

Accenture Interactive

The Great Marketing Declutter

Focus. Discard. Rewire.

Over the last year and a half, the kitchen became a school, the living room became a gym, and the dining room became an office. The boundaries between so many aspects of life blurred—especially between people’s personal and professional lives.

So much change so fast has been exhausting. A global employee survey reveals that **44% of employees say they are burned out**,¹ and other reports indicate that over 40% are considering quitting.² Burnout is especially prevalent in marketing organizations.



Nearly 70% of marketing executives say that the past year has completely exhausted their employees.

Months of relentless change as customers have radically reevaluated their values and purpose have impacted marketers the most directly of all business functions.³ At the same time, shrinking budgets and increased pressure from the business to take the lead on customer experience and drive growth have made marketing even more difficult.

While the digital revolution has transformed the art and science of marketing, it has also made marketing inexorably more complex. There is always a new technology to explore—augmented reality today, and the Metaverse tomorrow. There is an explosion of channels to manage. There is endless data to analyze—let alone use—to deliver personalized experiences. Decades' worth of digital disarray in marketing organizations keeps accumulating with more channels, touchpoints and tools. All adding up to more work for marketers.

Yet we found a small group—just 17% of more than 1,000 marketing executives—whose marketing organizations are thriving despite all this change and complexity.

A full 86% of these select marketing executives say their employees have been energized by a new purpose of servicing customers' rapidly changing motivations. **We call them Thrivers**, and we set out to learn why they're fired-up in a burned-out workforce.

We surveyed over 1,000 senior marketing executives across industries and countries to learn how marketing is changing and what leaders expect for the future.

What marketing needs more of is less

Thrivers know that the world will never go back to how it was. They have seized this reality as permission to redefine what they do, how they do it, and the role of marketing in the business. In essence, they have used the pandemic as a forcing function to say **“no more”** to the way things have been.

Instead of holding on to what is, Thrivers are decluttering marketing to manage complexity. They are zeroing in on their customers' new motivations and what is needed to serve them in smarter, better ways. They focus on what really matters. Discard what doesn't. And rewire the rest. Free of meaningless stuff, Thrivers and their teams are finding greater meaning in their work.

59% of Thrivers say their marketing organization is stronger than last year because they've been pushed to think about marketing differently.

Decluttering marketing is paying off in a powerful trifecta. Marketers are doing more rewarding work. Customer satisfaction and lifetime value have increased. And the business is enjoying a significant performance premium, particularly over competitors whose marketers are burned out. These are the outcomes that every CMO needs in order to drive growth today.

Thrivers, Strivers and Survivors

We segmented marketers into three groups—Thrivers, Strivers and Survivors—based on specific aspects of how they treat their customer relationships.

These include how energized they are to serve changing customer needs, how much more responsible they are for meeting customer needs than they were a year ago, and how close they are to customers in understanding their values and motivations for purchase.

**The most energized about,
responsible for, and close to customers**

**The least energized about,
responsible for, and close to customers**

Thrivers (17%) are fired up

They have been empowered to be responsible for meeting customers' changing priorities and are flourishing because of it. They feel close to customers and are obsessed about connecting with them in authentic ways.

Strivers (66%) are persevering

They have some autonomy to meet customer needs but limited awareness of customer changes. So they are doing their best to make an impact. They have the will, but not always the way.

Survivors (17%) are burned out

They are not in tune with the pulse of customer change and assume it is temporary. They are trying to cope but it's becoming harder and harder to hold onto the status quo waiting for things to go back to normal.

Thrivers perform far better than Survivors

Over

1.4x

more likely to perform
far better in revenue
growth and profitability.

Over

1.8x

more likely to
perform far better in
customer satisfaction.

Over

2x

more likely to perform
far better in customer
lifetime value.

Over

2.5x

more likely to
perform far better in
customer awareness.

Thrivers understand how to cut through the clutter. Boldly. Bravely. And without apologies. When the world went sideways, challenging so much of what they knew, Thrivers took the chance to do what marketers have wanted to do for years. Change marketing.

Our global survey pinpoints exactly how they are leading the way in both their thinking and their actions. The distinctions are most evident when comparing Thrivers to Survivors, which is where we focus our analysis.

It is a story of two extremes. One group of marketers is breaking through while the others are breaking down. The comparison reveals a clear difference between mindsets and methods that are generative and motivational and those that are proving less productive and are discouraging.

Understanding this difference is instructive for marketing organizations everywhere. By emulating Thrivers, Survivors can begin to turn things around. And Strivers—who are the majority of marketers today—can focus on specific ways to improve their impact.

Thrivers ask themselves:

Is it aligned with our purpose?

YES

Is it aligned with our customers' purpose?

YES

Will it improve how we work?

YES

The **Thrivers** difference:

Five rules for
decluttering marketing

- 01 **Reacquaint yourself with your customers**
- 02 **Find your collective difference**
- 03 **Move at the pace of change**
- 04 **Figure out what no one wants to do**
- 05 **Own what you want to stand for**

01

Reacquaint yourself with your customers

Customer behaviors have always been evolving, but the pandemic took customer change to uncharted territory. Marketers have scrambled to understand customers' shifting priorities and, as a result, are reassessing which marketing activities to keep, which to pause and which to discard. Now is the time to step back and focus on what matters to thrive in a world in flux.



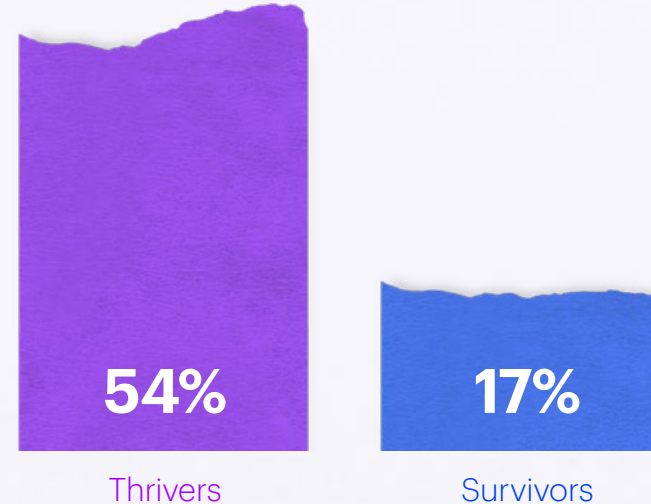
What Thrivers do

Thrivers faced the truth that the customers they once knew are no longer the same. Thrivers know their old beliefs about customer preferences—and by extension, how they connect with their customers—are less relevant. In fact, Thrivers are over **2.5x more likely** than Survivors to believe the challenges that marketing faces today are fundamentally new.

Seeing change for what it really is

Most marketing executives (**70%**) think the pandemic will have only short-term effects on consumer psychology and behavior. However, Thrivers are the radical realists. Not only do they see the challenges as new, they see them as long term. **More than half** believe that marketing will be significantly influenced by the pandemic for the foreseeable future, compared to just **17%** of Survivors.

Thrivers are over 2.5x more likely than Survivors to believe that today's marketing challenges are fundamentally new.



Listening to the customer zeitgeist

It is one thing to acknowledge that customers' motivations have changed. It is another to continually uncover and act on changes—especially when they are so fluid. But Thrivers find the truth by listening to customers. Then face it.

The use of digital tools is one way that Thrivers listen and engage with customers, going straight to the source to learn what matters most to them. To get close to their customers, they know they have to be contextually relevant to where their customers are, and most commonly invest in geolocation technologies. They are also **nearly 50% more likely** than Survivors to have already implemented technologies to conduct social listening and field surveys. All of this is to create a virtuous loop of interaction between marketers and customers grounded in the customer zeitgeist.

Thrivers are 50% more likely than Survivors to have already implemented technologies to conduct social listening and field surveys.



Measuring what matters to customers

Having listened to what matters to customers, Thrivers fully commit to it, cutting through complexity and shifting their priorities accordingly across everything they do. And they hold themselves accountable by measuring their own performance through a customer lens. Case in point: **Customer satisfaction is Thrivers' #1 criteria for success.**

While cost, efficiency and competitive measures clearly still matter, Thrivers' self-assigned first accountability is to what customers care about—an external measure rather than an internal vanity metric. For Survivors, customer satisfaction is not so primary, ranking behind how well they control the cost of maintaining customer value.

Thrivers know that assumptions can be dangerous. They believe in listening to customers to rewire marketing around who customers are at a moment in time, not who marketers assume they will always be.

How to get reacquainted with your customers

Focus on what really matters

Put customers in the middle of everything by engaging with them in meaningful ways—from developing customer advisory boards to giving them a voice in product or service development. Track changing behaviors through telemetry and feedback mechanisms and act on customer suggestions quickly.

Discard yesterday's personas

Humanize customer segmentation, shifting from one-dimensional caricatures to multi-dimensional views that offer a full view of customers based on what they are likely to do and why they do it. Internalize these personas as a shared north star, activate them across all initiatives and update them regularly.

Rewire what is measured—and how

Evolve performance measures to reflect the outcomes that are most important to customers, not just to the business. Measuring what matters to customers by using customer performance indicators (CPIs) can deliver better results on the outcomes important to the business (KPIs).

Helping customers love pets like family

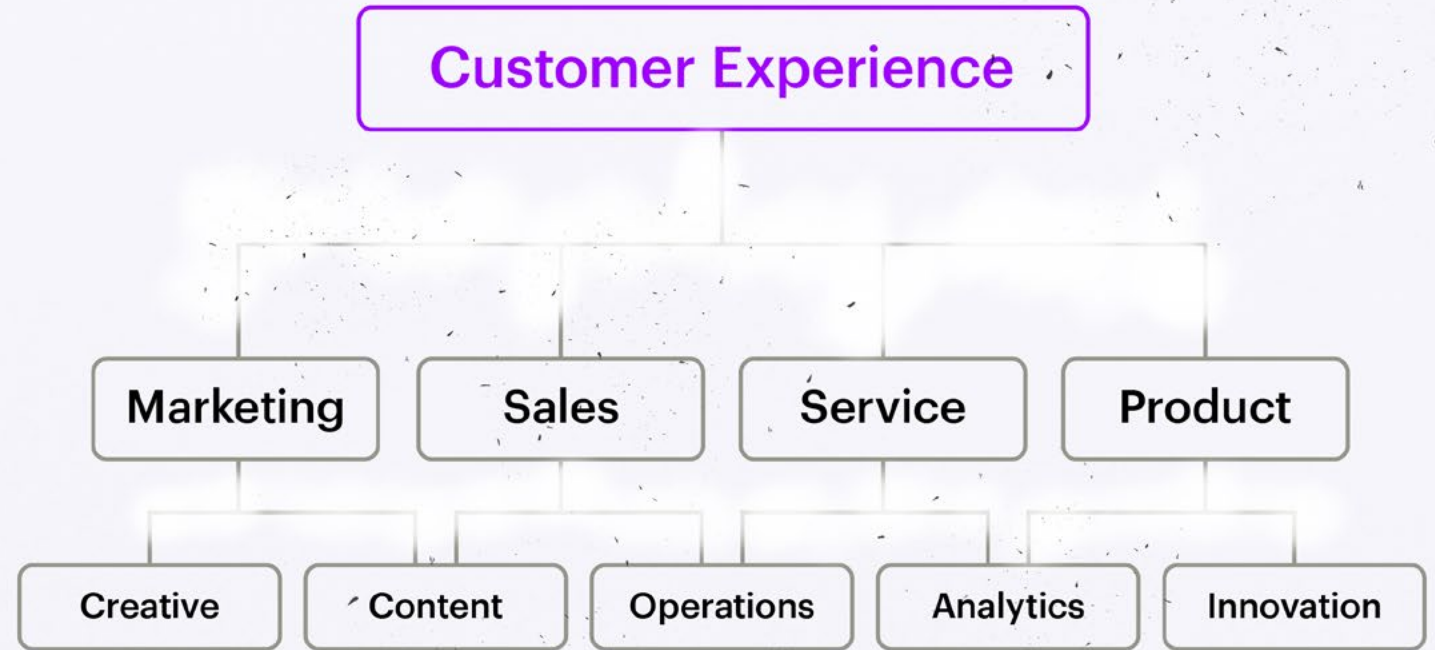
SPOTLIGHT

Pet adoptions soared during the pandemic as people made room for furry friends to keep them company at home. It was the perfect moment for **Blue Buffalo**, America's top selling natural pet food brand, to deepen its relationships with pet parents. As part of this focus, the brand created a new experience called Buddies™. It is designed to help pet parents build a happier and healthier relationship with their four-legged family members. With Buddies, people can connect with a community that puts pets first, track all their pals' activities, shop BLUE products and earn points for exclusive rewards—all in one place.

02

Find your collective difference

Every part of the business is hyper focused on its own priorities and workstreams. But delivering on differentiation and customer experience takes unity and collaboration. Now is the time to rewire the enterprise around its collective difference—eliminating competing ambitions so that the whole is greater than its parts.



What Thrivers do

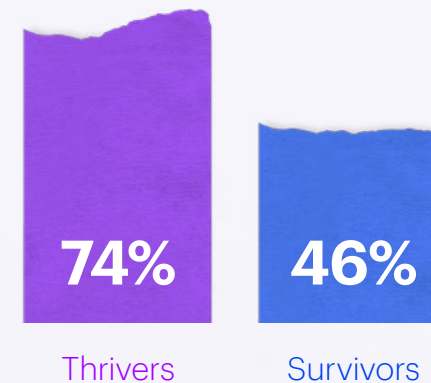
Thrivers know that they cannot go it alone when it comes to differentiating in the market. So, they use data to create a common understanding and rally the organization around its collective difference. After all, differentiating the brand to customers is the one thing that binds everyone together no matter their siloed responsibilities. In fact, Thrivers are nearly **40% more likely** than Survivors to focus their use of data to drive a shared ambition and differentiate their brands.

Rallying around a common ambition

Thrivers know that unleashing differentiation goes way beyond marketing. It requires synching all functions—product, commerce, sales, service and marketing—around it. To do this, Thrivers have stepped up to take ownership and accountability for customer experience. Just two years ago, all marketing organizations reported roughly similar levels of influence in customer experience strategy.

Today, far more Thrivers than Survivors own customer experience within their organizations, and **74%** of Thrivers report that their input is highly critical to key business decisions regarding customer experience. Only **46%** of Survivors say the same. In addition, Thrivers know that experience is inextricably linked to differentiation and growth. They are **67% more likely** than Survivors to provide essential input to corporate growth strategies.

Their input is key to business decisions around customer experience strategy



Leading with influence everywhere

Unlocking collective difference means leading with influence outside of the marketing department. Thrivers are far more likely than Survivors to be open and culturally ambidextrous. Collaboration even in areas not typically aligned with marketing has become second nature. **Nearly all Thrivers (91%)** frequently collaborate across functions and move talent between different groups, compared to **73%** of Survivors. This suggests that Thrivers understand that every function must play a role in delivering on differentiation, and they are actively leading the charge. As an example, **19% more Thrivers** provide highly critical input on aftersales strategy compared to two years ago.

91% of Thrivers frequently collaborate across functions and move talent between groups, compared to **73% of Survivors.**

Asking for forgiveness later

As much as Thrivers value collaboration, they are keenly aware of the fine line between building consensus and bottlenecking progress. Thrivers are deliberate about how they collaborate across the C-suite, embracing a do-it-now, ask-for-forgiveness later attitude while keeping peers informed about what they are doing and why. They are **2.5x more likely** than Survivors to say it is very important to work with the CEO and Board of Directors to impact business priorities and strategic issues. This suggests that they know when to use their hard-earned organizational influence to bypass delays and complexity in service of moving the customer agenda forward.

Thrivers galvanize the entire organization around their collective difference. Not only in words, but in actions. They understand that taking the lead means knowing what to focus on, who to rally and where to push to deliver outcomes. Thrivers go straight to the CEO when they have to in order to impact business priorities.

Cheers to change

SPOTLIGHT

“During the pandemic, we quickly realized the usual ways of operating weren’t going to work and we needed closer collaboration across the business than ever before to best support our employees, customers and consumers. Identifying new ways of working has continued beyond Covid and every function is now looking at all aspects of what they do to determine which tasks could be simplified, adapted or maybe even eliminated. It’s bringing even greater clarity to what we do and improving how we work together as an organization”

**Julie Bramham / Global Brand Director
Johnnie Walker, Diageo**

How to find your collective difference

Focus everyone on purpose

Strengthen cross-functional collaboration grounded in the brand purpose and a sense of community. Take ownership of a vision that the whole organization can get behind—from leadership to the most junior employees—and allow people to participate through their actions.

Discard tired ways of working

Lead the charge in the business to evolve the operating model to remove friction, support data-driven decisions and create better work environments. Ensure that the new operating model inherently transcends longstanding organizational silos.

Rewire around value delivery

Communicate the marketing strategy to internal stakeholders—particularly the C-suite—as a value story. Be specific about what every functional area of the business must do to support customers' agenda, and do it with honesty, authenticity and transparency.

Smashing silos with data

SPOTLIGHT

Leading UK insurer **Direct Line** knows their brand is so much more than its communications. It's the full customer experience. This is one reason why the insurer made improving collaboration between marketing and the rest of the business a priority. A shift to an agile operating model helped break down internal silos, and Direct Line has been able to launch new propositions much faster than before. The new model includes a Data Center of Excellence to make the company's wealth of customer data accessible across the organization to improve customer experience.

"You've got to get over your own ego of owning a function. I think deep down marketers are collaborators and like to join the organization up, which means that they can play a lead role in breaking down silos."

**Mark Evans / Managing Director,
Marketing & Digital, Direct Line Group**

03

Move at the pace of change

There is so much rapid change and mounting pressure in marketing today. It is easy for marketers to lose focus and get lost in all the clutter of priorities coming at them from all sides. Now is the time to rewire the marketing organization for speed so that it can move at the pace of customer and market changes.

Marketing organizations struggle to move quickly and not wastefully. They need to declutter processes and the labor-intensive ways of working in order to move as fast as customers and markets change.

What Thrivers do

What has become evident to nearly all Thrivers **(91%)** over the last 12 months is that customers' behaviors are changing faster than ever. They understand that the only way to lead and stay relevant is to move quickly and proactively in real time with customers, which has made finding the right speed non-negotiable for them.

91% of Thrivers believe that customers' behaviors are changing faster than ever.

Changing marketing for speed

Thrivers are committed to making a wholesale shift to adapt everything they do—insight, data, engagement, responsiveness—so that change is the expectation, not the exception. It means moving away from committing to specific investments or campaigns far in advance, and instead, regularly revisiting plans and actions and revising them as necessary.

A critical foundation for this is to have an operating model backed by technology capabilities that allow for rapid and smooth shifts. It is not about rushing; it is about being ready. Thrivers make this a priority. They are **over 2x more likely** than Survivors to strongly agree that their organization has had to significantly adapt operations for this fast-paced environment.

Mastering test-learn-tweak-repeat

The way that Thrivers think about speed is different. Their mindset is not about making people work harder to go faster. Quite the opposite. They are interested in working smarter and faster on the right things to increase speed. The goal is to deliver messages, content and experiences that are relevant to customers' "right-now" needs.

Thrivers do this with a more adaptive, agile organization that values experimentation and test-learn-tweak-repeat approaches. They continuously follow the pulse of customer change, tossing aside the initiatives that are not resonating, and zeroing in on those that are much earlier in the process. Thrivers go beyond using data insights as a validation in the final stages of development. Instead, insights define everything they do from the start. Rather than focus solely on budgets and timelines, Thrivers focus on customer and business outcomes.



Scaling what works the best

Thrivers realize that getting the most impact from their agility means practicing it at scale, not in isolated corners of the marketing department. Essentially all **(95%)** have increased their ability to scale at speed compared to **65%** of Survivors. That means that Thrivers are increasing technology investments to improve execution time. Take AI for example, Thrivers have implemented AI at far higher rates, which enables them to quickly localize and personalize content and campaigns with its ability to predict customer intents based on each customer's profile, behavioral and contextual data. Then they design experiences and offers around these intents..

Not only have Thrivers been successful embracing agility within the marketing organization, but they are using their influence to get other functions to adopt agile methodologies to expedite every facet of the experience. They are nearly **5x more likely** than Survivors to say that their organizations' agile methods are supported through coordination with and buy-in from other functions.

Thrivers do not want to fall behind. By rewiring the organization to flex fast, Thrivers can do more than watch their customers change around them. They can change with them. At speed.

95% of Thrivers have increased their ability to scale at speed compared to **65% of Survivors.**



How to move at the pace of change

Focus on better, faster decisions

Take a hard look at processes that slow down decision making. To get buy in, get to the point by trading lengthy business cases for executive summaries that tell decision-makers everything they need to know so they can approve, reject or tweak the plan and move to the next thing.

Discard narrow thinking—and doing

Avoid over-indexing on one method or approach to improve organizational velocity. Take a broader view of all the components, including infrastructure, data insight, operating model, talent sourcing practices, even performance measurement.

Rewire for continuous experimentation

Create an environment where all ideas can be considered—and remember—little ideas are important and can deliver big impact. Allow for ongoing and rigorous experimentation to easily test new ideas to find those to invest in at scale—ensuring that the organization is change ready by design.

Passing the test of speed

CVS Health's marketing organization went into high gear in the early months of the pandemic, as the pharmacy and healthcare giant became a COVID-19 testing provider. The marketing team had to quickly pull everything out of market, and at the same time, inform people about testing. Thanks to an agile marketing operating model, CVS got sites live and messages shared in 48 hours, rapidly deploying communications tuned to different populations and geographies.

"If we hadn't been communicating to our clients, members and customers in an effective way, it wouldn't have mattered that we were doing all this stuff, because nobody would have known about it. And so operations—the foundation that we had in place—enabled us to rapidly move in the moment."

**Norman de Greve / Chief Marketing Officer
CVS Health**

04

Figure out what no one wants to do

The marketing ecosystem has become exponentially more complex thanks to an explosion of touchpoints, technologies, regulatory issues and partners. Managing everything they have to do can be overwhelming and defeating for marketers. Now is the time to clear the space to focus on what really motivates them to do their best work.

Creative Performance

Data Entry

Compliance Checks

Creative Thinking

Translation

Experimentation

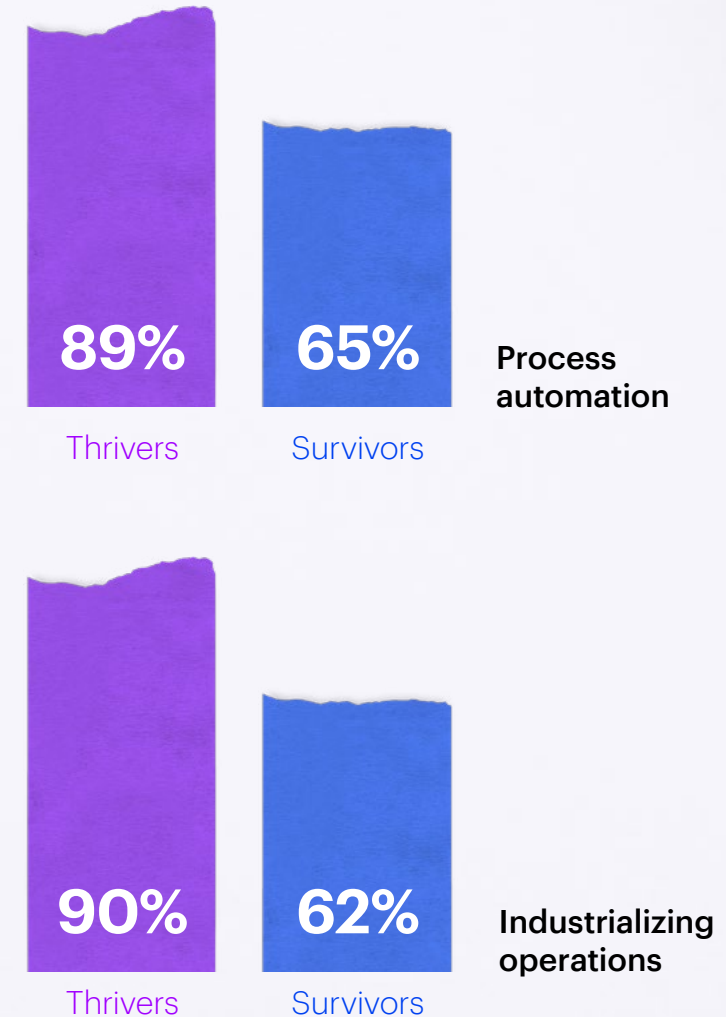
Content Optimization

What Thrivers do

Thrivers have outwitted complexity. They understand that not all marketing tasks are created equal. It is not about stopping tedious and transactional tasks. Instead, it is about getting them done in other ways. Case in point: Thrivers are **40% more likely** than Survivors to have increased investments in process automation and industrializing operations, whether through internal teams, external partners or a hybrid of both.

Moving from mundane to motivating

Thrivers identify the tasks that marketers do not like to do, or that are repetitive with few changes, and lean into process automation **(89%)** and industrializing operations **(90%)** to get them done. Survivors are not even close in matching these investment increases. With automation technologies becoming more sophisticated all the time, these technologies can handle higher-level tasks that were out of reach even just a few years ago. That's how Thrivers are freeing marketers from tedious tasks like compliance checks, translation and content optimization.



04 Figure out what no one wants to do

Having made these investments, Thrivers are in an ideal place to benefit from the next generation of marketing automation. In addition to taking on the repetitive, unfulfilling work, intelligent machines are on an exciting trajectory to making the fulfilling work even more fulfilling. Advances are happening fast.

Consider how AI can improve content creation for better conversion rates. Companies are using AI-powered tools that alert designers to deviations from brand guidelines or compliance requirements. These tools can also reverse-engineer the creative performance of different elements of large amounts of content to determine which perform better—from which capture people's attention first to which are the most memorable. And they can do this for different audience segments. By pulling data insight into creative processes early on, AI empowers creatives with assurances that their ideas are on target while preserving their ability to perfect their craft. Creatives are not only making clever content, they are working at the intersection of data insight and creativity.



Delegating with confidence

Thrivers are also turning to trusted channel partners to rewire ways of working in marketing. Realizing that they do not have to do it all, Thrivers empower other groups and partners with the right skills and capabilities to take on their share of the responsibility.

Doing this makes good sense from both resource utilization and employee engagement perspectives. In fact, Thrivers are more likely than Survivors to have ramped up investments to improve coordination and communication across marketing support services **(90% vs. 64%)**. They also are over **60% more likely** to have increased investments in improving ways of working with their channel partner ecosystem **(91% vs. 56%)**.

91% of Thrivers are likely to invest more to improve ways of working with their channel partner ecosystem compared to just 56% of Survivors.

Compared to Survivors, Thrivers are **40% more likely** to rank innovation and originality as an important future skill

Seeking out fresh thinking

Having redistributed some marketing tasks to machines and skilled partners, Thrivers understandably invest in different skills for the human workforce. Looking toward the future, they are interested in developing innovation skills and originality. At the same time, they are interested in hiring people with the technical skills needed to strategically lead the automation of lower-value work, which makes for an interesting duality. Compared to Survivors, Thrivers are **40% more likely** to rank innovation and originality as an important future skill and **23% more likely** to view technical skills as an important future skill.

Thrivers have an edge because they have discovered something fundamental about marketing today. It is just as important to be thoughtful about how to discard tasks as it is to be thoughtful about how to complete them.

How to figure out what no one else wants to do

Focus on marketers' value—and passions

Create an environment where marketers feel that they can share their thoughts and perspectives. Encourage them to reveal the parts of their jobs that they do not like doing as well as the tasks that inspire them where they can make the best contributions.

Discard temporary Band-Aids

Avoid the temptation to invest in tools before streamlining existing ways of working. Focus first on improving processes to better align with serving customer needs and achieving better business outcomes. Then start small to ensure solutions and refined processes will work. Expect to scale via iteration.

Rewire for human and machines

Be transparent with employees about how their roles will shift and make it easier for customers to seek out human-to-human interactions when they need them. Make it clear that there is a path to more interesting work as a way to acquire, train and retain top talent.

The beauty of streamlined operations

SPOTLIGHT

To implement a global brand strategy locally, beauty leader **Shiseido** relies on a digital activation center to quickly scale product promotions and marketing campaigns based on customer demand data and other vital metrics. Thanks to the center, marketers can stop spending countless hours parsing fragmented chunks of customer data and focus on strategic marketing tasks. Optimizing the power of data insights and intelligence, Shiseido now engages customers with dynamic personalized communications and experiences.

05

Own what you want to stand for

Many marketers have discovered that trying to be all things to all people is messy. It is easy to lose sight of their unique brand purpose. In trying to appeal to everyone, they risk appealing to no one. Now is the time for marketers to discard the long tail of tactics that yield diminishing returns so they can truly own what they stand for in big, bold ways.



**BRAND
PURPOSE**

What Thrivers do

When it comes to new opportunities to stand out to their customers, Thrivers take them—and own them. They do not just express their brand purpose in what they say. They embody it in what they do. So much so that they are **over 2x more likely** than Survivors to be laser-focused on actioning their brand purpose in customer experiences to demonstrate their competitive differentiation.

Thrivers are over 2x more likely than Survivors to be laser-focused on actioning brand purpose to customers to highlight their competitive differentiation.

Empathizing with customers

Thrivers are owning their brand purpose in authentic ways by focusing on their target customers, not on everyone. They feel far more responsible for ensuring that their customers feel cared for when they interact with them.

Consider that **72%** of consumers who shifted attitudes and behaviors over the last year expect the brands they choose to understand how their needs have changed and commit to addressing them.⁴ Among all marketers, Thrivers are best positioned to do this. They feel the deepest connection with their customers and over **70%** believe that most of their customers want more empathy from them versus just over half of Survivors.

Connecting in more meaningful ways

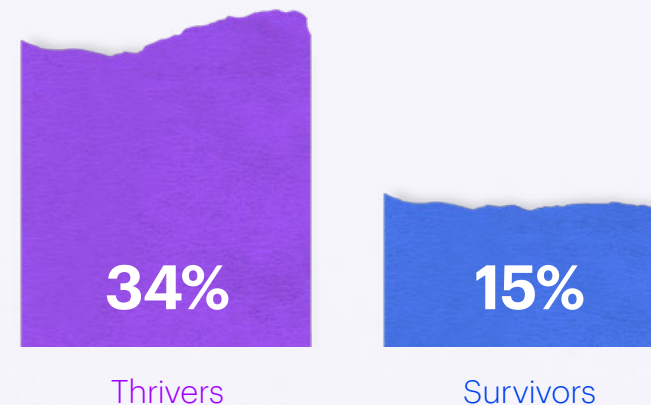
Thrivers are much more likely than Survivors to see growth potential in customer changes. For example, they are **5x more likely** than Survivors to view shifts in customer values coming out of the pandemic period as opportunities to rethink marketing's role and reimagine their brand purpose.

This is a mindset grounded in applying brand purpose in areas that matter the most to customers. Right now, two opportunities stand out for them. Thrivers are nearly twice as likely as Survivors to have adjusted their marketing practices to resonate with personal care and service. At the same time, Thrivers are more than twice as likely to have adjusted how they market to accommodate customers' focus on trustworthiness.

How do Thrivers deliver for customers in these areas? They think beyond optimizing channels and touch points and focus instead on creating bold gestures that are authentic to their brand purpose. They give themselves permission to take business-as-usual marketing campaigns beyond business as usual.

Consider what one bank did during the pandemic in line with its purpose of serving customers in innovative ways. With a strong online banking platform and emphasis on digital marketing, the bank made sure that customers had the peace of mind of knowing that they could do their banking during quarantine without ever having to set foot in a branch.

We have adjusted our marketing to accommodate customers' focus on trustworthiness



Protecting what matters most

SPOTLIGHT

Australian insurer **NRMA** lived its brand purpose in everything from helping people reduce risk to protecting the habitat of endangered koalas. The public responded. Customer growth, profit, brand evaluation and brand awareness all increased significantly.

Innovating without boundaries

Thrivers understand that connecting with customers in these ways demands both innovative thinking and implementation at scale.

In fact, Thrivers believe that the chief innovation officer is the most important executive to collaborate with to impact business priorities and deliver on brand purpose. Less than half as many Survivors value this collaboration in the same way. Moreover, Thrivers view innovative products and services that sustain growth as a critical success factor—second only to customer satisfaction. For Survivors, innovation is well down the list of marketing's success measures.

By owning their brand purpose, connecting with customers with empathy and authenticity, and delivering for customers on what they value, Thrivers are laying the groundwork for relationships that can endure even as customer preferences shift.



How to own what you want to stand for

Focus on employees as champions

Rally all employees across the company as the best evangelists of the brand purpose. Co-create engaging and inspiring internal communications of purpose to cultivate a shared aspiration that everyone can embody and express.

Discard the empty promises

Forget vanilla proclamations of brand purpose that could fit any brand and messages that pull at the heartstrings without any heart behind them. Ensure that the brand purpose is meaningful and specific to the organization, not just words that sound good.

Rewire the culture to spark imagination

Foster an open and creative culture that makes room for rebels and recognize that going above and beyond has become an essential ingredient to business as usual.

Big support for the littlest humans

SPOTLIGHT

To stay relevant to modern parents and adapt to their increasingly digital behaviors, babycare brand **Huggies®** launched a new global brand platform tailored to every market. The platform brings life to Huggies' new brand purpose, "Helping Navigate the Unknowns of Babyhood." The new direction saw emotional response and praise from the general public and moms. It drove 1.3 billion earned impressions, more than 410 social engagements and an 11-point lift in brand net sentiment. Huggies was also a category leader in organic search volume for the first time in three years.

"We are committed to showing up for a new generation of parents and children—and I think Huggies' new brand purpose embodies this spirit. And we understand how difficult it is to navigate the unknowns of babyhood during a global pandemic. So we've donated 5 million diapers to the National Diaper Bank Network and are working with nonprofit Hand to Hold to provide support for NICU caregivers during this time. It's all about helping babies thrive."

**Craig Christenson / Vice President Global Baby
& Child Care at Kimberly-Clark**

Focus. Discard. Rewire. How Thrivers deliver:

01

**Reacquaint yourself
with your customers**

54%

of Thrivers

Believe that customer changes brought by the pandemic will be long-term (compared with just 17% of Survivors).

02

**Find your
collective difference**

74%

of Thrivers

Report owning the customer experience—their input is highly critical to key business decisions (versus less than half of Survivors).

03

**Move at the
pace of change**

5x

More likely than Survivors to say that other functions support and buy into their agile methods.

04

**Figure out what
no one wants to do**

90%

of Thrivers

Have industrialized marketing operations to reduce overall complexity, compared with just 62% of Survivors.

05

**Own what you
want to stand for**

5x

More likely than Survivors to view shifts in customer values coming out of the pandemic period as opportunities to rethink marketing's role and reimagine their brand purpose.

Less of the wrong things More of the right things

With so much time at home over the last year or so—and more time than usual on their hands—people started to see the clutter around them. They got inspired by organizing expert Marie Kondo. They packed up boxes of stuff to donate to charities. They hauled off junk to the nearest dump.⁵

This great declutter is happening in marketing too.

Thrivers are taking control and decluttering by following their own rules—one step at a time. They determine what they should keep—the responsibilities and tasks that motivate teams, meet customer expectations and deliver for the business. They have discovered that shifting and getting rid of things produces greater returns. More growth. More meaning. Even more joy. This is why instead of burning out, Thrivers are igniting a rallying cry that is changing marketing.



Authors



 Jeannine Falcone

Global Marketing
Services Lead,
Accenture Interactive

Jeannine has nearly 30 years of experience running large-scale global agency and digital marketing businesses and has helped to build, transform and lead successful teams to drive growth for some of the world's largest brands. She is based in Philadelphia.



 Nevine El-Warraky

Marketing Advisory, Europe
Accenture Interactive

Nevine has over 30 years of marketing consultancy experience in the consumer goods industry, and specializes in growth strategy, marketing operating models and digital transformation. Before joining Accenture, she was the Co-CEO of Brand Learning, which Accenture acquired in 2017. She is based in London.



 Gene Cornfield

Experience Transformation
Lead, North America,
Accenture Interactive

Gene has over 25 years in transforming marketing and customer experience across several industries. He also leads Accenture's global CMO community of 600+ senior-most marketing leaders who gather throughout the year to collaboratively tackle their greatest opportunities and most pressing challenges. He is based in Boston.



 Giovanni Rivetti

Communicate Experiences
Lead, LATAM,
Accenture Interactive

A seasoned content marketer, Giovanni founded the Committee Melhores Práticas de Conteúdo de Marca (Best Practices for Brand Content) at the Brazilian Association of Advertisers and co-founded New Content, which Accenture acquired in 2018. He is based in São Paulo.

Contributors

Mark Curtis

Global Head of Innovation,
Accenture Interactive

Carlos Horn

B2B Marketing Services,
Accenture Interactive

Mark Green

Accenture Interactive Lead,
Australia and New Zealand

Jason Seegert

Marketing Transformation
Lead, North America,
Accenture Interactive

Research Lead

Ivy Lee

Research Team

Josh Bellin

Agneta Björnsjö

Katarzyna Furdzik

Michael Malinoski

Konrad Suchecki

Juan Pablo Romero

Marketing + Communications

Mark Kiernan

M + C Lead

Jeanine Kent

About the research

The research was designed to study the way that marketing leaders felt and reacted to the changes they perceived in their customers/consumers over the past year (e.g. 2020), and how that contributed to their marketing organizations’ resilience (as well as overall business outcomes).

From June to July 2021, Accenture Research and Accenture Interactive surveyed:

1,022

Marketing executives worldwide.

Across

19

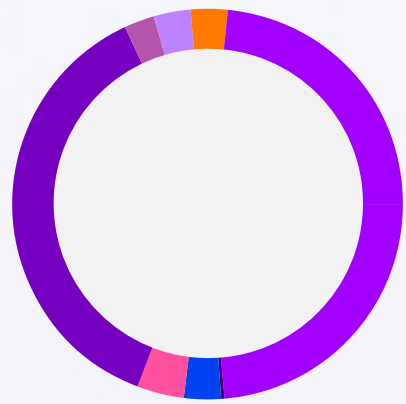
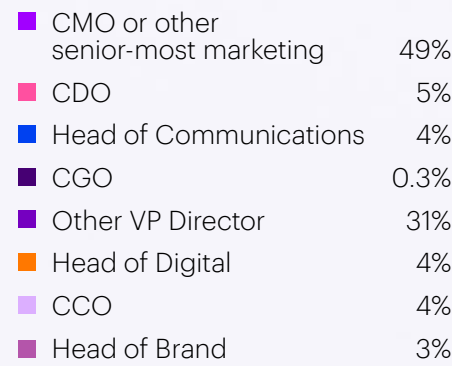
Countries

Across

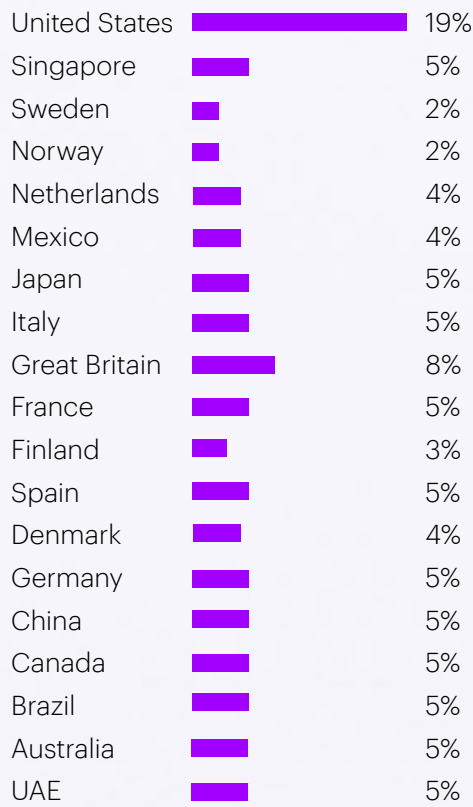
19

Industries

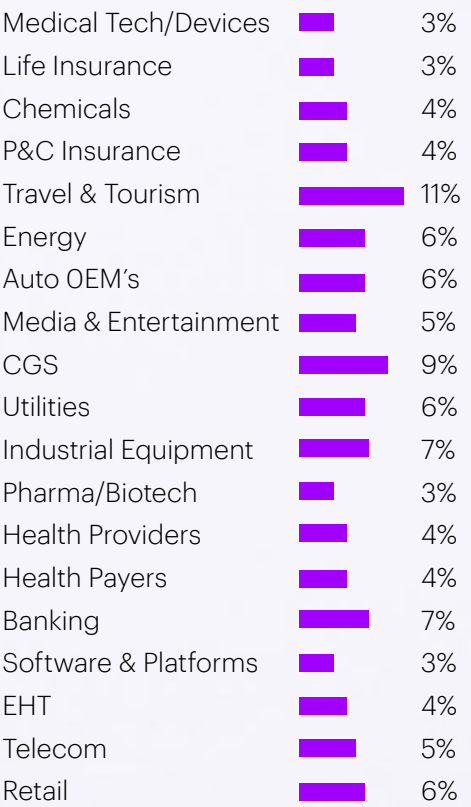
Who we engaged with



Country



Industry



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