms are **more likely to have software** in place for these types of requests.

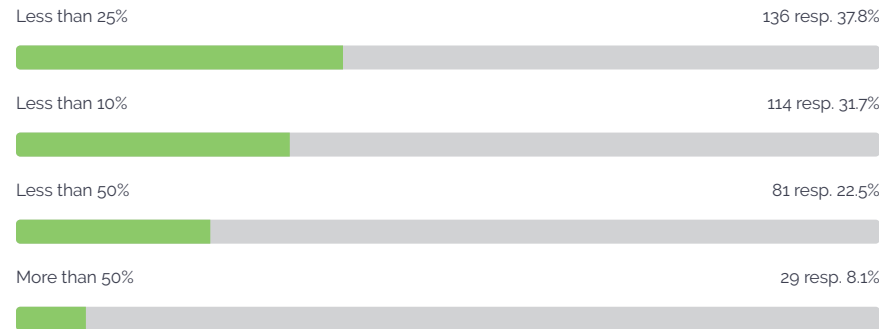
Key Insight: The majority of respondents indicate that internal teams requesting content have the necessary access. However, a significant percentage report occasional access issues or difficulties finding content. The majority of firms need a formalized system or process for managing internal requests. A digital asset management (DAM) system works to alleviate this common pain point for AEC marketers by providing both the accessibility and the security that the nature of their work demands.

Managing Data

Managing Data

Percentage of Time Devoted to Managing Data

When asked “What percentage of your team's time is devoted to managing data?” the majority of respondents (**69%**) said **less than 25%**, with **32%** of those stating that number is **less than 10%**.



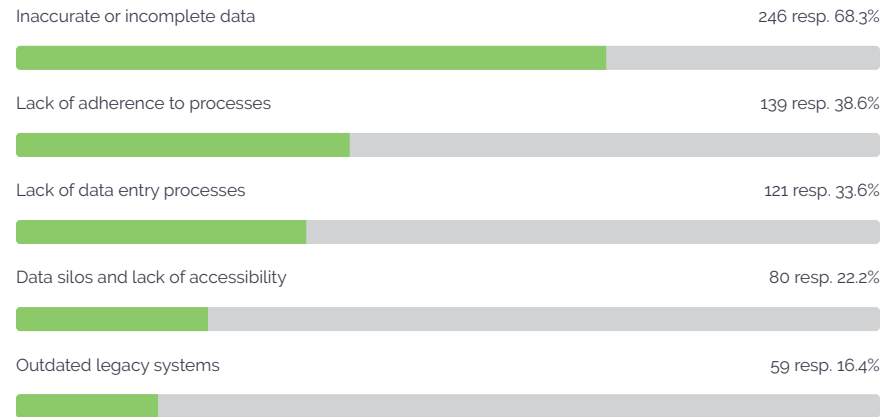
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Key Insight: Despite the importance of data, a significant portion of marketing teams spend relatively little time managing it, potentially due to time constraints and limited resources. However, the actual time required for effective data management may be underestimated.

Challenges in Database Management

When asked, "What are the biggest challenges you face in database management?" respondents noted their greatest challenge was inaccurate or incomplete data **(68%)**.

- **Lack of adherence to processes** followed at **39%**, and **lack of data entry processes** followed at **34%**.



Note: OpenAsset has removed responses of "other" in the displayed data for clarity.

Key Insight: Inaccurate or incomplete data poses the most significant challenge, followed by a lack of adherence to processes and data entry standards. These challenges may result from manual data entry processes and the absence of automated validation tools.

Ensuring Data Integrity

When asked “How do you ensure a culture of data integrity?” here's what respondents shared:

- **Encouraging accountability** for data accuracy among team members (**57%**), and **establishing clear data entry standards and guidelines** came second (**52%**) were the top two selections for ensuring data integrity.

Key Insights:

- Only **16%** reported utilizing **automated tools for data validation and accuracy**, meaning their data entry is manual and potentially tedious.
- Marketing teams' methods for data integrity essentially rely on their team's good faith: a team that is generally overworked and under-resourced. Marketing teams may benefit from investing in automated tools for data validation and accuracy to streamline data management processes and reduce errors.

By addressing these key takeaways AEC marketing teams can become more efficient, effective, and strategic in their efforts. To take the first step in enhancing your team's productivity, schedule a demo with a digital asset management expert at <https://openasset.com/request-a-demo/>

Final Takeaways

Focus on Proactive Marketing:

- The survey data suggests a potential **underinvestment** in proactive brand-building activities and content creation.
- Marketing teams have an opportunity to **prioritize strategic marketing efforts** beyond just supporting pursuits to shift their workloads to proactive endeavors. This more strategic, zoomed-out approach to marketing can lead to higher win rates and more effective proposals.

Data Management Needs Improvement:

- A significant portion of time is spent managing data, but challenges remain with **data accuracy and incomplete information**.
- Marketers can invest in **tools and technology automation** to streamline data management and reduce errors.

Resource Constraints are a Major Hurdle:

- Marketers report feeling **overwhelmed** by the volume of pursuit support activities and content creation needs.
- Teams should explore ways to **automate tasks streamline workflows and eliminate redundancies** to free up time for strategic marketing initiatives.

Importance of Networking and Relationships:

- Building and nurturing relationships remains a top priority for AEC marketers.
- In order to be most effective, AEC marketers should **invest in networking opportunities** and industry events to build brand awareness and generate leads.

Final Takeaways, cont'd

Content is King (But Underutilized):

- Project sheets and resumes are the most requested content, but trends and market research should be utilized more in creating content resources.
- AEC marketers should prioritize developing a content strategy catering to both internal and external audiences to promote their brand. Creating and maintaining a consistent content library helps prospects and customers understand the brand story, view recent projects, and learn more about the business.

Technology Can Bridge the Gap:

- Many marketing teams lack a **formalized system** for managing internal content requests; leading to disparate processes and added confusion.
- AEC leaders should consider implementing a **digital asset management (DAM) system** for improved accessibility and organization across all contributors within AEC marketing.

By addressing these key takeaways AEC marketing teams can become more efficient, effective, and strategic in their efforts. To take the first step in enhancing your team's productivity, schedule a demo with a digital asset management expert at <https://openasset.com/request-a-demo/>

Special Thanks:

We extend our gratitude to Julie Shaffer of Shaffer Creative, Rachelle Ray of RMR Consulting, and all the AEC marketers and partners that helped to contribute to this report.