

Marketing Automation: A View from the C-Suite



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Marketing Automation: A View from the C-Suite -- helpful stats from @ClickDimensions and @Ascend2research

Methodology

Ascend2 benchmarks the performance of popular digital marketing strategies and tactics using a standardized questionnaire and a proprietary 3-Minute Survey format.

This survey was fielded to a panel of research subscribers and marketing influencers by Ascend2 during the week of April 2, 2017.



Marketing Automation: A View from the C-Suite



In short, marketing automation is the technology that helps companies attract and nurture leads and customers. While once used by only the largest companies and often those in high-tech industries, the technology is now implemented by small and mid-sized businesses and across industries.

And marketing automation isn't just for marketing anymore. Organizations today count on marketing automation to make their marketing, sales and customer experience initiatives more efficient and effective.

But what is the C-suite expecting from marketing automation in the year ahead?

To find out, ClickDimensions, in partnership with Ascend2, fielded the State of Marketing Automation Survey.

The data in this edition of the study, titled *Marketing Automation: A View from the C-Suite*, exclusively represents the opinions of the C-level leaders completing the survey. We thank these busy professionals for sharing their valuable insights with us, and you.

This research has been produced for your use. Put it to work in your own marketing strategy – whether to align your objectives with the C-suite or to convince executives to invest in a marketing automation solution. Clip the charts and write about them in your blog or post them on social media. Please share this research credited as published.

Enjoy!

Survey Respondents

N =76 C-Level Leaders

Number of Employees

More than 500 = 37%

50 to 500 = 34%

Fewer than 50 = 29%

Primary Marketing/Sales Channel

B2B (Business-to-Business) = 53%

B2C (Business-to-Consumer) = 26%

B2B and B2C Equally = 21%



Important Strategic Objectives



C-level decision-makers are looking at top line results such as acquiring more customers, as well as bottom line results like increasing marketing ROI.

To accomplish these objectives, marketing productivity will need to be optimized, and marketing and sales teams better aligned, the next most important priorities.

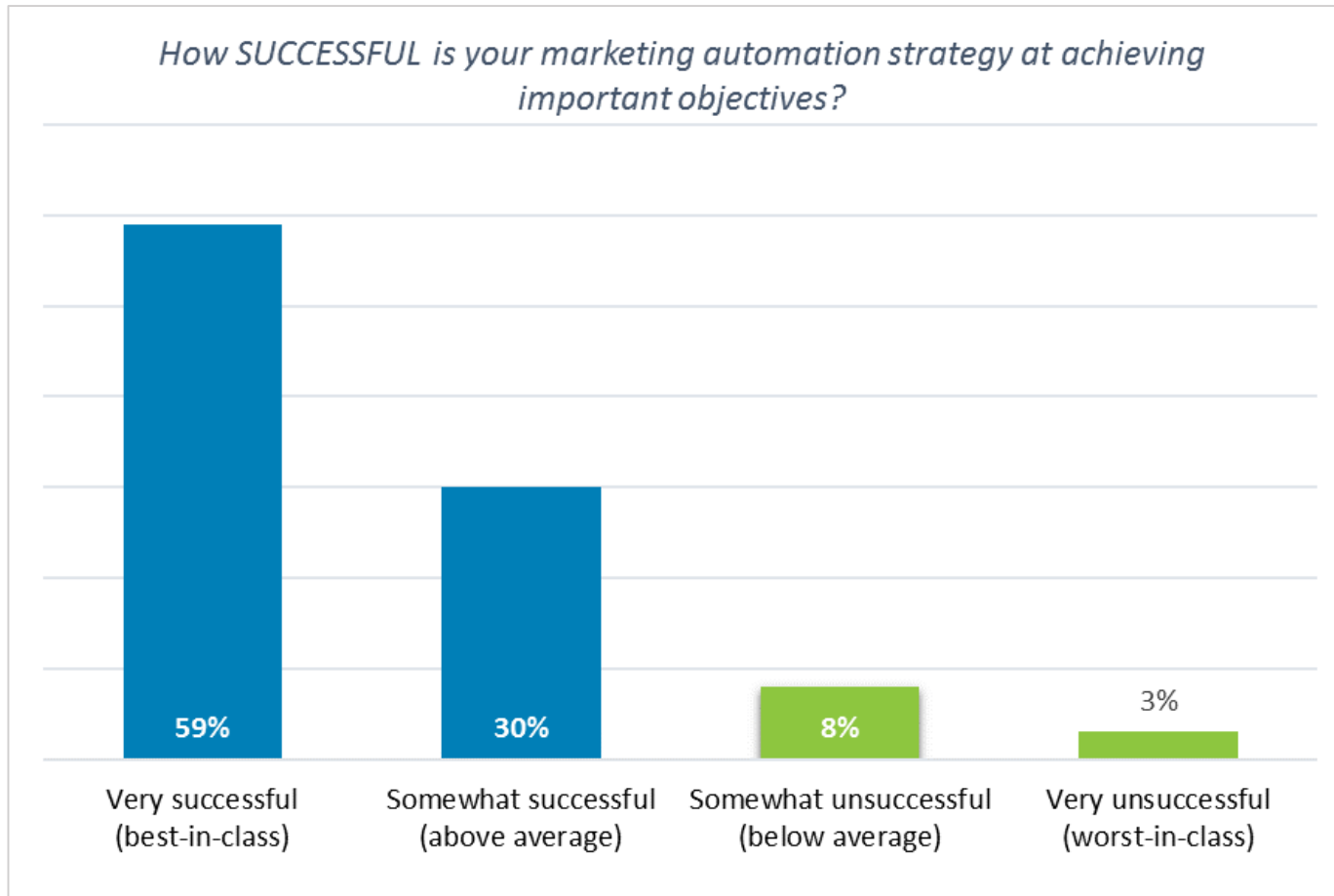
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C-suite says most important objective of a #marketingautomation strategy = acquiring more customers



Rating Strategic Success



59% of C-level decision-makers consider their marketing automation strategy very successful at achieving important objectives, describing it as “best-in-class.”

30% consider their strategy somewhat successful while the remaining 11% are still struggling to achieve success.

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Nearly 90% of C-suite leaders say #marketingautomation is successful at achieving objectives



Challenges to Success

What are the most critical CHALLENGES to achieving marketing automation success?



There are many challenges competing for the top spot, however, 42% of C-level leaders consider acquiring more customers and increasing marketing ROI among the most critical challenges to success.

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#marketingautomation challenges?
Acquiring more customers & increasing marketing ROI, say C-suite leaders



Making the Business Case for Marketing Automation



Marketers can sometimes face a sizable obstacle in the purchase of marketing automation technology – their company's C-suite.

The biggest challenge is often this: marketing has a persistent image problem. Many executives still don't see marketing as a revenue-driving function, but as a cost center. The impression from the C-suite can often be that marketing teams are too focused on creative and social media, not lead generating activities.

Whether you're addressing a CEO, CIO, CFO or VP of sales, focus on outcomes. What can marketing automation do for them? Speak a business language, and be sure you understand your executive team's goals. Make a list of the challenges your business faces and how marketing automation can help solve them. Talk in terms of revenue, pipeline contribution, cost savings, etc., not just marketing metrics.

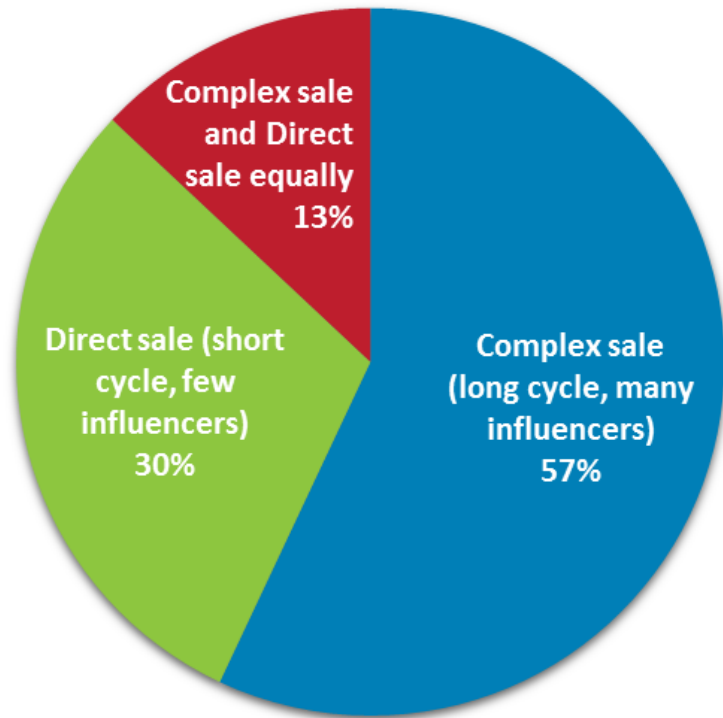
During these discussions, don't just focus on the acquisition of a marketing automation system. Making the case for retention can help you hone in on the long-term benefits and how marketing automation can bring lasting, positive changes to your organization over time.

If you are seeking approval for a marketing automation investment, be prepared to educate and persuade executives – the charts in this report can help!



Sales Cycle Encountered

Which best describes the type of SALES CYCLE encountered most often?



57% of C-level executives say the complex sale is encountered most often in the course of their marketing.

The complex sale is the sweet spot for marketing automation. However, nearly one-third of companies automate marketing processes for direct sales.



Strategic Analysis

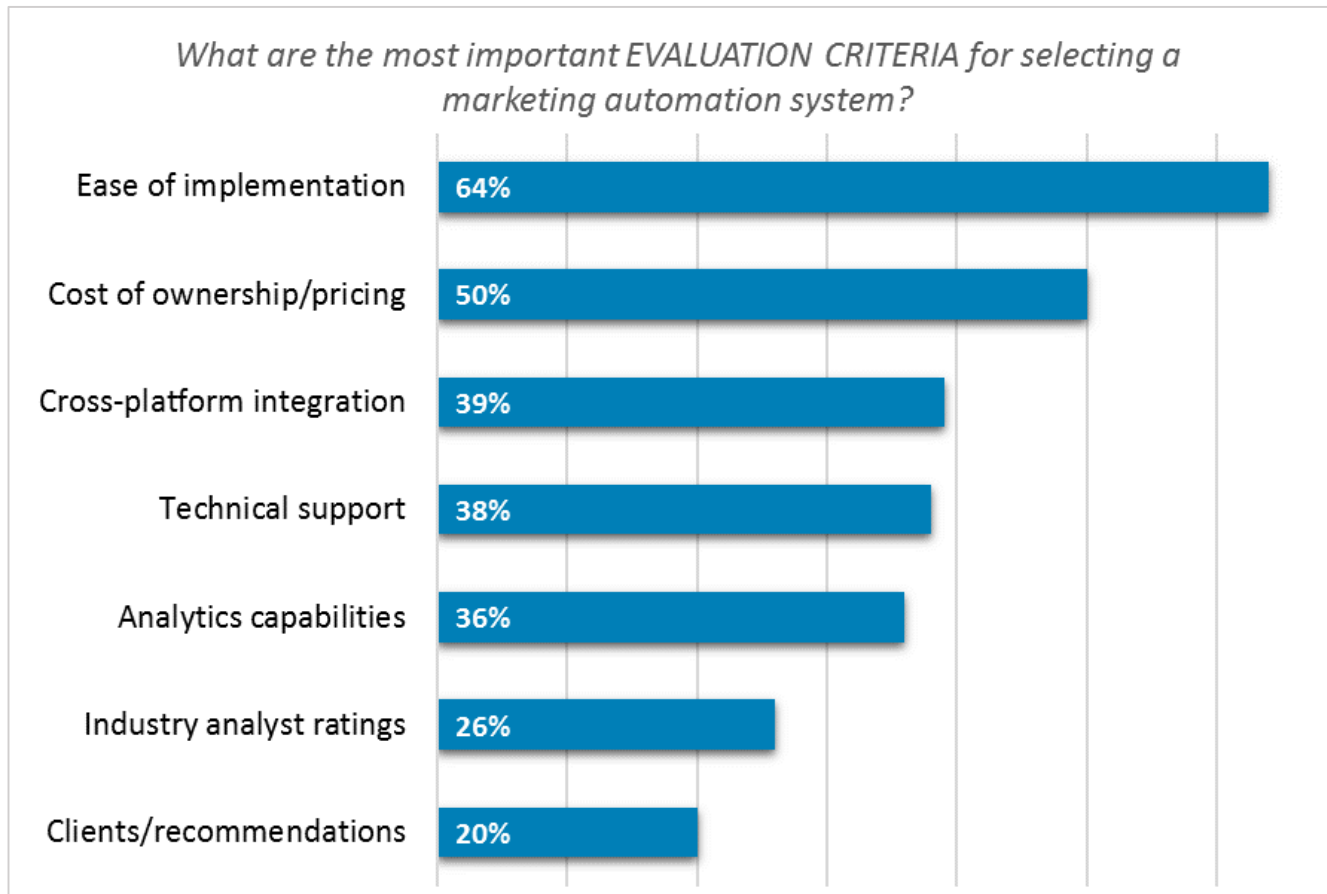
Analyzing important objectives versus critical challenges.



The more important an objective in comparison to the challenge of achieving it (acquiring more customers, for example), the higher the priority it should have in the development of a successful marketing automation strategy.



System Evaluation Criteria



Nearly two-thirds of C-level leaders point to ease of implementation as an important evaluation criteria for selecting a marketing automation system.

Ease of implementation is more important than even the cost of ownership, making it the subject of the following survey questions.

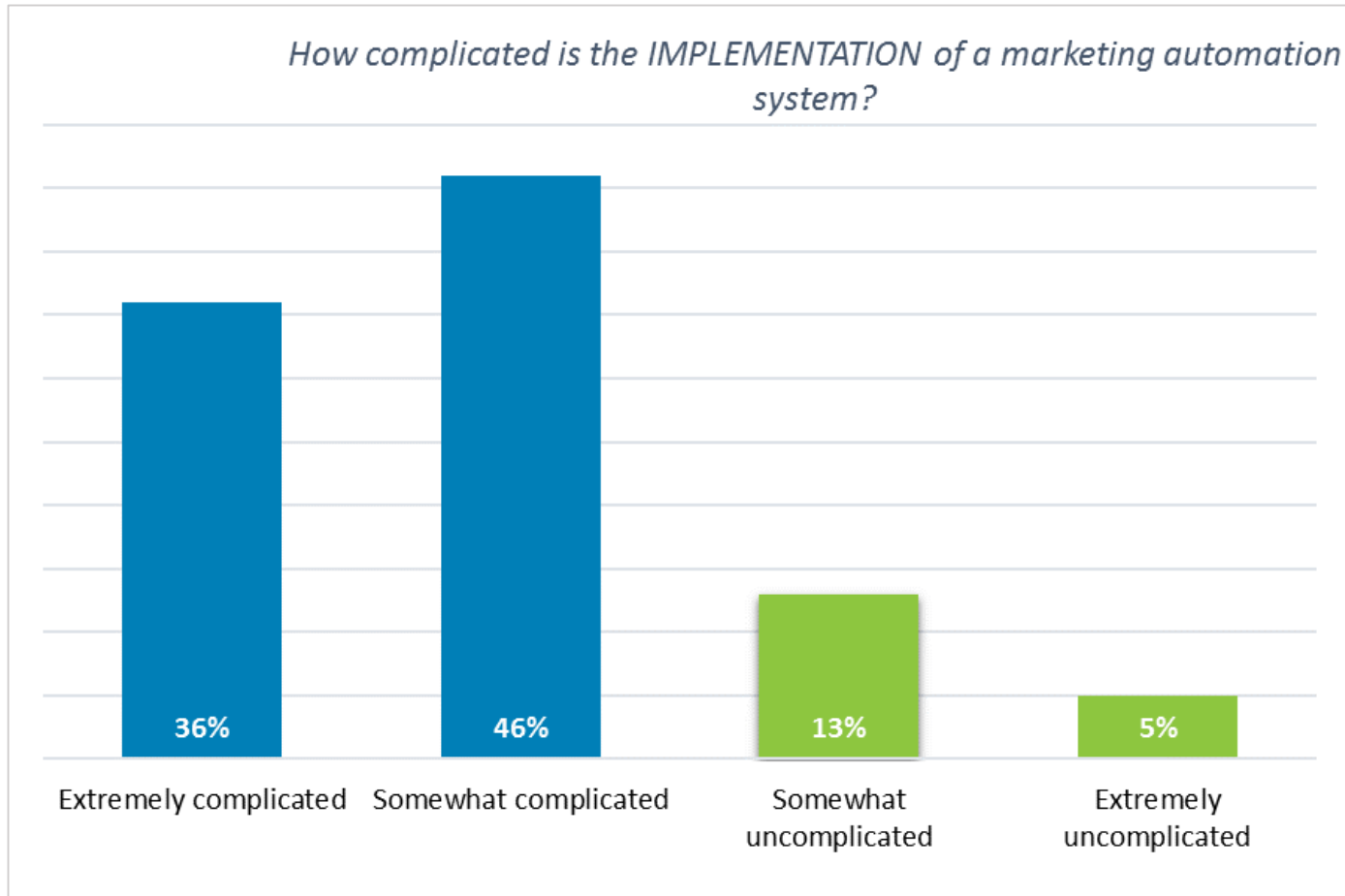
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C-suite leaders say ease of implementation is the most important criteria for #marketingautomation - even more than cost



Complexity of Implementation



Implementing a marketing automation system is perceived to be a complicated initiative by a strong majority of C-level decision-makers, with 36% describing it as extremely complicated.

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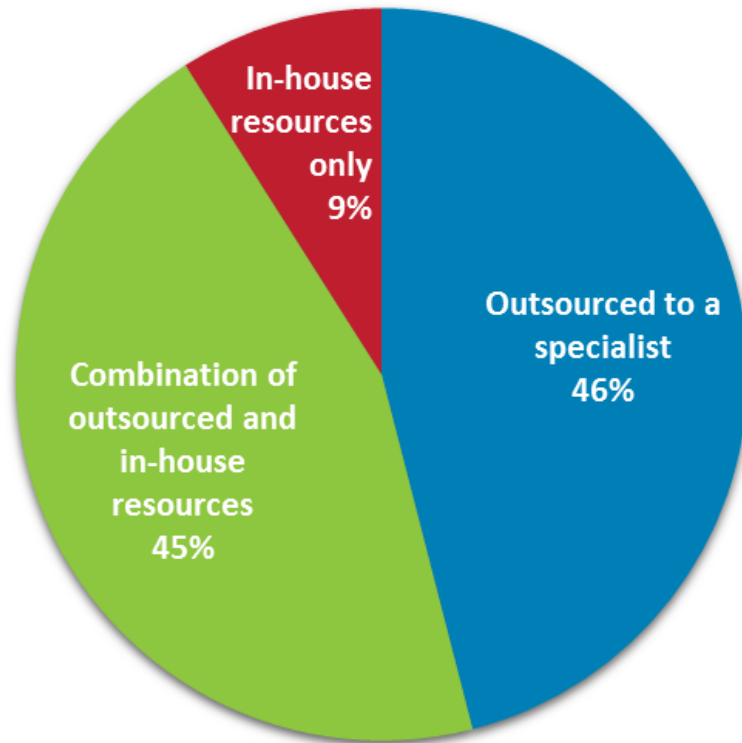


Implementing a #marketingautomation solution is perceived as complicated by the majority of C-level decision-makers



Implementation Resources Used

Which best describes the RESOURCES used to implement a marketing automation system?



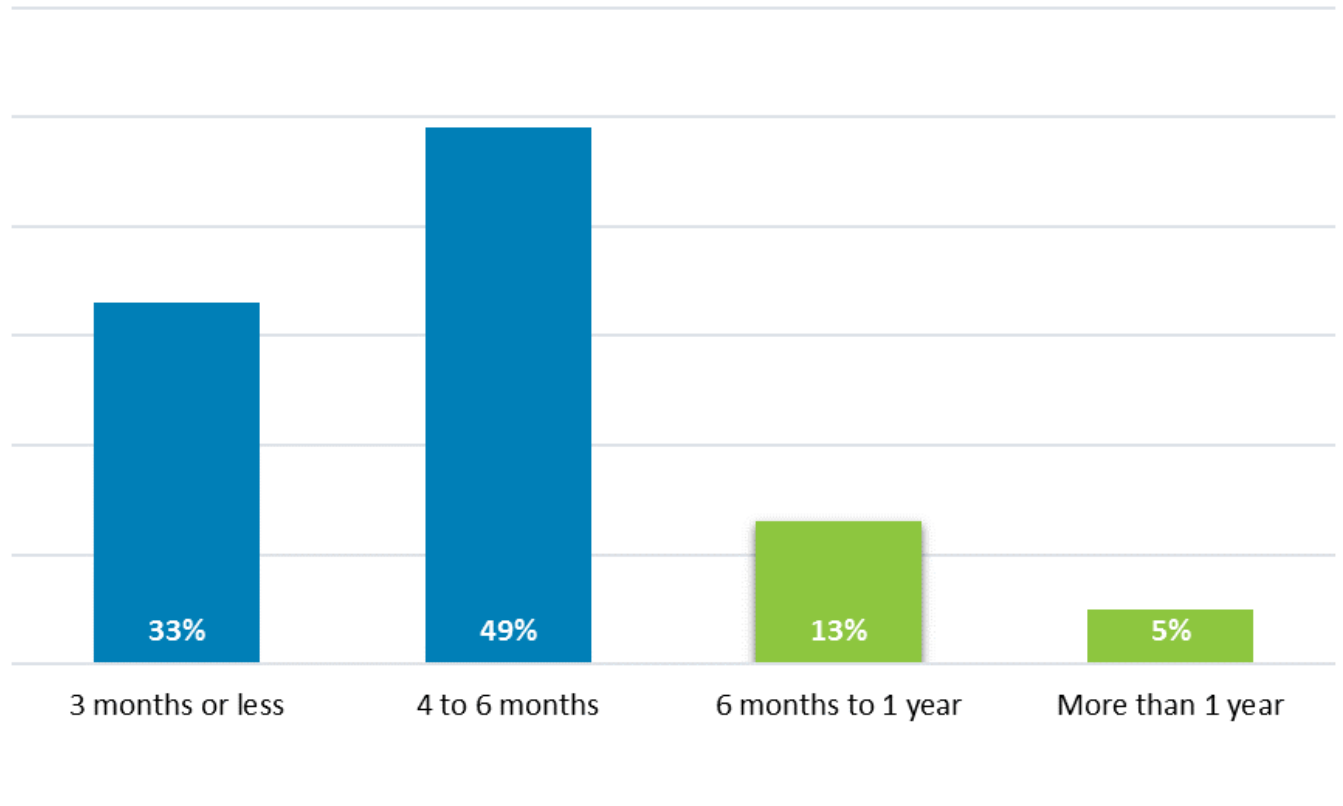
Whether complexity is a perception or a reality, it is the primary reason a total of 91% of C-level leaders outsource all or part of a marketing automation system implementation.

Outsourcing also provides skills and capabilities not always available in-house.



Implementation Time-Frame

What is a reasonable TIME-FRAME for completing the implementation of a marketing automation system?



About half of C-level leaders consider 4 to 6 months to be a reasonable time-frame for completing the implementation of a marketing automation system, while 33% think it can reasonably be done in 3 months or less.

Only 1 in 5 believe implementation should take 6 months or more to complete.

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Implementing a #marketingautomation solution should take 6 months or less, say C-suite leaders



3 Tips for Marketing Automation Implementation Success



A good start to using a marketing automation system can lead to great results down the line. With that in mind, here are three helpful tips for successfully implementing a marketing automation solution:

1. Choose wisely.

The first step in a successful implementation begins before implementation itself. When choosing a marketing automation solution, the level of integration is critically important to consider. Some marketing automation platforms can be used without being connected to a CRM system, but integration between the two solutions maximizes the effectiveness and value of each throughout an organization. The level of integration can impact the cost and timeline for marketing automation implementation, as well as the overall functionality.

2. Start small.

Email marketing, campaign automation, forms and landing pages, surveys, web tracking and more – it can be tempting to start using these valuable features all at once. However, this approach can easily overwhelm users and often means that they don't learn how to use each feature to its full potential. Instead, marketers and other key stakeholders should map out their priorities and begin using marketing automation features accordingly.

3. Utilize resources.

Since different users have different ways of learning and different schedules, during the search process, look for a marketing automation vendor that offers a variety of training options such as live webinars, recorded courses, help articles and blog posts. Similarly, support should suit your company's needs and operating hours. Then, make sure that the users of your marketing automation system are aware of these resources and take advantage of them.

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Marketing with #MSDyn365? See a demo of #ClickDimensions - <http://clickdimensions.com/demo/>

For Microsoft CRM users, there are many marketing automation systems on the market today that integrate with Dynamics 365, but with varying levels of integration.

ClickDimensions is natively built inside Dynamics 365, giving you real-time access to data and faster implementation and user adoption.

Learn more in our [7-minute demo video](#).



About the Research Partners



ClickDimensions is the leading Microsoft-certified marketing automation solution for Microsoft Dynamics 365.

ClickDimensions can streamline your marketing program by providing insights about your leads and contacts, resulting in reduced costs and increased revenue. Featuring email marketing, campaign automation, web intelligence, event management, web forms, landing pages, surveys and more, ClickDimensions allows organizations to attract more leads, close more sales and more effectively engage customers.

Learn more at clickdimensions.com.



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Learn more about [Ascend2](#) here.

