# The 2025 B2B Marketing Benchmark

## Food & Nutrition

A fresh helping of sector-specific insights to build smarter and more strategic marketing comms

BDB.

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**Welcome to the second edition of our Food & Nutrition Marketing Benchmark Report.**

This year, we set out to make it bigger and better. We've certainly achieved the former—expanding our reach and gathering insights from more industry professionals than ever before. As for "better"? That's not for us to claim. We'll let you be the judge of that.

What we found this year won't shock anyone—but it does reflect a meaningful evolution. Once again, we're seeing a disconnect between the value we marketers believe creativity brings and the results we actually see in our branding and activation campaigns. For this report, we haven't run a qualitative study to unpack why this gap persists but for those of us working in the industry, the likely culprits don't need much introduction: tight budgets, legal hurdles and the complex nature of the ingredients we work with.

Unofficially? We're all navigating multiple approval layers, racing against unrealistic timelines and trying to build emotional connections in ads about bioavailability—without falling back on the words "unlocking" or "potential".

Still, we've come a long way. The days of relying solely on factsheets and whitepapers are behind us. Today's marketers understand that lasting success belongs to the brands that communicate clearly, act with empathy and lead with expertise.The ones who meet their audiences where they are—and offer genuine solutions to the challenges they face.

We're ready to fight for that kind of marketing.

In this report, we'll explore how smart, strategic B2B marketing in the Food & Nutrition space can do more than weather uncertainty—it can build enduring brand value, stronger relationships and a future-ready foundation for whatever comes next.



Carmen Soggia
Associate Board Director, BDB


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# Expert perspective: food for thought

May you live in interesting times. Perhaps not the most creative observation but for B2B Food & Nutrition marketers around the globe seeking to enhance brand reputation, support sales efforts and build an engaged network, there are indeed many interesting areas to navigate. Who wasn't prepared to leave COVID-era supply chain disruption in the rearview mirror? Or move on from the financial uncertainty caused by ongoing economic pressures? Instead, we're entering a new phase where natural disasters, trade barriers and health concerns continue to upset the cart.

In the pages to follow, you'll find some assurance that these issues are being universally felt; we're all seeking the path forward that earns lasting loyalty and inspires confidence in our audience. *This supplier has my best interests at heart. This ingredient is designed to address exactly the challenges my R&D team has been struggling with. These people know what they're talking about; I can trust them.* In a time of disruption, the opportunity exists to strengthen business and brand while extending reach through creativity and innovation.



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# Executive summary

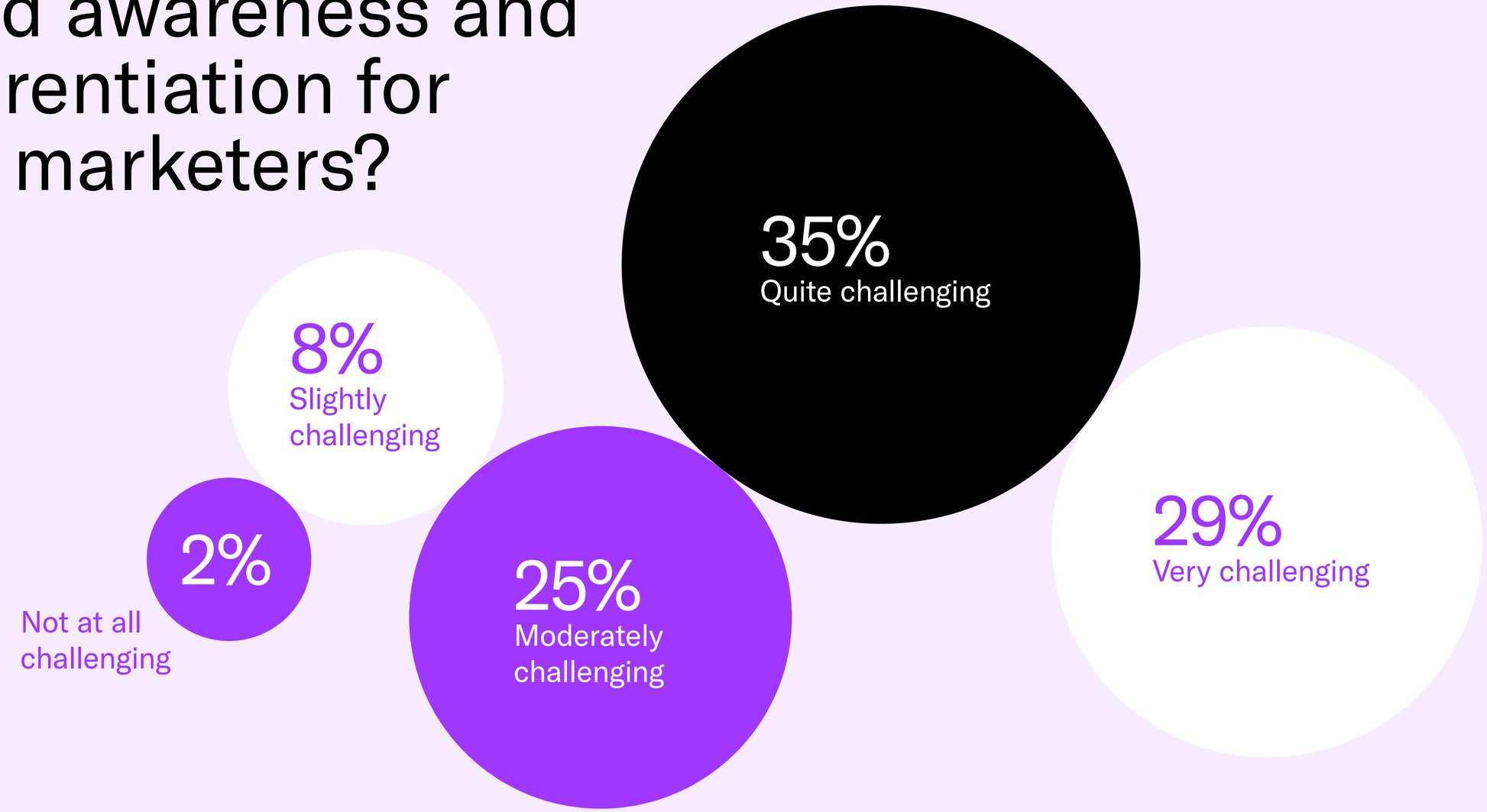
In the B2B Food & Nutrition sector, marketing communications have become a decisive factor for gaining —and maintaining— a competitive edge. With products and services in the industry having to meet increasingly demanding consumer requests about sustainability, quality and science credentials, distinctive brand narratives that highlight the ingredient's strengths in a clear and powerful positioning are more important than ever.

This second edition of our B2B Marketing Benchmark reveals significant shifts in strategic priorities since 2024.

While last year highlighted budget uncertainty and ROI challenges, the 2025 landscape shows brand awareness and differentiation emerging as the primary challenge for 64% of B2B F&N marketers.

Our research reveals a sector experiencing a 'differentiation dilemma' where technical capabilities and product specifications—while essential—no longer provide sufficient market distinction. In this environment, marketing excellence has become the key factor separating market leaders from followers.

# How challenging is brand awareness and differentiation for F&N marketers?



# The marketing landscape one year on

Looking back at 2024, three key findings have persisted and evolved:

## 1 Budget uncertainty continues

The economic ambiguity noted in our previous report has sustained, with the percentage of respondents citing budget uncertainty as a key challenge increasing from 37% in 2024 to 45% in 2025. Rather than focusing solely on cost control, marketers have changed tactic by becoming more growth-oriented—with client nurture and retention climbing the agenda and investment in improving brand perceptions more than doubling to 73% (up from 30% last year). This marks a major shift in the sector's approach to market uncertainty, moving away from a defensive stance toward proactive, strategic brand building.

## 2 The creativity gap widens

First identified in our inaugural report, the creativity gap remains an enduring challenge in the sector. Although the recognition of creativity's importance has slightly declined from 88% to 76%, only 41% of marketers agree or strongly agree that their work is more creative than competitors, similar to last year's figure of 40% who considered their brand "highly creative". Despite recognising the importance of creativity, many struggle to implement truly creative communications, making it harder to stand out in an increasingly competitive market.

## 3 Strategic digital adoption

Last year's report noted emerging interest in novel technologies and channels. This initial curiosity has now evolved into selective implementation decisions, with marketers showing clear preferences for certain digital tools. Our survey reveals 45% plan to implement AI for content personalisation, while one in ten (12%) are pursuing immersive AR/VR experiences. Meanwhile, video marketing has emerged as a clear priority, cited by 61% of respondents.


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# Methodology

Quantitative research was conducted through in-person interviews at key industry events and an online survey, targeting senior-level B2B marketing professionals in the Food & Nutrition sector.

By engaging 51 decision-makers across diverse company sizes and global regions during December 2024-January 2025, our study provides a balanced and authoritative view of the strategic priorities shaping the industry today.

## Our respondents primarily consisted of:

**18%**
Directors of Marketing

**43%**
Senior / Marketing Managers

With most **(84%)** having significant input or final say in marketing decisions.

Participants predominantly represented Active Ingredient Manufacturers **(78%)** with head offices in EMEA **(59%)** and North America **(33%)**, and spanned organisations of varying sizes from small enterprises to global corporations.

# Key findings for 2025

## 1 From short-term focus to strategic growth

Marketers are shifting from reactive, short-term tactics to strategic brand development, with 73% prioritising brand perception improvement. This pivot reflects a growing recognition that sustainable success requires balancing immediate sales demands with long-term brand equity building.

## 2 The creativity conundrum

Our research reveals a pronounced disconnect between the recognised value of creativity and its actual implementation in B2B F&N marketing. This creativity gap, coupled with the challenge of finding agencies with both sector expertise and creative capabilities, represents a significant opportunity for differentiation.

## 3 Exploring trends and future channels

Digital transformation is reshaping channel strategies, with 35% of marketers planning to increase social media advertising and 61% embracing video marketing. Yet personal connections remain vital, as 28% plan to increase face-to-face meetings, suggesting an emerging hybrid approach to engagement.

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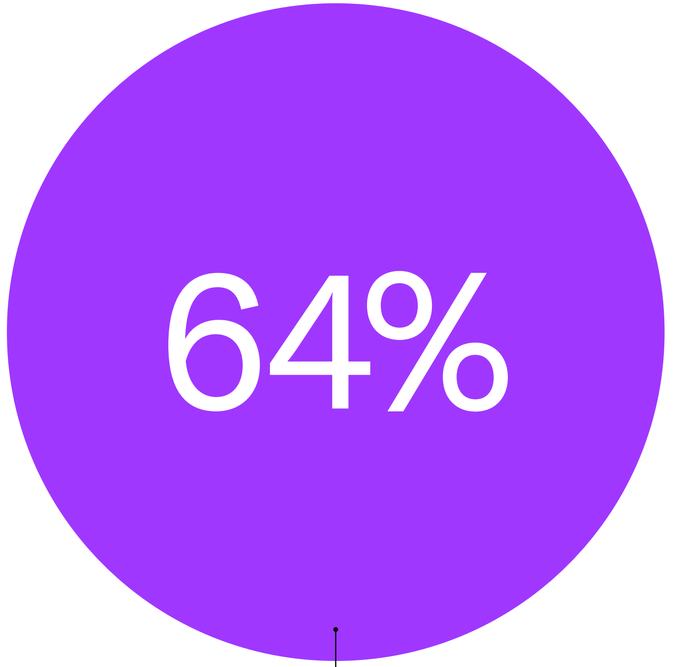
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# From short-term focus to brand building

A significant shift is underway as marketers move from short-term sales focus to more balanced strategies that build long-term brand equity. This evolution comes as 64% of B2B F&N marketers cite brand awareness and differentiation as their top challenge, making it the most critical issue identified in this year's benchmark.

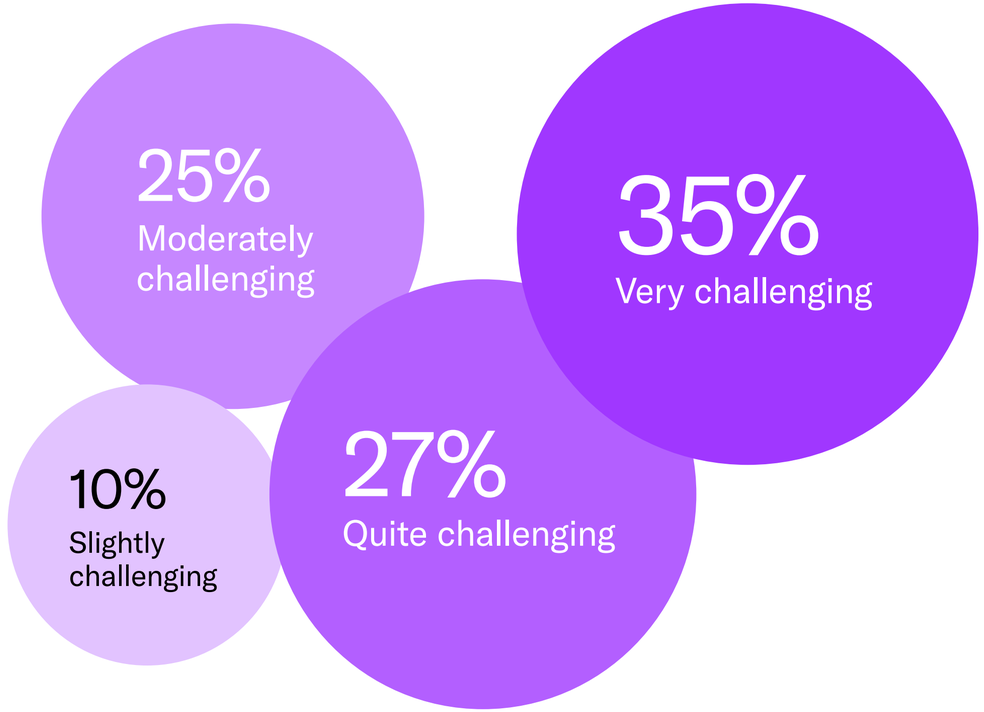



of B2B F&N marketers cite brand awareness and differentiation as their top challenge.

# Balancing immediate returns with strategic development

Historically, marketing efforts in this space have been geared towards quantifiable returns—ROI, lead generation and direct conversion metrics. However, the conversation is shifting towards Value of Investment (VOI), recognising that brand equity plays a vital role in long-term business sustainability.

Perhaps the most interesting insight from our research is how a focus on short-term gains has directly contributed to the current ‘differentiation dilemma’. With 62% of respondents identifying the balance between long-term brand health and immediate ROI as a major challenge, it’s clear that the pressure for quick results is undermining strategic brand development.



# Value on Investment explained

VOI metrics assess marketing effectiveness through broader indicators like improved brand perception, increased customer retention, enhanced audience engagement and stronger market positioning—outcomes that don’t immediately translate to revenue but significantly influence long-term business health.

Want to learn more about implementing VOI measurement in practice or detailed approaches to balancing brand health with commercial targets?

**Read our supporting blog post here.**

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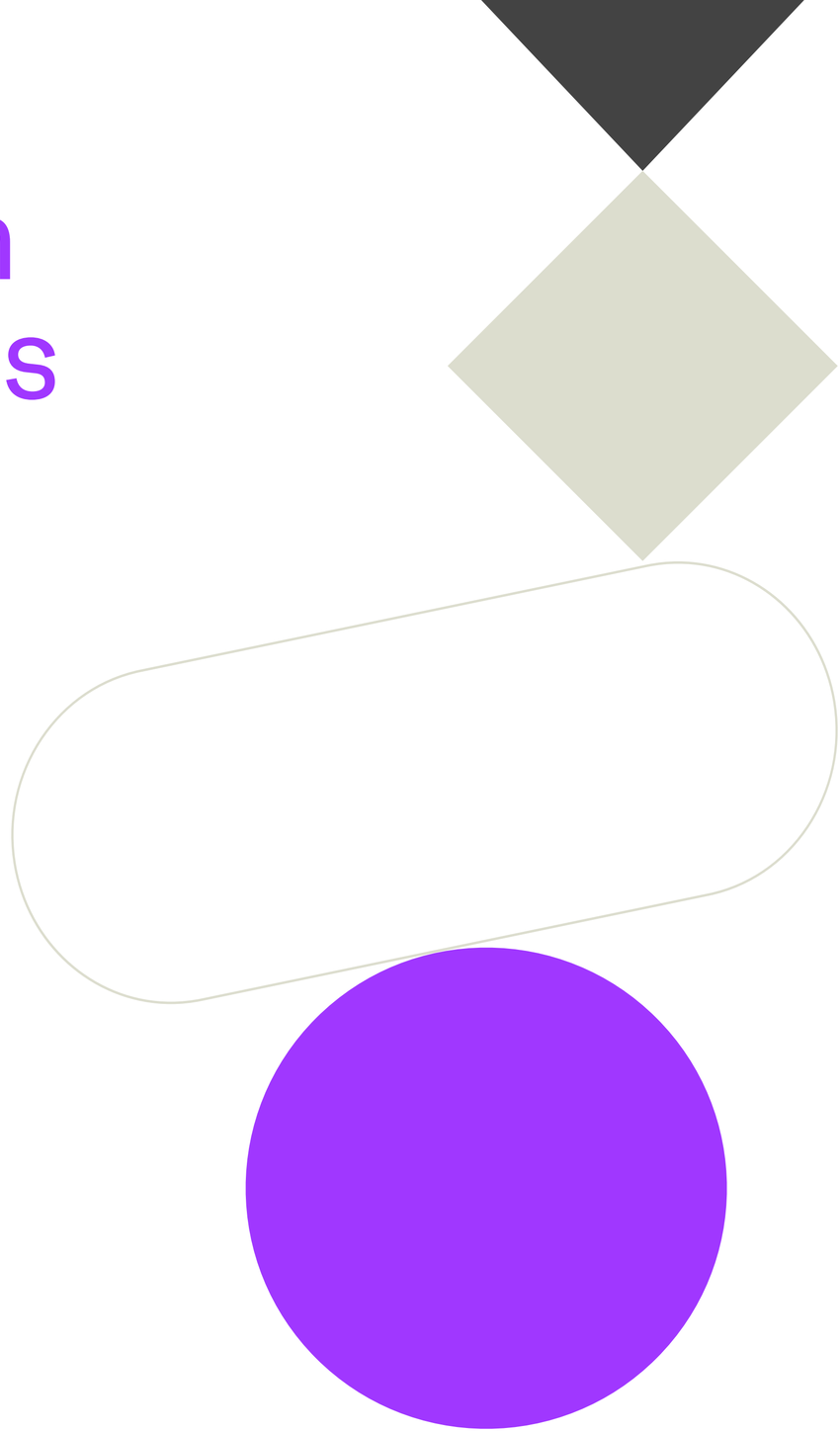
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# The challenge of balancing brand health with commercial targets

While marketers understand the importance of building distinctive brand identities, they face significant challenges in execution. Our research reveals several key marketing hurdles and emerging strategic directions.




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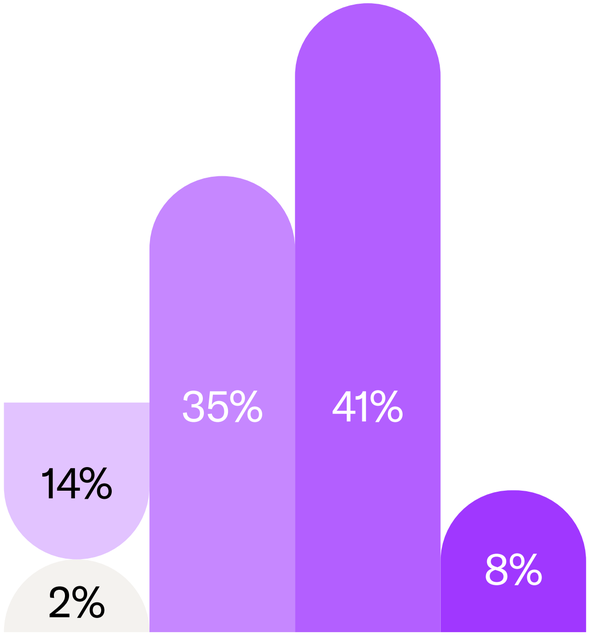
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# Key marketing challenges

Not challenging at all | Slightly challenging | Moderately challenging | Quite challenging | Very challenging

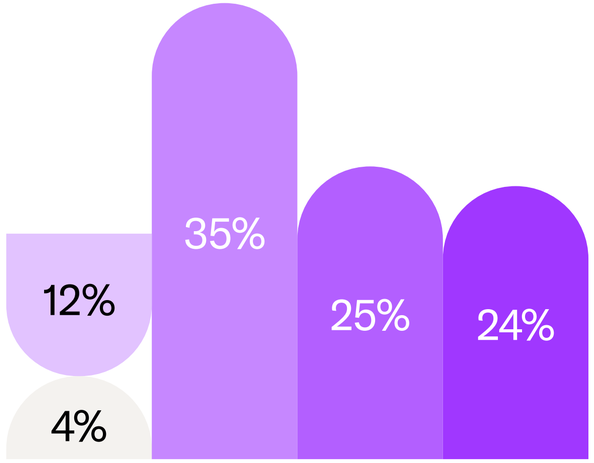
### Adapting to shifting marketing conditions

Half (49%) of marketers find adapting to shifting market conditions challenging, highlighting the difficulty of staying responsive in a dynamic industry.



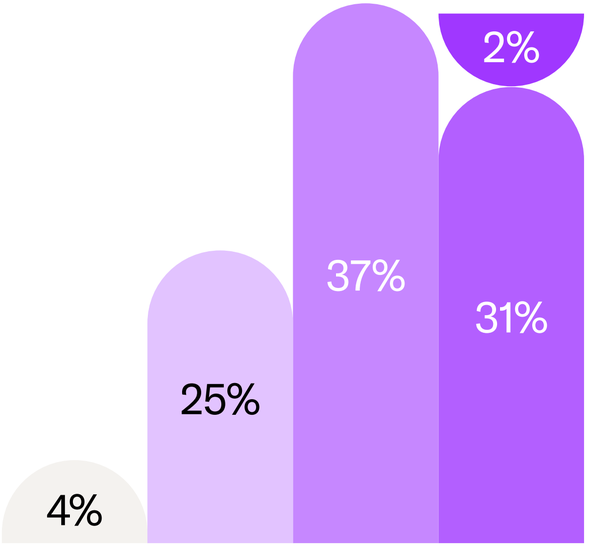

### Lead generation

Lead generation presents significant difficulty for 49% of marketers, demonstrating the persistent struggle to fill the sales pipeline.




### Finding the right marketing channels

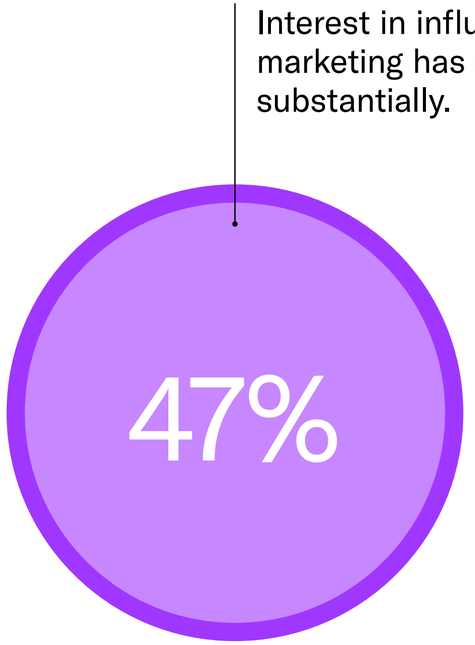
Finding the right marketing channels proves difficult for a third (33%) of marketers, reflecting uncertainty about where to focus communication efforts for maximum impact.



# Emerging strategic directions

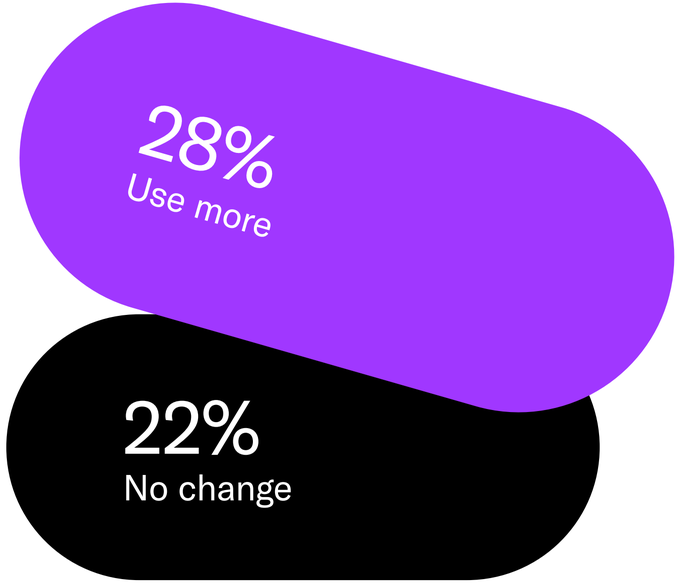
### Influencer marketing

Interest in influencer marketing has grown substantially with 47% of marketers having recently adopted or planning to adopt this approach in the next 12 months.



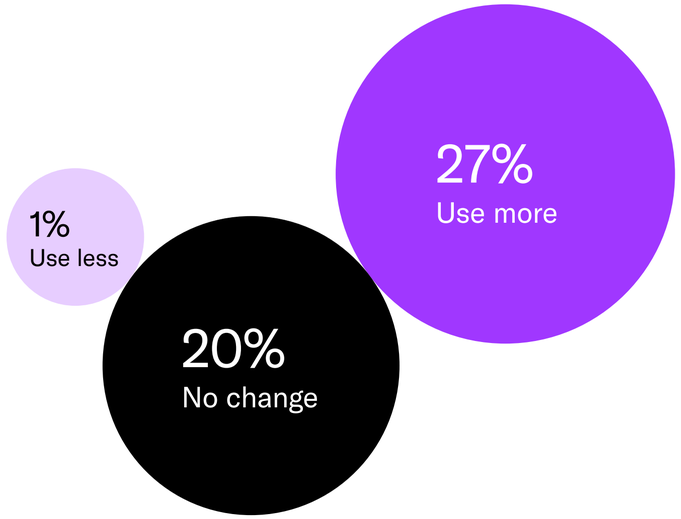

### Face-to-face

Face-to-face meetings remain vital with 28% of marketers planning to increase this traditional engagement approach despite the digital transformation underway.




### Bespoke content creation

Bespoke content creation is gaining momentum as 27% of marketers plan to increase their use of specialised content such as category trend reports and point-of-view pieces.




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# Key insight on differentiation

# 64%

of B2B F&N marketers struggle to stand out — differentiation isn’t just an advantage; it’s an imperative.


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# What marketers know— and what they struggle to do

While marketers in the B2B Food & Nutrition space demonstrate a strong understanding of their customers, translating this knowledge into effective differentiation isn’t straightforward.

Marketers face a paradox: they feel that they know their customers and their needs deeply but still struggle to stand out. The real challenge lies in transforming those insights into a brand story that captivates and connects.

The takeaway is clear: true differentiation isn’t just about gathering customer perspectives. It’s about taking those insights and translating them into creative brand stories that engage and resonate across all stakeholder groups.

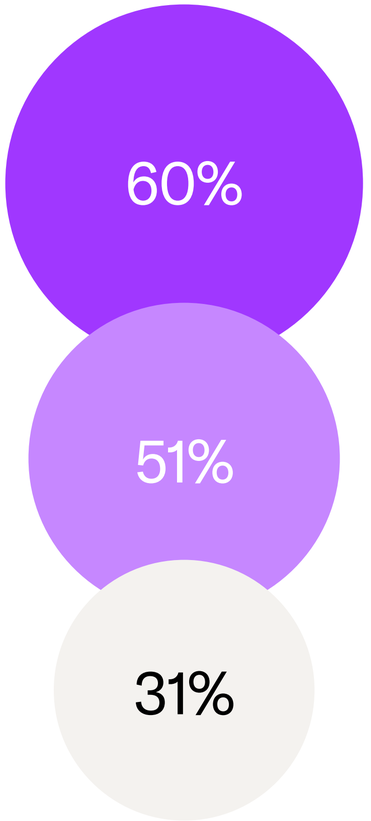
## What marketers know:

92%
Claim to have a clear understanding of who their customers are.

35%
Believe their customers are overly focused on price—indicating opportunities beyond cost competition.

72%
Recognise their customers comprise several distinctive groups requiring different marketing approaches.

## What marketers struggle with:




Feel that customer relationships are often more important than marketing communications when it comes to developing business—highlighting the challenge of balancing personal connections with broader marketing efforts.

Find it difficult to get their brand noticed—reinforcing the competitive pressures in the sector.

Indicate their customers are hard to engage with—suggesting that connecting with their audience remains a significant challenge for nearly a third of respondents.

# Hear from Heather

It’s certainly true in the crowded and dynamic Food & Nutrition market that it can be difficult to differentiate. However, while the market may constantly shift to anticipate consumer demands, what a company and brand stands for can’t do the same. It’s not just about understanding audience and customer insights but ensuring everyone across the organisation is aligned on the company’s unique value. When nearly two-thirds of marketers say brand awareness and differentiation is the challenge, it’s time to ensure clarity at the core.

Successful companies start by identifying the table stakes—whether for the whole business, a portfolio of ingredients or service offerings. What’s mandatory to compete in the market? But that’s only the starting point, not the complete story. If everyone has a product development lab, an ability to deliver vegan gummies or a widely-used sustainability certification, those become expected features not differentiators. They’re strong supporting points but they don’t define what truly sets a company or product apart.

Consider branded ingredients within the Food & Nutrition space. There are hundreds, if not thousands of ingredients, each marked with distinct logos and recognisable slogans on product labels and point-of-sale materials. However, it can be disappointing to discover that behind the catchy name is little more than creative design. These ingredients often have marketing polish without stand-out substance. It’s not really the ‘Intel Inside’, just another bioavailable curcumin. The difference lies with companies that have done the hard work. They have a story to tell, whether it’s grounded in scientific investment or proven quality and efficacy. That’s unique value.

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Differentiation isn't just about customer perspectives. It's about taking that input and realistically assessing whether those perceptions reflect the company's true brand value. When there's alignment in expectations, marketers can move faster with greater confidence, focusing their storytelling calling out the key methods by which the company solves real market problems.

One way to do this is developing bespoke content. While one-third of marketers say their customers are hard to engage with, if you can offer intel they can't get elsewhere, they'll lean in. Market data and analytics, tips for addressing market challenges, summaries of research—there are so many options to engage an audience. Chances are your organisation already has a strong foundation of education and expertise to draw from. Identify the most promising voices, provide them with the key talking points and support them in developing their profiles. It's not only the high-level titles but the ability to showcase the rising stars that illustrates the power of an organisation.

As you deliver unique, impactful content, through your trusted brand and expert team you begin to build a genuinely engaged community. Whether shared through your own platform or external channels, tracking community interaction offers valuable feedback—revealing which type of information resonates most with your target audience. These are the warm leads in a sustainable pipeline. Equipping the sales team with the context around each 'lead'—be that type of content they're seeking or the problems they want to solve—enables a more collaborative, consultative selling approach and forges long-term relationships with customers and prospects. Think of it as a ladder of engagement, delivering increasing relevance at every rung and incrementally increasing Customer Lifetime Value (CLV).



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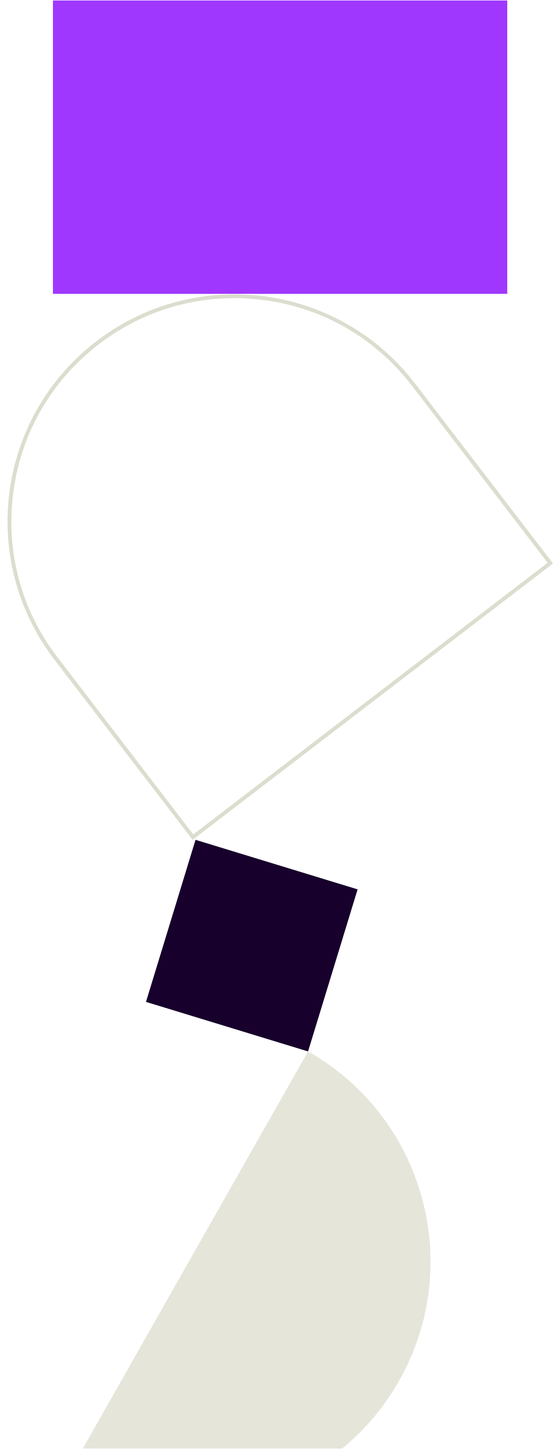
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# Creativity: The catalyst for brand differentiation

In today’s market, how a brand delivers its message matters as much as the message itself. Yet many B2B Food & Nutrition brands are missing the opportunity to leverage creativity as a means of differentiation.



# Disrupt your category to define it

The most effective creative approaches in this sector don't merely add visual appeal—they strategically disrupt category expectations to create recognition and recall. This might involve introducing unexpected formats for technical information, employing distinctive visual representations to explain complex concepts or using narrative techniques more commonly found in consumer marketing.

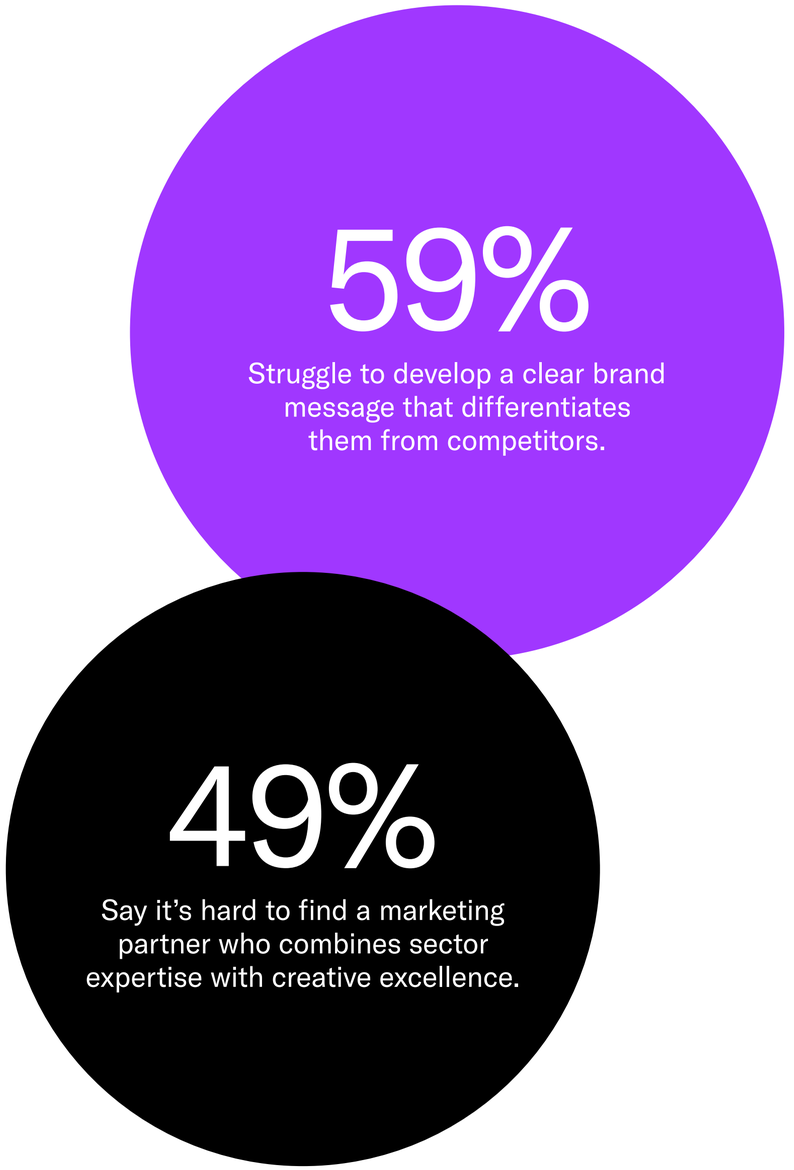
Forward-thinking brands are also finding success by extending creativity beyond communications into product experiences, service design and customer touchpoints—ensuring that creative differentiation is substantiated through every interaction with the brand.

The data highlights a clear creativity gap—despite the overwhelming acknowledgement of the importance of creativity, close to half say their execution falls short compared to competitors. Without strong creative differentiation, even the most well-positioned brands risk blending into the background in an already saturated market.

# The challenge: How to bridge the gap between ambition and execution

Many brands struggle to translate their technical expertise, product innovation and market positioning into communications that are engaging, distinct and memorable.

This creativity gap represents a strategic vulnerability in the sector but also a significant opportunity for differentiation. What's particularly revealing is that marketers with this self-awareness aren't simply lacking creative resources—they're struggling with the fundamental challenge of translating technical messaging into memorable marketing.



# Break free from creative inertia

The creativity challenge in B2B F&N marketing reflects a complex ecosystem where technical expertise meets communication artistry. The most sophisticated approaches to breaking creative inertia recognise that exceptional marketing doesn't occur in isolation. Rather, it emerges from the deliberate integration of internal knowledge, strategic vision and specialised creative expertise—whether developed in-house or through strategic partnerships.

What's clear from our research is that no matter which path organisations choose, prioritising creativity and approaching it as a strategic business capability rather than a tactical afterthought is what ultimately separates distinctive brands from those that struggle to stand out in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

With nearly half of marketers struggling to find a marketing partner who brings both deep industry expertise and bold creative thinking to the table, there is clear appetite for integrated agencies with sector-specific skills.

# Building internal creative capabilities

Many forward-thinking F&N companies are finding success by developing in-house creativity through targeted approaches:

- **Cross-disciplinary teams** that bring technical experts into direct collaboration with marketing professionals, bridging the science-communication divide
- **Creative leadership cultivation** through training programmes that help marketers expand beyond technical messaging into more innovative narrative approaches
- **Insight gathering mechanisms** that capture customer reactions to communications, providing evidence that supports more creative considerations
- **Protected innovation spaces** where marketing teams can experiment with new communication styles without the immediate pressure of performance metrics

# Leveraging external creative partnerships

Equally effective is the approach of partnering with external agencies to complement and enhance internal capabilities:

- **Specialised sector agencies** that understand both the scientific complexities of F&N and the principles of creative communication
- **Collaborative workshop models** where agency and client teams develop creative approaches together rather than in isolation
- **Knowledge transfer programmes** where external creative expertise builds long-term internal capability
- **Strategic planning partnerships** that align creative development with business objectives from the outset

# Hear from Heather

It may be the benefit and the curse of the Food & Nutrition category that we're all consumers too. Whether it's an ingredient or a service, we bring personal experiences and preferences to the brands we engage with. When we make our own purchasing decisions, from the multivitamin to the snack food, it's a combination of rational thinking and emotional resonance. Why should B2B storytelling be any different?

Ah, the difference is in that business and technical information, right? How can we get creative when our customers expect such depth? That's where a collaborative approach is critical. When marketing teams work closely with sales to understand customer pain points, messaging really comes to life. The same applies to the technical team who are answering questions about the application of ingredients and the functionality or research that really sets them apart.

When the value proposition is strong and story is clear, creativity can take the lead—allowing the unique attributes to truly shine. It starts with identifying the key technical talking points, then translating them into verbiage that is clear, relatable and easy to understand. That's what cuts through the industry noise. Involving the right team members in communication and branding—especially those with technical credibility—adds authenticity and depth to the message.

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Consider also the opportunity to build on growing demand for bespoke content—crafting something of great value that serves as the foundation for your creative messaging. Investing in one tremendous thought-leadership piece that aligns with a topic that your brand intends to ‘own’ can spark ripple effects across your entire creative process and marketing strategy. Customisation allows large content to be utilised in multiple formats and platforms, with a consistent throughline. It becomes the source for blogs, infographics, presentations, videos, image generation and more. This is also the moment to consider the use of AI and other new technologies to support customisation and personalisation of marketing communications—freeing up creative bandwidth.

Even companies that are operating within the commodity space have a unique value proposition. There is a point of differentiation that can be conveyed in a way that resonates more than just a list of pricing and technical specs.



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# Diversifying channel strategies for greater reach

B2B F&N marketers are actively exploring new channel strategies to boost brand awareness and achieve differentiation. Our research reveals that while traditional methods are at the foundation, marketers are increasingly embracing digital-first approaches to extend their reach.

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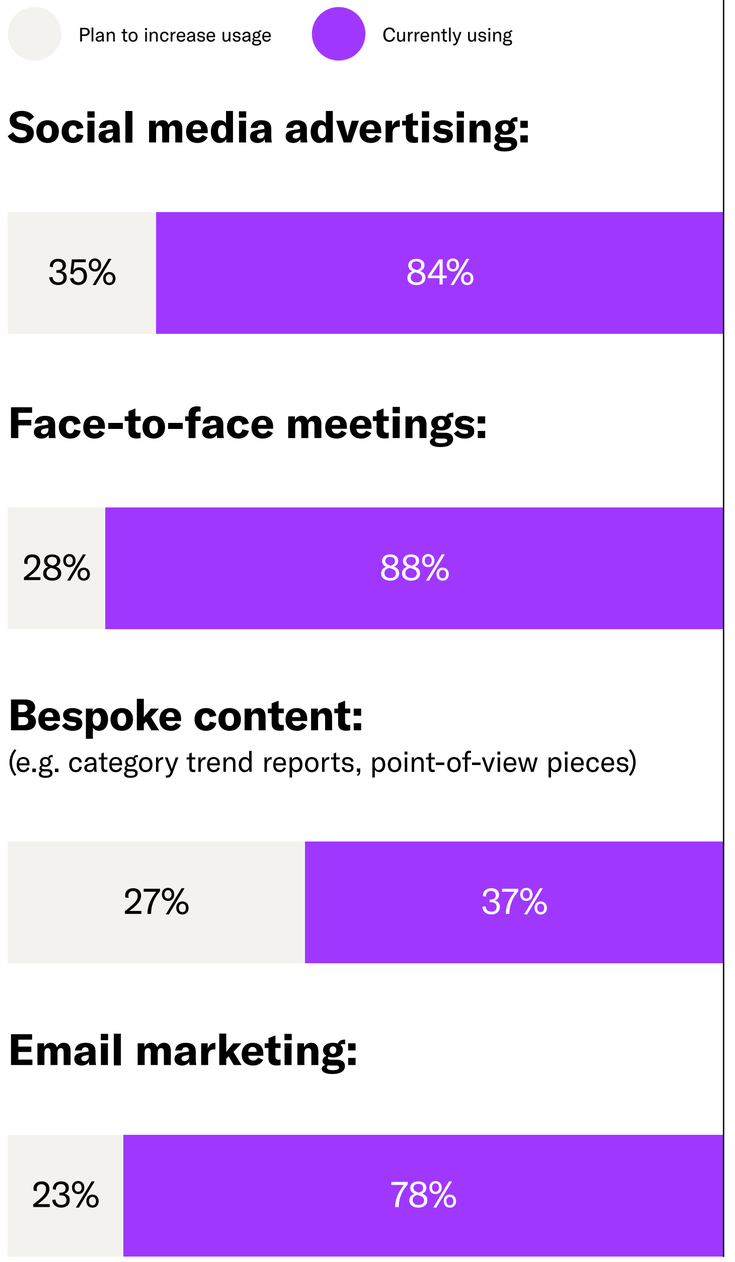
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Social media advertising stands out as the channel with the strongest forward momentum, with 35% of marketers planning to increase their use over the next 12 months. This builds on social media's established popularity—with 84% of marketers having already incorporated social media advertising into their marketing mix over the past year, making it the third most utilised channel.

## Physical mail outs:

This shift in channel strategy is happening alongside a decline in some traditional approaches, with 16% of marketers planning to reduce their use of physical mail outs and 11% planning to scale back their presence at trade shows and events. The data reveals a gradual but meaningful transition toward a more digital-centric marketing approach for 2025, with physical touchpoints becoming more selective rather than disappearing entirely.



# Video marketing emerges as a priority channel

**The most significant trend in marketing communications is the rapid rise of video marketing, with 61% of respondents having recently adopted or planning to adopt it in the next 12 months.**

This tracks with broader industry movements toward more dynamic, engaging content formats deployed digitally that effectively communicate complex information succinctly.

Video adoption is not occurring in isolation but as part of a broader shift toward more varied content types.

This includes a notable **47% of marketers exploring influencer marketing strategies.**

61%

Video marketing
(e.g. through TikTok / YouTube)

47%

Influencer marketing

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## LinkedIn platform shift promotes video innovation

LinkedIn's recent platform updates further validate this video marketing shift. There have been significant enhancements to LinkedIn's video presentation and discovery features, acknowledging that video content watch time has increased by 36% year-over-year on the platform.[1] The professional network is now bringing its full-screen, vertical video display format to desktop, creating a more immersive viewing experience across devices.

For B2B F&N marketers, particularly noteworthy is LinkedIn's introduction of improved video analytics, providing data on average watch time to better measure content performance, along with new search capabilities that surface relevant videos in a swipeable carousel when users research specific topics. With LinkedIn reporting that video creation is growing at twice the rate of other original post formats,[1] marketers should consider how video content fits into their LinkedIn marketing and brand-building approach to align with this significant platform shift.

**Keep up with the latest in B2B marketing — follow BDB on LinkedIn.**

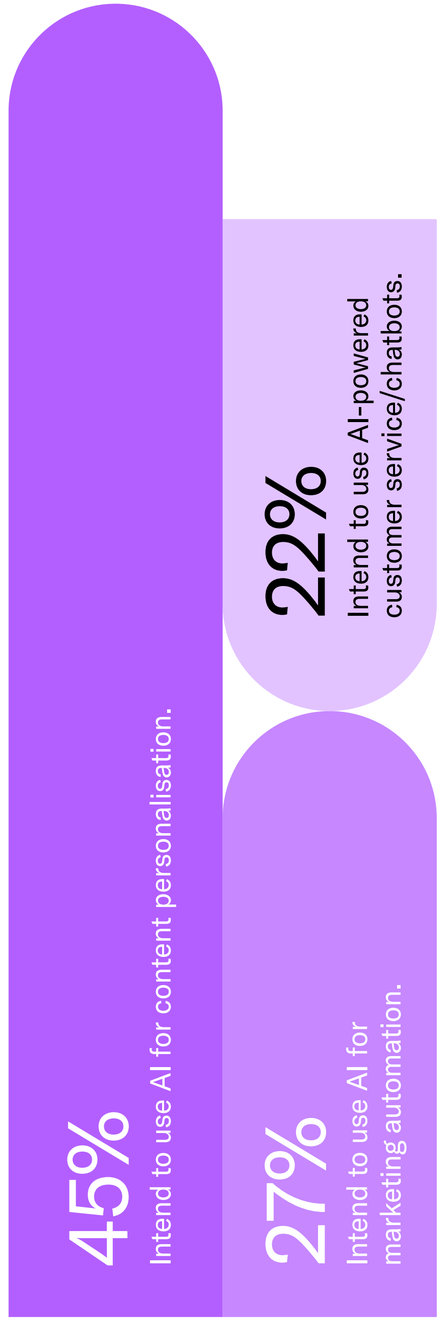
1. Hutchinson, Andrew. "LinkedIn Rolls Out Updates to Video Presentation and Discovery." Social Media Today, February 4, 2025.

# AI adoption is increasingly strategic and targeted

## While last year's report noted a growing interest in AI technology, our current findings show B2B F&N marketers are now making strategic implementation decisions around AI and automation.

This prioritisation reveals that F&N marketers recognise AI's greatest value lies not in back-office efficiency but in addressing the differentiation challenge through more relevant, customised communications for diverse stakeholder groups.

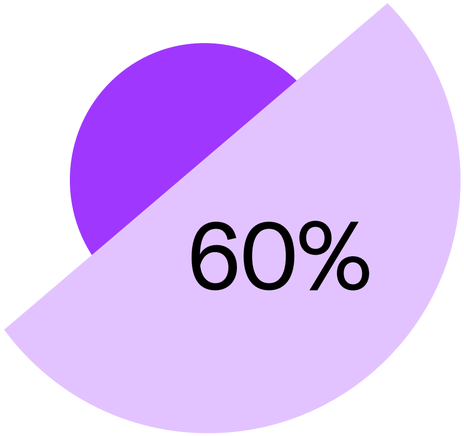
Notably, immersive technologies like AR and VR have garnered limited interest in the B2B Food & Nutrition space, with just 12% of marketers planning to adopt these approaches. The marked preference for personalisation over immersive experiences indicates a strategic focus on solving existing communication challenges—particularly around differentiation and audience engagement—rather than creating novel experiences that may not yet align with how B2B buyers in this sector prefer to research and evaluate products.



# Personal connection remains vital amid digital transformation

Despite a clear preference for digital channels, the research highlights that personal connection remains essential in the B2B Food & Nutrition space.

With 88% of marketers using face-to-face meetings in the past 12 months and 28% planning to increase their use, it’s evident that personal engagement continues to hold significant value. The finding that 60% of respondents agree or strongly agree that relationships are often more important than marketing communications when it comes to developing business further reinforces this.

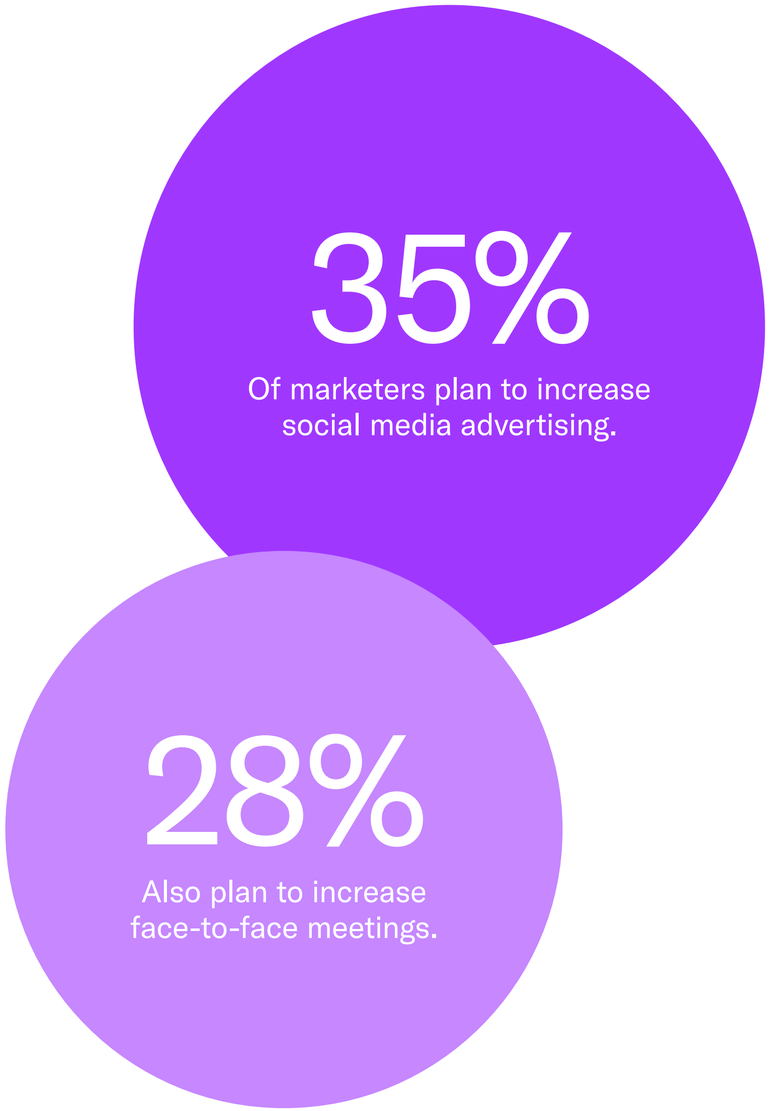



Of respondents agree or strongly agree that relationships are often more important than marketing communications when it comes to developing business.

The data reveals a balanced approach emerging: while 35% of marketers plan to increase social media advertising, 28% also plan to increase face-to-face meetings, demonstrating that digital transformation and personal connection are seen as complementary rather than competing strategies.

The most successful marketing teams are likely those that balance digital efficiency with the relationship-building elements that have long been central to success in this sector.

The two approaches work in tandem to strengthen relationships, with social media supporting the maintenance of connections across geographies until those valuable face-to-face meetings can be arranged.



# Hear from Heather

The majority of marketers have a clear understanding of who their customers are but also realise they are comprised of several distinctive groups. In the B2B market, there is often a stage-gate approach to a business decision, requiring multiple approvals before getting to a final ‘yes’. That’s why a collaborative approach spearheaded by marketing teams is mission-critical to ensure that the right information is available when it’s needed. From awareness and research to evaluation and determination, each stage of the process requires different information delivered through the most appropriate channels, at the right time.

Marketers are turning to digital-first strategies, focusing on the intentional use of the most effective channels. Social media, email marketing and paid search continue to grow in importance, supported by a broader shift toward platforms that showcase expertise and thought leadership. Webinars and virtual events were everywhere in COVID times, and they’re still a part of most B2B media outlets, associations and even large organisations. But audience expectations have evolved. People are more selective with their time and the perceived takeaway must be worth the investment. When was the last time you sat through an all-day virtual event? Or tuned into a webinar that ran longer than an hour? This is where content strategy matters. Is there a plan to repurpose content across different formats—bite-size takeaways, fuel for reports, highlight reels or supporting assets to augment other digital channels? Maximising the value of each initiative ensures your message goes further, meets your audience where they are and reinforces your brand’s expertise in a format they actually want to consume.

The desire for more video as a part of an awareness and social strategy is unsurprising; we’ve all gone down a rabbit hole on TikTok or Instagram. And the impact of influencers across video platforms cannot be overstated. Just look at creatine. After 25 years of clinical research and niche marketing, it has exploded into the mainstream, now showcased in content videos as the ingredient you can’t do without. Collagen has followed a similar trendline.

Continues →

And while it would be great to know what's coming next, that's not necessarily where the B2B marketing focus should lie. Particularly as the need to 'feed the beast' on a platform like TikTok may not have the VOI as it relates to a B2B brand.

Instead, consider again the depth of experience on the bench. Who are the true subject matter experts and trusted voices across the company, remembering that leadership isn't always tied to titles? Think about how these individuals can communicate in ways that resonate with each segment of your target audience. This approach builds authenticity and connection, while fostering recognition and stronger relationships. It's also an opportunity to reinforce key messages across teams, driving internal alignment and amplifying your unique value in the market.

While social media advertising is the third most commonly used marketing strategy, and ranks highest for planned growth, it trails behind trade shows/events and face-to-face meetings in overall importance. In fact, marketers are actively looking to increase face-to-face meetings, recognising the critical importance of real, human connections. It may seem contradictory, then, that some companies are scaling back their presence at events. But this shift is less about stepping away from events entirely and more about refining the approach—focusing on quality over quantity.

Understanding the value of each event, whether for building a pipeline, showcasing thought leadership and maximising meetings around a gathering point means taking a more thoughtful approach; it's about engaging a captive audience in a relevant way rather than a flashmob.

This speaks to the continued strength of the personal connection. Sixty percent of respondents agree or strongly agree that relationships are often more important than marketing communications when it comes to developing business. While the B2B landscape may seem vast, it's actually surprisingly small when it comes to building a professional network. Buyers and formulators often carry their connections to new companies and are interested in working with those they trust. The key is building trust with that individual contact—in case they move on and become a new 'lead' elsewhere—but also expanding engagement across departments to reinforce the strength of the brand behind the ingredient or service. This ensures that success doesn't come down to a single point of contact. Using that ladder of engagement can support the relationship between two organisations, not only the people within them.



Heather Granato
President,
Nutrachievement Inc.

# 04 Report recap: Build a future-focused B2B F&N strategy

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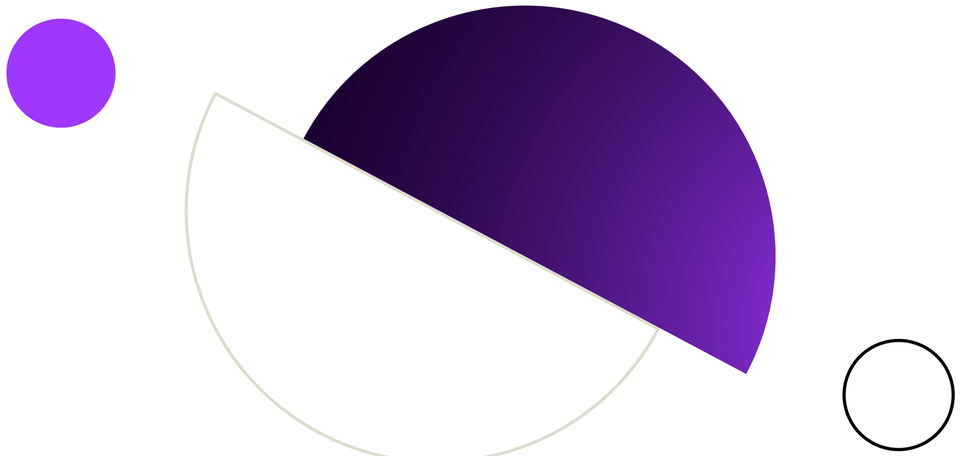
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# Beyond short-term tactics: Building sustainable brand differentiation

As we look to the future of B2B marketing in the Food & Nutrition space, we see a meaningful shift emerging in how successful brands approach the market. The era of purely tactical, transaction-driven marketing is giving way to a more balanced perspective that recognises the critical importance of building lasting brand equity alongside immediate commercial objectives.

In an increasingly crowded marketplace where technical specifications alone no longer provide sufficient distinction, the path forward requires a fundamental rethinking of how brands express their unique value and connect with their audiences. The most successful brands are those making the transition from isolated campaigns to cohesive brand narratives—creating identities that resonate across all touchpoints and stakeholder interactions. They understand that building a memorable brand isn't a distraction from commercial success but rather the foundation upon which sustainable growth is built.

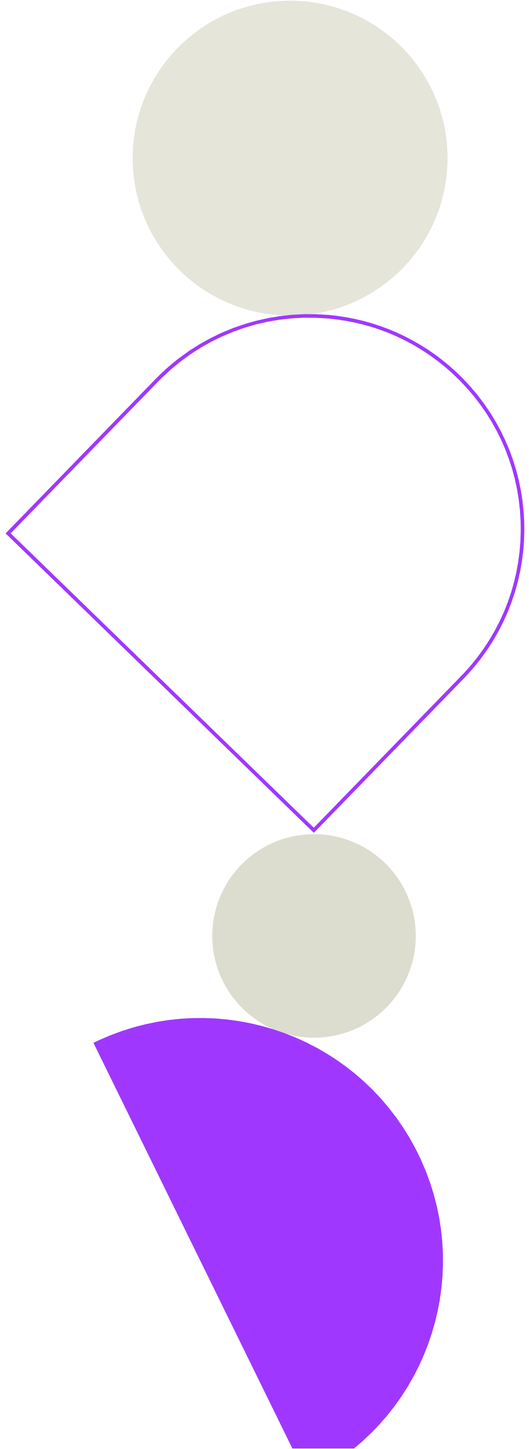


# I. Balancing immediate returns with long-term equity

## The tension between short-term sales and long-term brand health represents perhaps the most significant challenge facing B2B F&N marketers. This isn't simply a matter of resource allocation but reflects a deeper question about how organisations define and measure marketing success.

Forward-thinking companies are moving beyond the limitations of pure ROI metrics to embrace Value of Investment approaches that account for the full spectrum of marketing's contribution to business success.

This means recognising that while immediate lead generation remains essential, equally important are the less tangible assets of brand recognition, trust and preference. Unlike ROI's focus on attributable financial returns, VOI acknowledges that brand building creates durable competitive advantages whose value is not limited to quarterly results, enabling F&N marketers to justify investments in differentiation and creative storytelling that may not deliver immediate sales but are essential for sustainable growth.



# II. Creative differentiation as a competitive necessity

## The research clearly signals a sector-wide recognition that creative differentiation provides a crucial competitive edge, even as many brands struggle to translate this understanding into practice.

In the B2B Food & Nutrition space, creative differentiation goes beyond aesthetically pleasing designs. It encompasses innovative approaches to communicating complex scientific and technical information. This might include developing interactive digital tools that visualise ingredient functionality, crafting distinctive brand narratives that connect technical benefits to broader consumer trends or employing unexpected formats like documentary-style video content to showcase real-world applications.

The coming years will see increased investment in creative approaches that break through the category conventions, with those brands that successfully bridge the creativity gap gaining disproportionate share of voice and attention.

# III. Integrated channel strategies for maximum impact

## The research indicates that marketers are approaching channel selection with increasing sophistication, focusing less on individual channel performance and more on how different touchpoints work together in tandem.

What's particularly telling is the strategic recalibration of channel investments for the future: prioritisation of owned, high-value content suggests a strategic shift from rented attention to building proprietary thought leadership assets that can drive engagement across multiple platforms.

The integration of diverse channels—from specialised trade publications to personalised digital touchpoints—creates an ecosystem where brand messaging can be reinforced through multiple complementary exposures, addressing the differentiation challenge through consistent, multi-channel presence.

# Shifting from product-focus to authentic brand narratives

As marketing evolves, the advantage will lie with brands that move beyond technical specifications and embrace purpose-driven storytelling.

Those who succeed will not just demonstrate what they offer but also clearly communicate why it matters—creating narratives rooted in relevance, not rhetoric. It’s not about louder messages but more meaningful ones, delivered with precision across the right channels. That’s how lasting connections are built.

# A taste of what's shaping F&N marketing in 2025

The top trends and priorities Food & Nutrition marketers expect to have the biggest impact on their strategies in the year ahead.





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# About BDB

An integrated marketing communications agency, BDB has been helping multinational Food & Nutrition B2B brands achieve transformative communications for almost 40 years.

With unrivalled technical expertise and a legacy of consultative execution, we combine inspiration, information and ingenuity to turn complex challenges into lasting commercial opportunities.

To learn how we can elevate your brand and enhance your influence in the industry, get in touch via email at hello@bdb.global or visit our website

www.bdb.global


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# About Heather Granato

Heather Granato is the founder of strategic business consultancy Nutrachievement and a 30-year veteran of the global nutraceutical and food industry, serving in senior leadership roles with the SupplySide, Vitafoods and Food ingredients events and media brands.

She is an international moderator and presenter with multimedia publishing experience, who has been recognised with awards for leadership, management and content by FOLIO:, the American Herbal Products Association (AHPA) and the United Natural Products Alliance (UNPA). Heather is the co-founder and founding president of Women In Nutraceuticals (WIN), a global non-profit focused on gender equality; she is also on the board of directors for the Organic & Natural Health Association.



# Achieve more from your B2B F&N marketing

In today’s fast-moving F&N landscape, standing apart is no longer a luxury—it’s a necessity. Brands that resonate don’t just speak louder; they speak with clarity, purpose and creativity.

At BDB, we bring sector knowledge together with bold ideas to help you craft a distinctive narrative and deliver it through powerful, integrated campaigns.

If you’re looking to strengthen your presence and take your brand further, let’s talk.

+44 (0)161 925 4700

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