

# STATE OF PRODUCT MARKETING REPORT 2020

# CONTENTS

<b>Part 1</b>	
Introduction	3
<b>Part 2</b>	
Our participants, at a glance	6
<b>Part 3</b>	
Roles, responsibilities and team infrastructure	18
<b>Part 4</b>	
How do Product Marketers collaborate with their colleagues?	32
<b>Part 5</b>	
Product Marketing budgeting	37
<b>Part 6</b>	
PMM tools	40
<b>Part 7</b>	
Sources of fulfillment for Product Marketers	43
<b>Part 8</b>	
The appreciation of a Product Marketer	50
<b>Part 9</b>	
Pain points of Product Marketers	56
<b>Part 10</b>	
What does the future hold for Product Marketers?	59
<b>Part 11</b>	
Conclusion	63

# Part 1

## Introduction

# Our motivation behind producing this report

**The last 12-months have provided a rich source of optimism for product marketers. Sure, there's still a degree of ambiguity surrounding the role, but this needn't detract from the fact the coveted positive perceptions amongst C-Suiters have improved, with companies devoting time to putting product marketing teams in place in a bid to fulfill short and long-term targets.**

These developments during the last calendar year represent a sign of progress when compared with our 2019 report, in which the results suggested recognition had perhaps bypassed some product marketers.

Members of the product marketing community can take great encouragement in seeing the positive steps during the last year. But, this doesn't mean there isn't room for further improvements, particularly given PMMs expressed certain wishes when partaking in our previous survey (like a seat at the leadership table and more investment in PMM strategies), to ensure the importance of their roles were fully appreciated.

The following report is a comprehensive analysis, formed to provide an up-to-date picture of how product marketing is regarded in 2020. Global product marketers, with varying degrees of experience and expertise, have provided renewed perspectives, in a bid to gain a definitive understanding of the State of Product Marketing in the modern-day workplace.

# Stuck for time? Check out our key findings

Here are just a select few of the juiciest parts of the report, to whet your appetite:

- 1. 21.2% of Product Marketers work alone:** When we asked PMMs how many people are in their Product Marketing team, over one-fifth of people taking part revealed they're the only person in their set-up.
- 2. Just 5% of product marketers are 100% sure the role of product marketing is fully-understood:** when asked if other teams and stakeholders in their organization understand their role, just 5.1% of product marketers said they believe this is the case.
- 3. More PMMs say they have less influence on their product's direction:** in 2019, the average level of influence on shaping the direction of the product(s) PMMs market was 6.2/10. In 2020, that average dipped to 5.9.
- 4. Product marketers are here for the long-haul:** when asked about their career plans, 66.5% of PMMs said they're keen to enter the next stage of their career in product marketing, with just 4.5% saying they're looking to leave the field.
- 5. Common pain points amongst product marketers included:** 1) lack of clarity surrounding the role of a product marketer, 2) a perceived lack of trust and investment in product marketing from senior management, and 3) lack of clarity between product management and marketing.
- 6. Product marketers are still being pushed to the limit:** in last year's report, it transpired 32.8% of product marketers were responsible for 5+ products. This year, the heavy workload wasn't alleviated. There has been a marginal increase in product marketers being stretched by their employers.
- 7. Interestingly, 1 in 5 product marketers don't directly speak to customers:** instead, they rely on gathering feedback from other, internal teams.

# Part 2

## Our participants, at a glance

**2,000+ product marketers from around the world took part in the survey.**

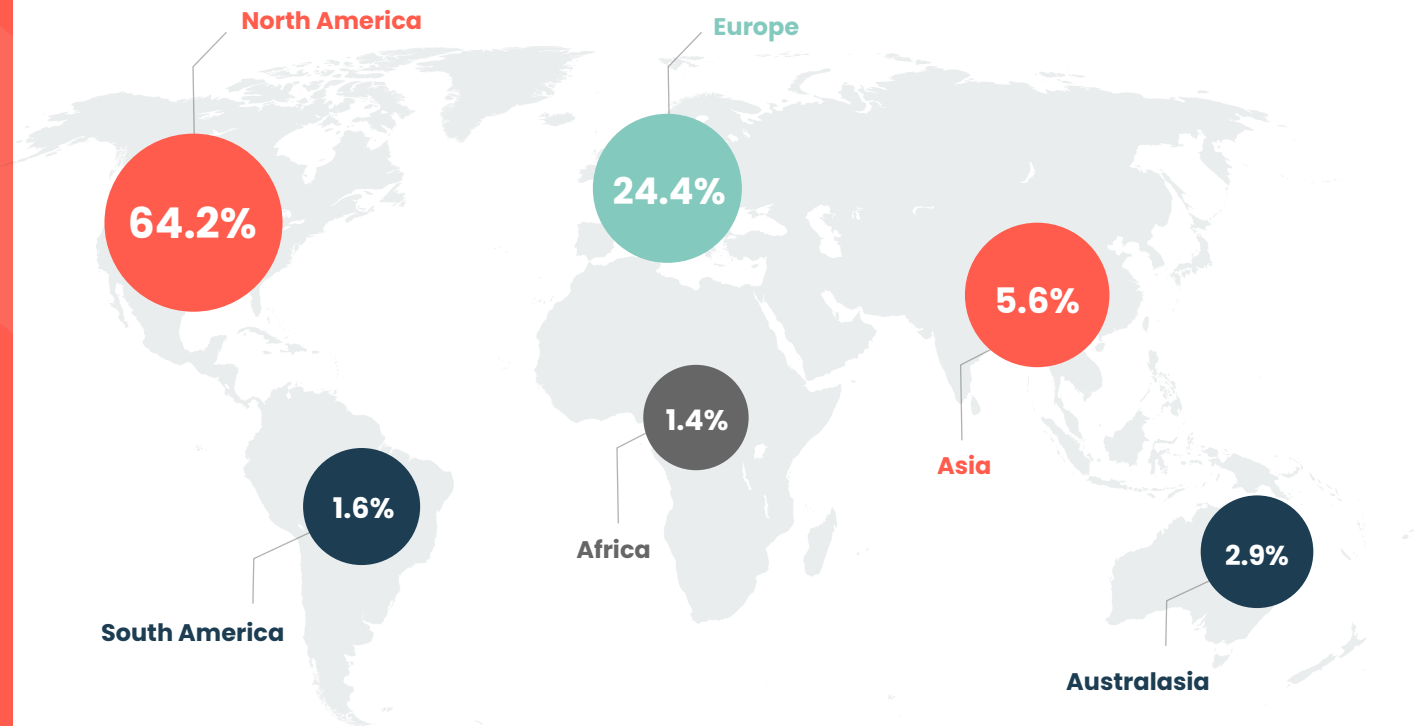
The majority of respondents were from North America and Europe, specializing in B2B services, with most marketing SaaS products to businesses.

While product marketers taking part in the survey were employees at companies at varying stages of development, most were at organizations who were mid-growth with an established go-to-market team in place.

In terms of their length of time in the industry, respondents had varying levels of experience and held a range of job titles, with most relatively new to the field, indicating they'd been working as a product marketer for 1-3 years.

## Location

The product marketers who took part in the survey were primarily from North America (**64.2%**) and Europe (**24.4%**). Outside of the top two continents, PMMs participated from Asia (**5.6%**), Australasia (**2.9%**), South America (**1.6%**), and Africa (**1.4%**).

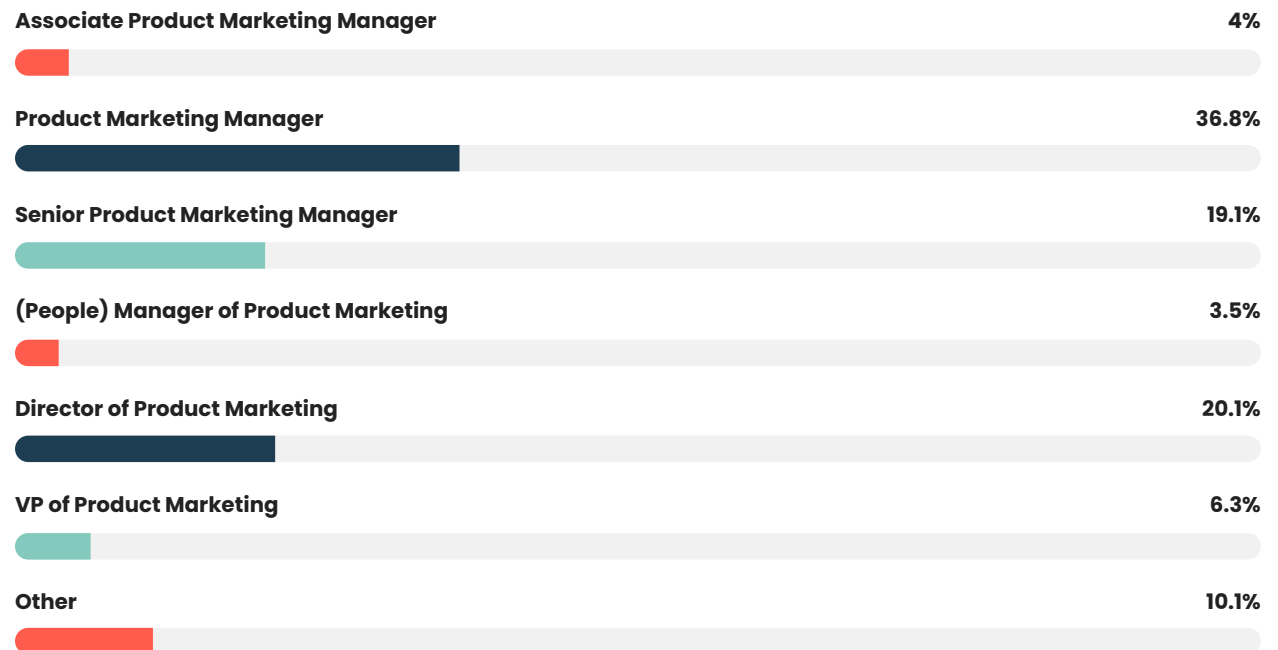


# Experience and roles

## Current role

While the majority of the PMMs were Product Marketing Managers (**36.8%**), a breadth of product marketing experts took part, including Senior Product Marketing Managers (**19.1%**), Directors of Product Marketing (**20.1%**), VP of Product Marketing (**6.3%**), (People) Managers of Product Marketing (**3.5%**), and Associate Product Marketing Managers (**4%**).

Some fell into the category of ‘other’ (**10.1%**), too. Participants within this group included Product Managers, CEOs, Head of SMB Partnerships & Integrations, VP of Marketing, Chief Commercial Officer, Consultants, and so on.



The fact that 10.1% fell into ‘Other’ wasn’t too much of a surprise to us. When we ask PMMs how they got into the product marketing industry, a lot of the time, people say ‘I just realized I’d already been doing parts of the product marketing role but under another job title,’ which explains the percentage here.

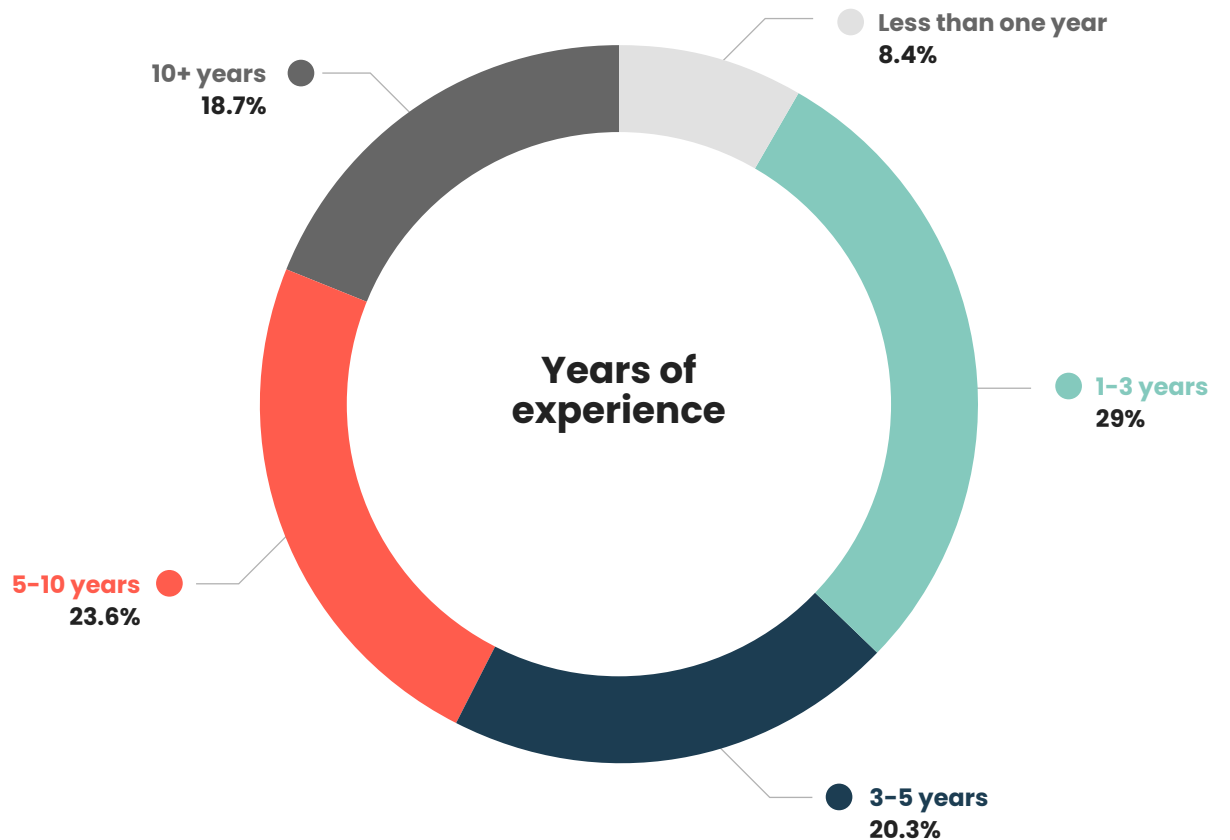


## Experience and roles

### Level of experience

As well as job roles, the level of experience amongst those who took part also varied.

Almost one in 10 (**8.4%**) of the survey's participants have been working in product marketing for less than a year, **29%** have 1–3 years experience, one in five (**20.3%**) have 3–5 years, while **23.6%** and **18.7%** have accumulated 5–10 years and 10+ years experience, respectively.



# Experience and roles

## Previous roles

Trends have indicated more people are making the decision to begin a career in product marketing, and this is the case amongst those taking part in the survey.

While the product marketers surveyed had accumulated years of invaluable experience between them, many had worked in previous sectors before making the transition into product marketing.

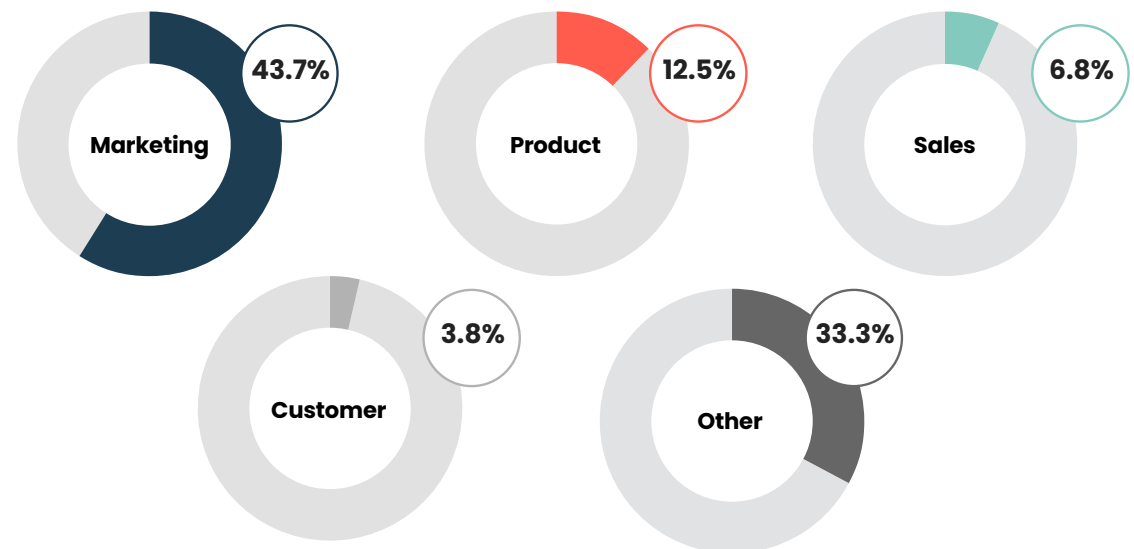
Such was the breadth of roles previously held by the product marketers taking part, we formed a series of umbrella categories and categorized the participants accordingly:

- 1. Marketing** – This group included the likes of Marketing Communications Managers, Directors of Marketing, Brand Specialists, and Content Marketing Managers.
- 2. Sales** – The sales category included product marketers who had previously held positions such as Director of Sales and Marketing, Sales Engineer, Sales Enablement Manager and VP of Sales and Marketing.
- 3. Customer** – This category included PMMs who'd previously held customer-facing roles, such as Customer Success Manager, Customer Strategist, Team Manager, Senior Manager of Client Success, etc.
- 4. Product** – This group included people who had previously worked in roles including Head of Product, VP of Product Management, Product Managers, and so forth.
- 5. Other** – There were a variety of other professions previously held by people in the survey that didn't fall into the aforementioned categories, such as Teachers, Flight Attendant, Attorney, and US Navy Submarine Officer.

The responses revealed that almost half of the people taking part in the survey had decided to pursue a career in product marketing having previously worked in the marketing sector (**43.6%**). Of these PMMs, **65.8%** were based in North America.

## Experience and roles

With people continually seeking a new career path, product marketing continues to appeal to a variety of people in search of an alternative challenge. This was highlighted within the study, with **33.3%** of respondents falling into the 'other' category, a segment including professions with no link with the product marketing field.



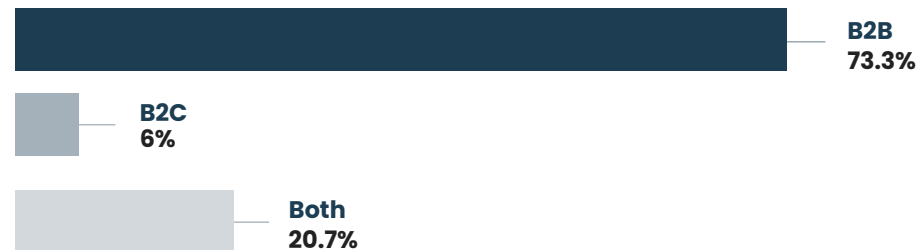
Here's a glimpse into just some of the job titles that fell into 'Other':

Professional Services Consultant	Training Manager
Solution Engineer	Teaching Assistant
Global Media Strategist	UX Designer
Designer	Director of Solutions Architecture
Flight Attendant	Community Manager
Chief Revenue Officer	Events Manager
	Principal
	Ph.D. Scientist
	Validation Engineer
	Director of Public Relations
	Strategy Analyst
	Legal Advisor
	US Navy Submarine Officer

## Company type

### Which customers were served?

The majority of product marketers surveyed work at companies offering specialist B2B services for businesses (**73.3%**). Some product marketers worked in B2C (**6%**), while a proportion served both B2B and B2C customers (**20.7%**).



### Which products were marketed?

Many of the PMMs surveyed market a SaaS product (**74%**), while some market both SaaS and physical products (**12.5%**), which was pretty consistent with last year's findings. Elsewhere, a minority of the product marketers who took part focus their efforts solely on physical products (**6.5%**).



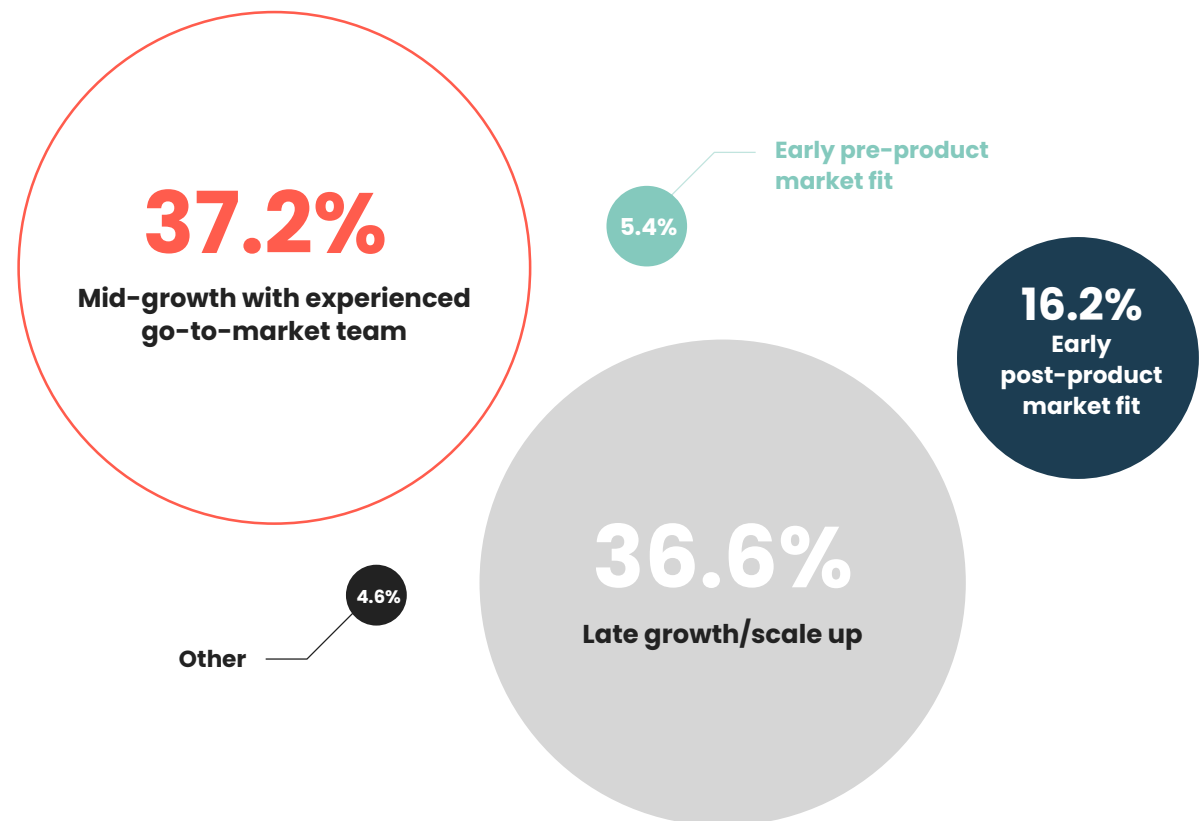
**NB:** Some product marketers answered 'Other' when asked which products they marketed. These included education resources, FinTech tools, and online grocery apps.

# Company type

## Stage of growth

The participants who took part in the survey were employees at companies at various stages of growth.

Over one-fifth (**37.2%**) are from companies with an established go-to-market team, while **36.6%** are from late-growth/scale-up orgs.



**NB:** Some participants answered 'Other', stating their respective companies were "mature small businesses" or "established", while others worked on a consultancy basis.

# Company type

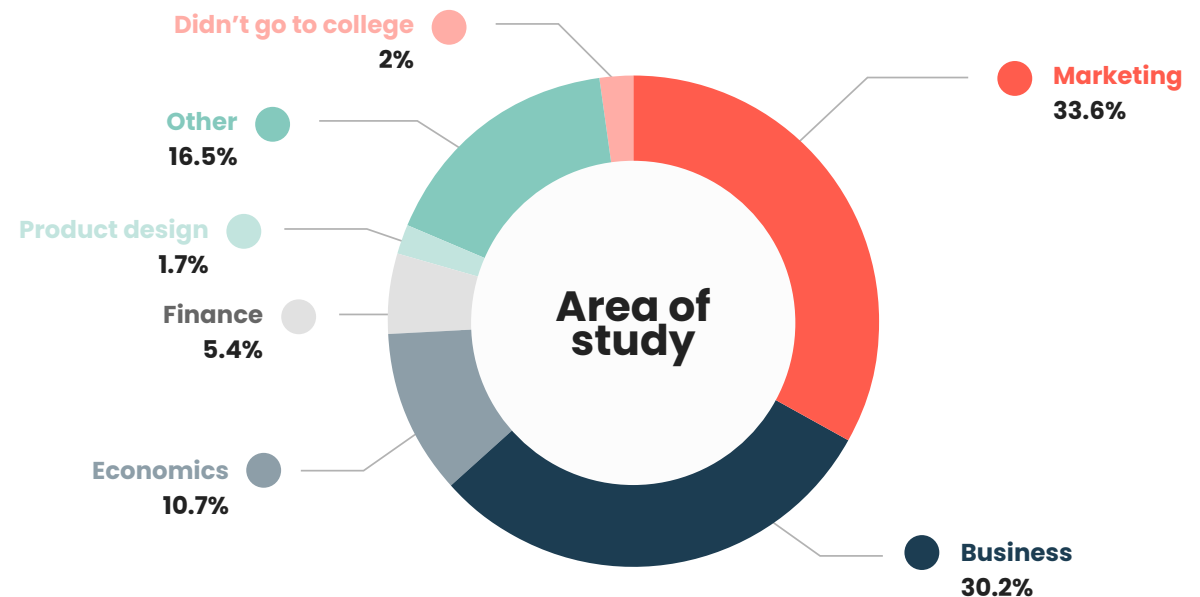
## Education

The vast majority of the product marketers surveyed were college graduates, with **98%** of people taking part in further education.

As with the results to our question around people's most recent, non-product marketing job, the feedback revealed no particular set path before entering a career in product marketing.

For instance, **33.6%** of people who completed the survey were marketing graduates, while business (**30.2%**) also proved to be a popular area of study. Economics (**10.7%**), finance (**5.4%**), and product design (**1.7%**) completed the round of the most popular courses.

Almost one-fifth of product marketers (**16.5%**) answered 'other', with the diverse submissions a further indication of the broad background base amongst PMMs. Additional courses included the likes of Journalism, Nanotechnology, Science, and Psychology.



## Company type

### What industry were product marketers in?

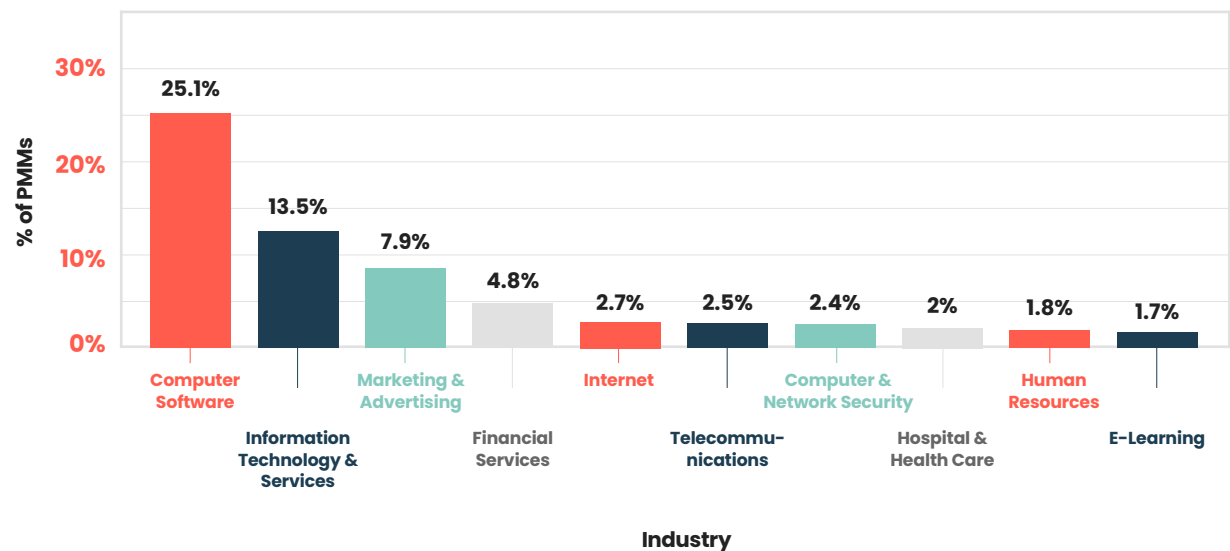
While the role of a PMM was once considered somewhat of a luxury in the eyes of many C-Suiters, there were product marketers from 83 different industries taking part in the survey.

The presence of PMMs from various sectors could be viewed as a sign of further progression, and a positive indicator as far as the current State of Product Marketing is concerned.

Based on the people taking part in the survey, the role of product marketing is most prominent amongst workers in the IT sector.

Product marketers working within the computer software industry accounted for one-quarter of the total participants, while a further **13.5%** worked in Information Technology and Services.

This is perhaps unsurprising, given a significant number of the product marketers taking part specialized in the production of SaaS products, rather than physical products. To provide you with further insight, here's a list of the top 10 industries represented:

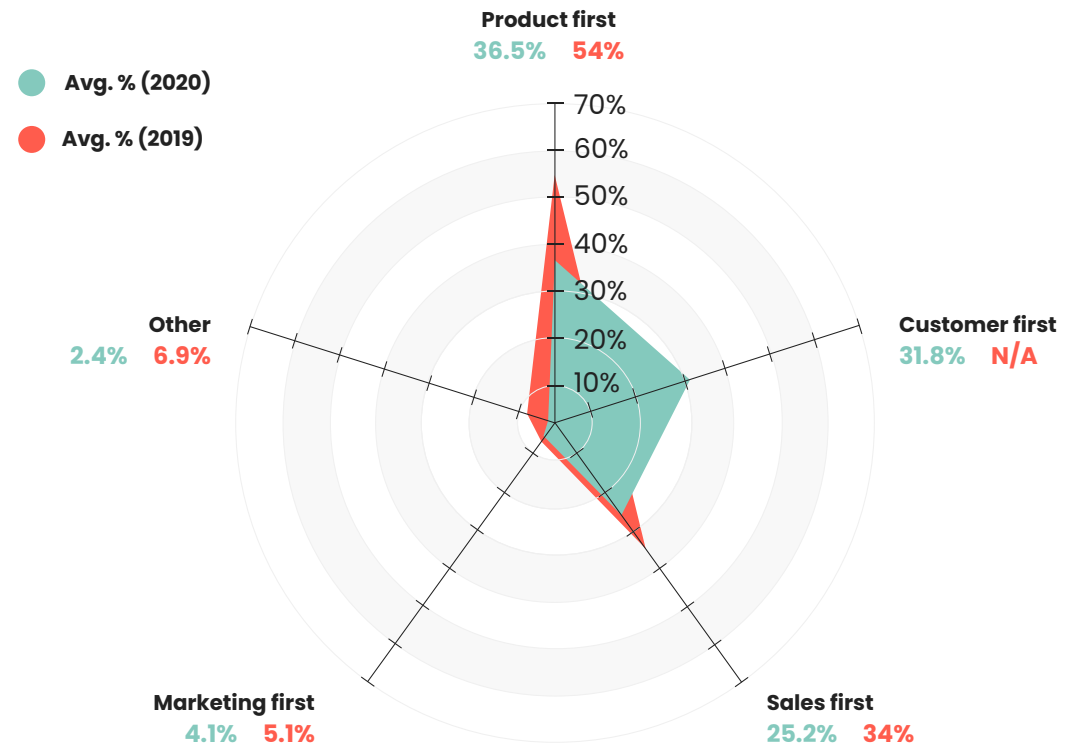


# Company type

## Company culture

Most product marketers we spoke to were from product-first companies (**36.5%**), closely followed by customer-first companies (**31.8%**). A quarter of people were from sales-first companies (**25.2%**), with a minority marketing-first (**4.1%**), with a minority marketing-first (**4.1%**).

Last year, many of the product marketers who fell into the 'Other' category said their companies were customer-first. So, this year, we decided to add a field exclusively for customer-first PMMs.



**NB:** Participants who answered 'Other' indicated factors such as 'professional services', 'company politics', and 'technology' were at the forefront of their organization's minds.



## Company type

**Yoni Solomon**, Director of Product Marketing & GTM at G2, gave his opinion on how a healthy company culture is critical in cultivating the practice of Product Marketers:



*"Customer-obsessed cultures breed great Product Marketers, and are foundational to companies successfully taking a product-first approach to the way they work. This is core to how we do things at G2, and our Customer-first approach helps us ensure we're building the right products, messaging them the right way, and selling them in total alignment to the needs, problems, and goals our customers have."*

# **Part 3**

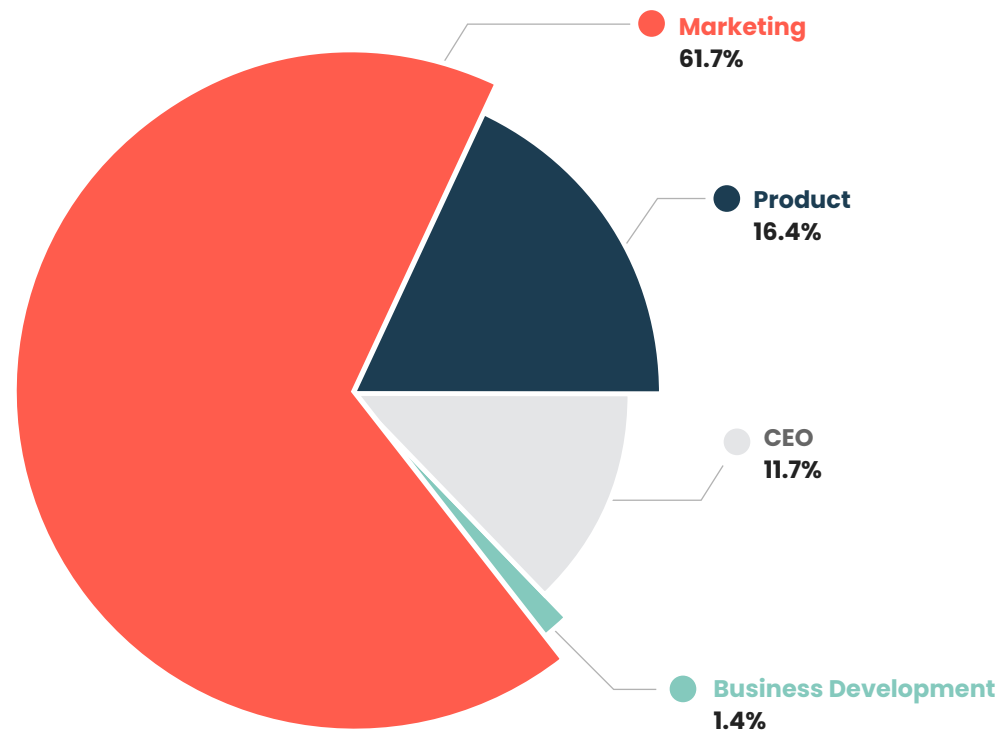
## **Roles, responsibilities and team infrastructure**

## Roles, responsibilities and team infrastructure

### Role in the company

We think it's fair to say the role of the product marketer is gathering momentum; more companies are utilizing the specialist skills and benefits a PMM can bring to the table.

While the survey revealed product marketers report to different teams within a company (which was perhaps no surprise!) most PMMs said they report to the marketing department (**61.7%**). The rest of the respondents either formed part of the product function at their respective firms (**16.4%**), reported directly to the CEO (**11.7%**), or fed up to Business Development (**1.4%**).



# Roles, responsibilities and team infrastructure

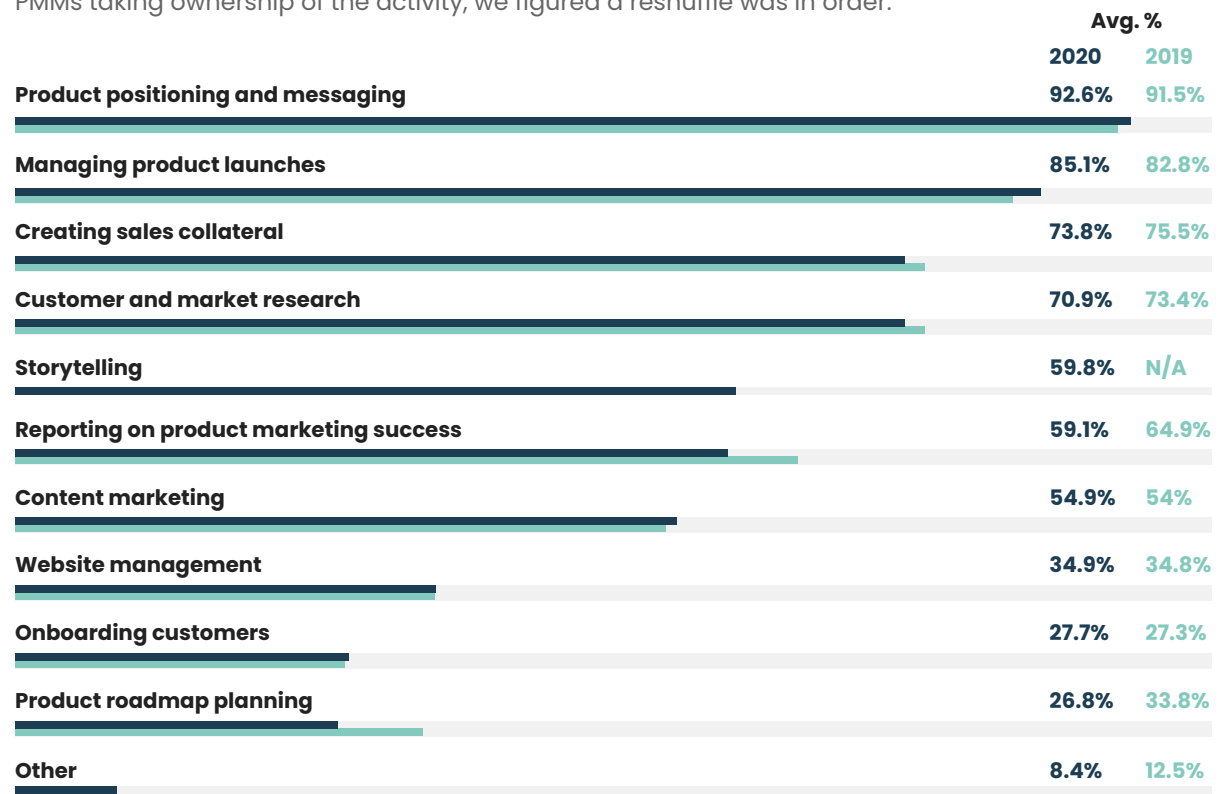
Of those that said **'Other'**, activities such as pricing, analyst relations, supporting demand-gen programs, commercialization of new product categories, tradeshow, and event strategies made the cut.

## Product marketer's responsibilities

Product marketing is a cross-functional role; it's not uncommon for them to fulfill multiple jobs to ensure their team performs to its optimum potential.

As with last year, product positioning and messaging were identified as the core element of the product marketing role, with **92.6%** of people taking part identifying this is one of their main responsibilities, while **85.1%** of product marketers cited managing product launches.

Our survey this year included a new option for product marketers to choose from when identifying their roles: storytelling. This category wasn't included in last year's report, but given the growing number of PMMs taking ownership of the activity, we figured a reshuffle was in order.

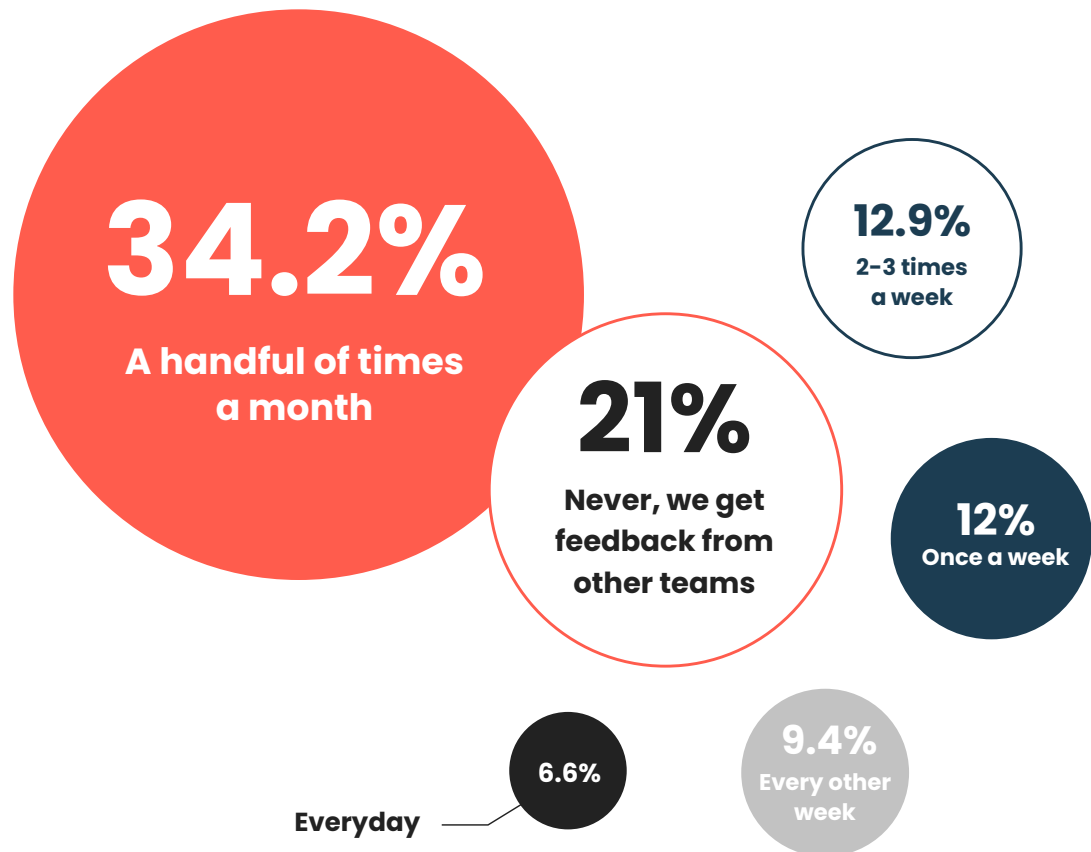


## Roles, responsibilities and team infrastructure

### Customer interaction

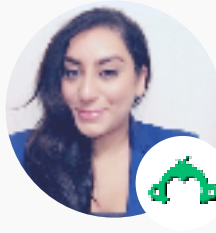
PMMs are often referred to as ‘the voice of the customer’ – and rightly so. With that in mind, and given it’s such a pivotal part of the role, we wanted to get a feel for how often those in the industry get out there and talk to their customers.

The majority of product marketers we spoke to tended to interact with their customers a few times a month, with one-fifth of the respondents saying they never spoke with customers, rather opting to rely on the feedback from other teams.



# Roles, responsibilities and team infrastructure

The lack of engagement between Product Marketers and customers came as a surprise to **Sarah Din**, Director of Product Marketing at SurveyMonkey:



*"The fact that one out of five Product Marketers never interact with customers is really surprising, for three main reasons!"*

*"First, a good Product Marketer cannot be successful until they develop deep customer empathy and have a full appreciation of their customers' pain points. Attempting to do that, without direct customer interaction is akin to a physician attempting to cure a patient without ever interacting with them."*

*"Second, third-party sources of customer feedback are very useful, but to really get a full picture of who your customer is, including all the subtleties and nuances, nothing beats going directly to the source."*

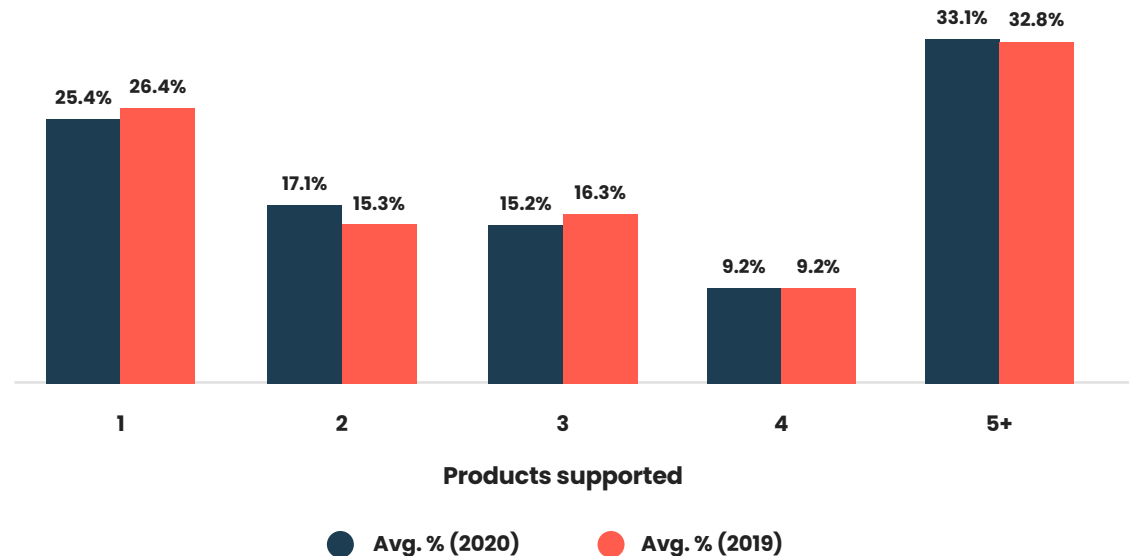
*"Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it is just the right thing to do. If you are going to try to position a product to a customer in order to convince them to buy it, you owe it to them to take the time to listen to what they have to say."*

## Roles, responsibilities and team infrastructure

### Product support

In last year's State of Product Marketing Report, **32.8%** of product marketers were responsible for 5+ products.


The number of product marketers being asked to support 5+ products is ever so slightly greater in 2020 (**33.1%**) than in 2019.





As was the case last year, this could be attributed to a lack of support being given to product marketing teams to alleviate their workload.


This was alluded to when product marketers gave their feedback on internal barriers and obstacles faced, with many identifying a heavy workload, as well as a lack of understanding of the PMM role as particular pain points.

## Roles, responsibilities and team infrastructure

 “Everyone wants me to solve everything at once. I feel as though I’m being treated like an order taker.”

 “There are many efforts we should be doing, but we are a small team so the backlog is long.”

 “I’m being pulled in too many different directions and supporting multiple teams.”

 “Often, there’s too much to do, and not enough time. There are too high expectations to accomplish everything.”

**Div Manickam**, Director of Portfolio Messaging at Dell Boomi, gave her views on how many products a PMM can realistically support:



*“This is a classic less is more scenario. PMMs are asked to do more than it’s sustainable in my opinion. We need to be realistic and prioritize efficiently. If we are not careful, our PMM team members will face burnout sooner than we can imagine. It’s the company’s responsibility to make sure we are focused on the right priorities and to add team resources and budget to support business needs.”*

*“In my experience, adding more than 2 products is unrealistic and we had to reprioritize based on business needs and even paused supporting a few products because of resource constraints. With the spectrum of responsibilities for PMM, it’s easy to think one individual can manage it all – we as PMM are great at multitasking and always ready to put out the next fire, but that’s not fair for sustained growth. We are considering looking at functional responsibilities vs product focused PMMs to meet top business needs.”*



# Roles, responsibilities and team infrastructure

We also asked our sponsors over at **Kompyte** how product marketers can make competitor analysis manageable when overseeing so many products and competitors at once, and here's what they had to say"



*"As markets become more crowded, it's critical now more than ever to have a competitive intelligence strategy in place. Marketing Technology has grown over 500% in the last decade – jumping from a couple hundred solutions to thousands. Not only are product marketers using more tools daily, but the same trend is happening in the number of competitors they go up against.*

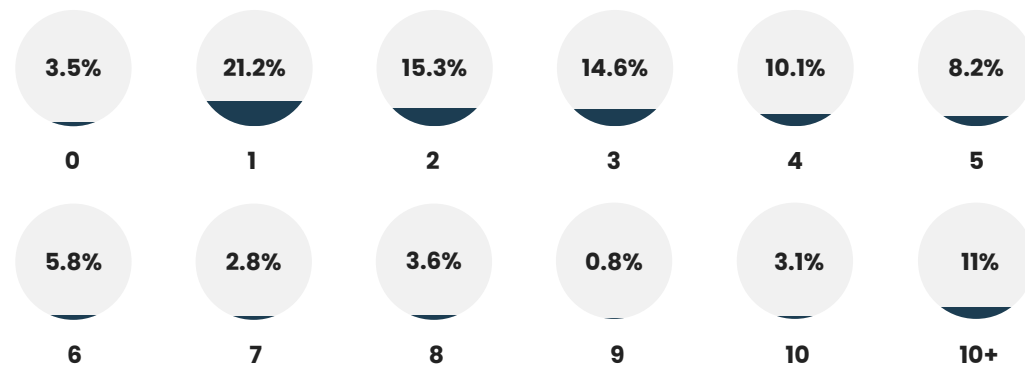
*"Product Marketing is responsible for a variety of critical functions including, messaging, sales enablement and product roadmap development. However, the best efforts to execute in a saturated market will fall short without competitive intelligence driven strategies. Consistent competitive intelligence is not a nice to have, but critical to win and lead your industry. The more companies that join your space, the more important competitive intelligence becomes, and the harder it will be to track all your competitors consistently, in real time.*

*"The competitive intelligence industry is in a continual state of flux, but as leading research analysts are seeing, competitive intelligence automation is an integral part of a winning go-to-market strategy, and a key tool for organizations to gain an all important market advantage."*

# Roles, responsibilities and team infrastructure

## How many people form product marketing teams?

When we spoke to PMMs taking part in our survey, we discovered one in five PMMs work alone, as a one-man band. Around three in 10 said they work in a team of 2-3, and just over one third (35.3%) had the luxury of 5+ product marketing colleagues.



When we dug even deeper, we found the average size of a product marketing team varied in line with a company's stage of growth. For example, companies in the early pre-market fit stages had an average team size of two product marketers, whereas late growth/scale ups had around nine people in their team.

### Early pre-market fit



### Early post-product market fit



### Late growth/scale up




### Mid-growth with established go-to-market team





# Roles, responsibilities and team infrastructure

## How are product marketing teams structured?


After digging deeper, we found it wasn't only team size that changed. There were also variations in how product marketing teams are structured. Here's how some PMMs said their respective teams were organized:


 "I report to the Director of PMM. We have 4 PMMs on the team and a Customer Marketing Manager. Everyone reports to the Director."

 "I report to a Senior Product Marketing Manager, who reports directly to the Chief Revenue Officer."

 "Our product marketing team has three core pillars: Core product marketing, solutions product marketing, and business content. All three teams report to the VP of Product Marketing. Currently, I have three direct reports, while the tech content and DevRel teams also report to the VP of Product Marketing."

 "I run the International PMM team. I report to Product Management but have a close alignment with international sales and marketing leadership. The team is organized around product portfolios, which roughly align with personas. We have PMM representation in our Tier 1 markets, with Tier 2 markets receiving support as needed, but I think this needs to improve."

 "There are 1-3 PMMs per product team; they report to the VP of Product Marketing and their respective product team leads. There are also services available to other areas, such as Digital Marketing, Marketing Automation, Design, Regional Marketing, etc. Generally, the structure is quite flat."

 "I report to the VP of Marketing and VP of Technology. My team of marketing, product and digital managers report to me."

# Roles, responsibilities and team infrastructure



*"The Director of Strategic Marketing takes ownership of Product Marketing, technical marketing, customer research (including reference program and analyst relations), as well as competitive intelligence. I report into Product Marketing. There are nine people on the team, one manager, and eight individual contributors."*



*"I'm on a team that's referred to as Product Marketing, though as a recently acquired, late-stage startup, we still wear a lot of non-traditional Product Marketing hats."*

# Roles, responsibilities and team infrastructure

## Performance measurement and OKRs


Objectives and key results (OKRs) are a pretty common talking point in the product marketing field and in our Slack community, week in, week out, we see tons of PMMs asking how they should, or could, measure their performance. So, we lifted the lid.


Last year, bottom-line goals and OKRs emerged as a key focus for product marketers, with generation of revenue, increasing marketing qualified leads, and retaining customers the main goals in place – and in 2020 the top spots were much the same, bar the emergence of upselling customers


When we checked out OKRs for PMMs this year, we found over half of the PMMs who took part **(56%)** said their performance is measured against how much revenue they generate. Almost three-quarters of people who said this OKR is used to track their performance served B2B customers **(73.8%)**, with the generation of new revenue not a priority for companies serving B2C customers, comparatively.


Roughly one in six product marketers **(14.7%)** revealed no OKRs are in place for their respective teams. It could be suggested no OKRs are being set for some product marketers because their companies don't have the understanding required to accurately measure or track success.

This has emerged as a distinct possibility, with product marketers working without OKRs saying:

 *"Most people in my company don't understand the role of PMM, and that's our everyday struggle."*

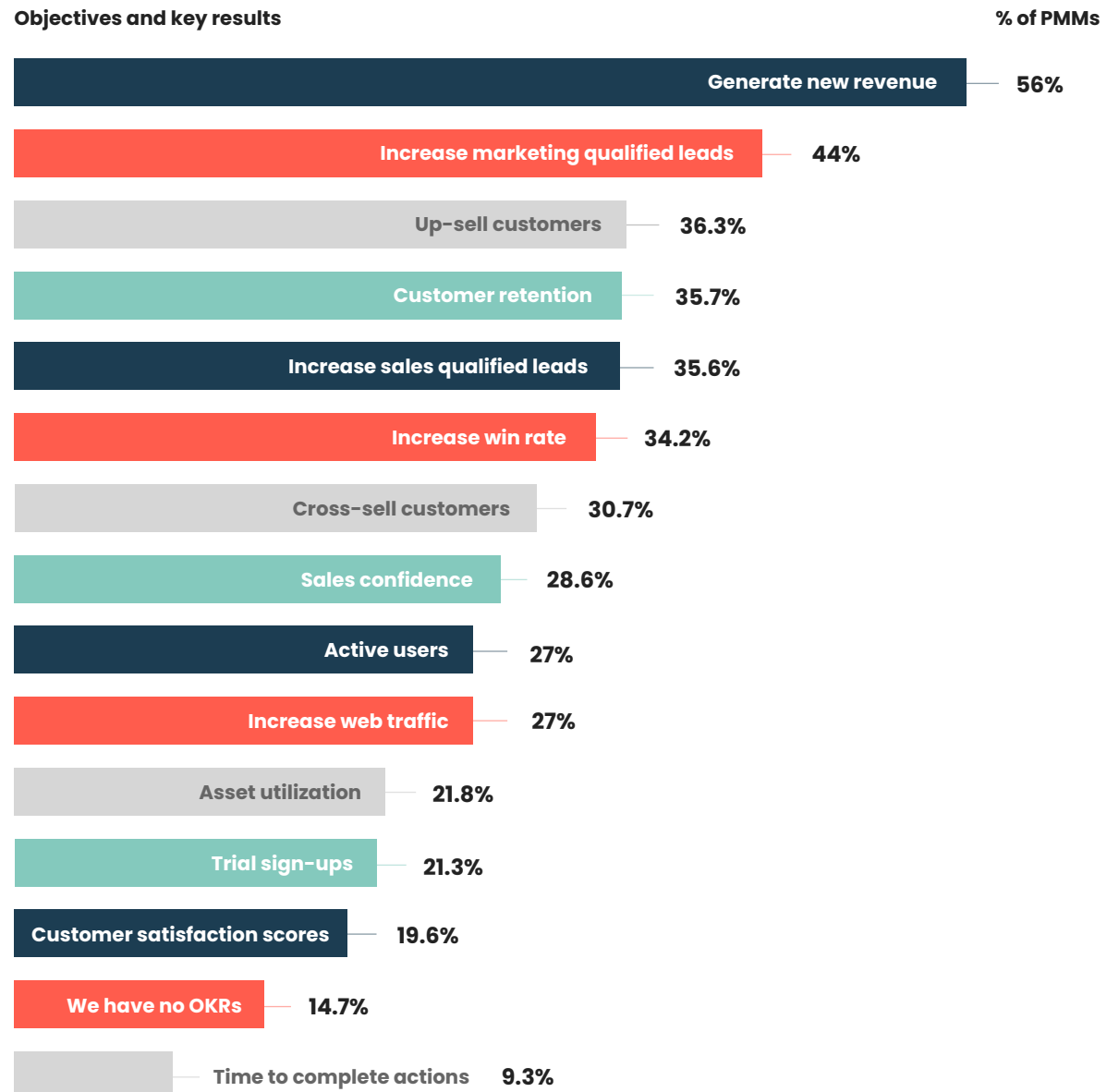
 *"My manager is not well versed in product marketing and isn't able to support."*

 *"There's a lack of definition and measurement of our role."*

 *"People don't know the role and don't want to use us as a creative function."*

 *"There's confusion between what Product Marketing is as a function, and as an activity."*

# Roles, responsibilities and team infrastructure



# Roles, responsibilities and team infrastructure

After uncovering the leading OKRs amongst the Product Marketers we surveyed, **Priya Doty, VP of Product Marketing at IBM**, gave her views on the findings as a whole, the top 3 OKRs identified, and also revealed the OKRs in place at her organization:



*"It's consistent with the OKRs we've seen. Every business is different, in terms of growth stage and need, the point of an OKR is to ensure everyone is working towards something valuable and measurable, so it's more important to have an OKR that aligns to the business strategy. The list here is a good starting point to have that conversation about which OKRs matter most."*

*"For my area it's always been Qualified Leads and Revenue, primarily. It's important to emphasize that Revenue is all routes, not just marketing created, but also channel and sales created. The danger of no OKRs? That's simple. Your colleagues in sales and product who are very numerically driven will have a lot of trouble understanding your value, and how you contribute to their business without them."*

# **Part 4**

## **How do product marketers collaborate with their colleagues?**



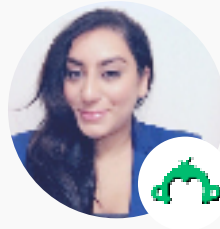
# How do product marketers collaborate with their colleagues?

## Which team(s) do product marketers work closely with?

Most of the product marketers surveyed (**88.3%**) worked closely with product teams (no surprise there), while a further **84.2%** of people spent much of their time collaborating with marketing specialists.

Such is the cross-functional nature of the product marketing position, it's perhaps no surprise they also work across other teams, with three quarters (**75.9%**) working with sales, and just under half (**42.8%**) collaborating with customer success.

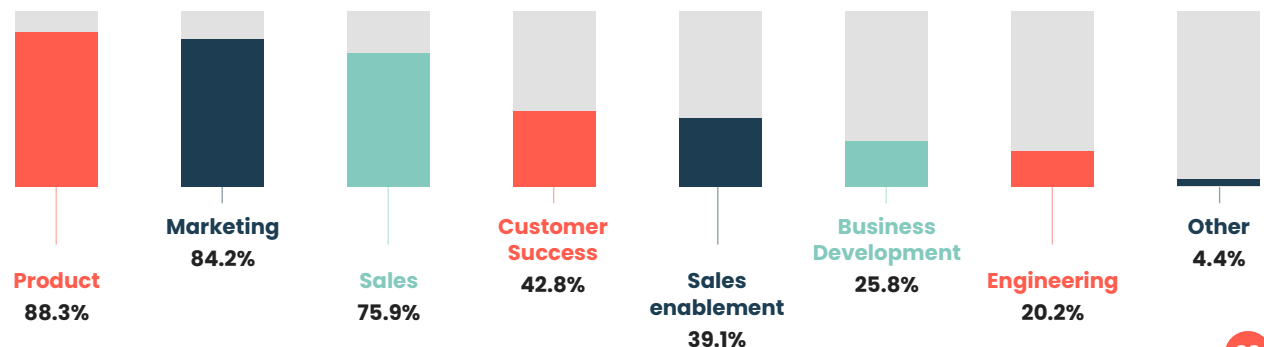
Human collaboration is essential for product marketing teams to thrive, as explained by **Sarah Din**, Director of Product Marketing at SurveyMonkey.



*"Product marketers are the connectors inside an organization. They sit at the center of the product, marketing, sales, customer success, strategy, and multiple other functions and help connect the dots between them. To be a successful PMM, you have to do two things well. Firstly, build great relationships with other teams internally. Nothing we work is done in a vacuum and collaboration is at the core of every project – so make friends!*

*"Secondly, think of people, not features. Whether you sell B2C or B2B is irrelevant – you sell to people. Listen to them, understand them, speak their language. The human element of marketing is probably the most important as a PMM."*

Here's a closer look at who product marketers said they worked most closely with.



## How do product marketers collaborate with their colleagues?

### How many colleagues do product marketers work with daily outside their product marketing team?

One thing we know about product marketing is it works alongside lots of different internal departments – which is why communication and collaboration are such fundamental skills. While hosting our podcast series though, it became even more apparent just how interactive the role is, with many PMMs spending most of their days in meetings, doing desk drops, and so on. So, we wanted to explore this angle a little more.

On average, product marketers interact with seven internal people outside their team, daily. The levels of interaction varied, depending on which role a product marketer held at their respective firm.

Interactions per day	Associate PMM	PMM	Senior PMM	(People) Manager of PMM	Director of PMM	VP of PMM
0	16.7%	16.7%	0%	0%	16.7%	0%
1	0%	42.9%	0%	0%	0%	14.3%
2	12.2%	31.7%	9.8%	0%	9.8%	4.9%
3	0%	36%	20.2%	3.4%	12.4%	3.4%
4	0%	31%	0%	1.1%	16%	5.7%
5	4%	37.2%	20.2%	1.8%	17.5%	4%
6	2.4%	42.7%	20.7%	6%	14.6%	2.4%
7	5.7%	45.3%	15.1%	1.9%	13.2%	5.7%
8	1.8%	45.6%	15.8%	3.5%	14%	3.5%
9	8.3%	50%	16.7%	8.3%	0%	8.3%
10	2.6%	30.3%	18%	5.1%	22.9%	6.6%

## How do product marketers collaborate with their colleagues?

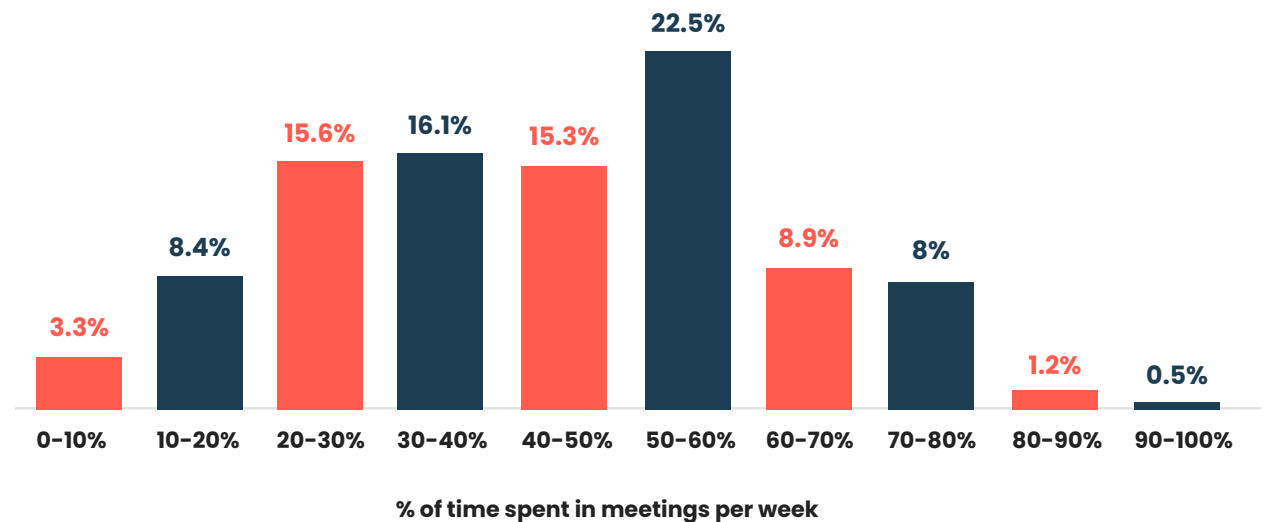
### How long do product marketers spend in meetings?

So, we know PMMs spend a lot of their day mingling with their coworkers. Next, we wanted to see how many of those interactions took place in the form of a meeting.

In total, product marketers said they spend an average of **45.1%** of their working week in meetings, however, the amount of time spent in meetings varied depending on their product marketer's level of seniority within their respective companies.

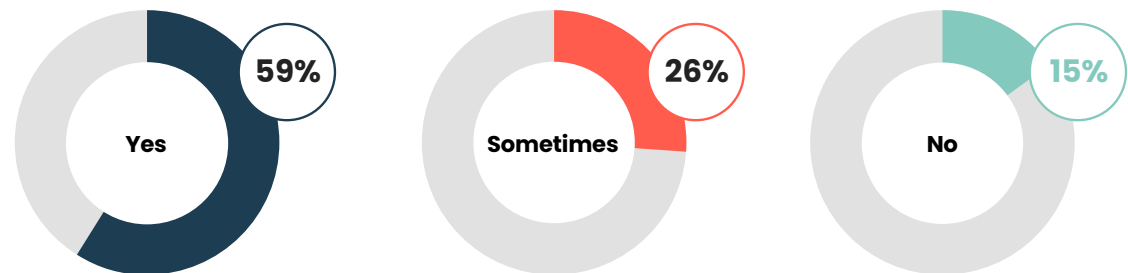
For instance, most Associate Product Marketing Managers spend 20–40% of their time in meetings, while on the other hand, over one-fifth of VPs of Product Marketing said they spend 80–100% of their time sharing their thoughts in the meeting room.

Similarly, while most Senior Product Marketing Managers (**40%**) said they too spend 20–40% of their working week in meetings, a further **13.2%** said 60–80% of their time is occupied with meetings, with a minority even falling into the 80–100% category.



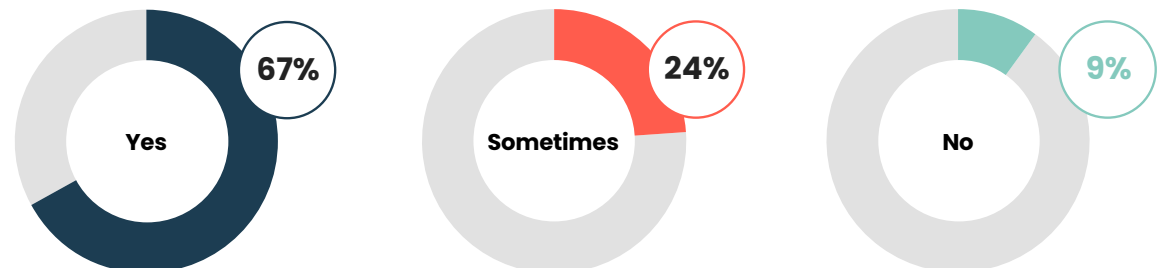
## How do product marketers collaborate with their colleagues?

These next findings make for good reading for product marketers. Over half of the respondents (**59%**) said a representative of the product marketing team attends leadership meetings regularly, while over a quarter (**26%**) said they're invited to those meetings most of the time.



Of the respondents who said they didn't get invited to leadership meetings full stop, **51%** had been in product marketing for three years or less. It could be suggested their lack of invitation was linked to perceived inexperience.

The healthy presence of product marketers at leadership meetings supplements the findings outlined in our recent report: [C-Suite perceptions of product marketing](#). In the study, three-quarters of people (**67%**) said PMMs were invited to attend senior leadership meetings, with one-quarter saying they invite their product marketers one-quarter of the time (**24%**). Only **9%** of C-Suiters interviewed said they didn't ask PMMs to join their meetings.



# **Part 5**

## **Product marketing budgeting**

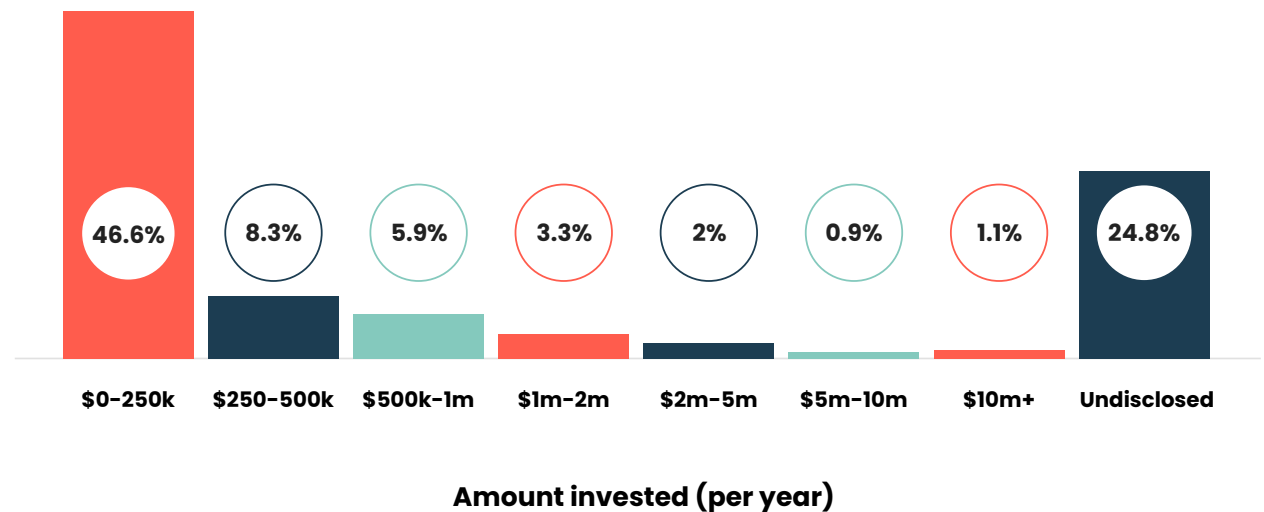
# Product marketing budgeting

## How much are companies investing in product marketing, annually?

Great product marketing strategies cost money, and it's pivotal for companies to invest in their product marketing teams.

When we looked at the amount of investment being made in product marketing, it emerged more companies are making the decision to invest in their PMM teams; **46.6%** of companies have a budget of up to **\$250,000** in place.

Generally, average budgets increased as companies progressed through their growth cycle, but late growth scale-ups did buck the trend. On average, early pre-product market fit organizations invested **\$287,300**, while early post-product market fit invested **\$930,000**. As we moved further down the line, mid-growth teams with an established product marketing team budgeted at just over **\$1.2 million**, while late growth scale-ups, interestingly, dipped down to **\$653,500**.



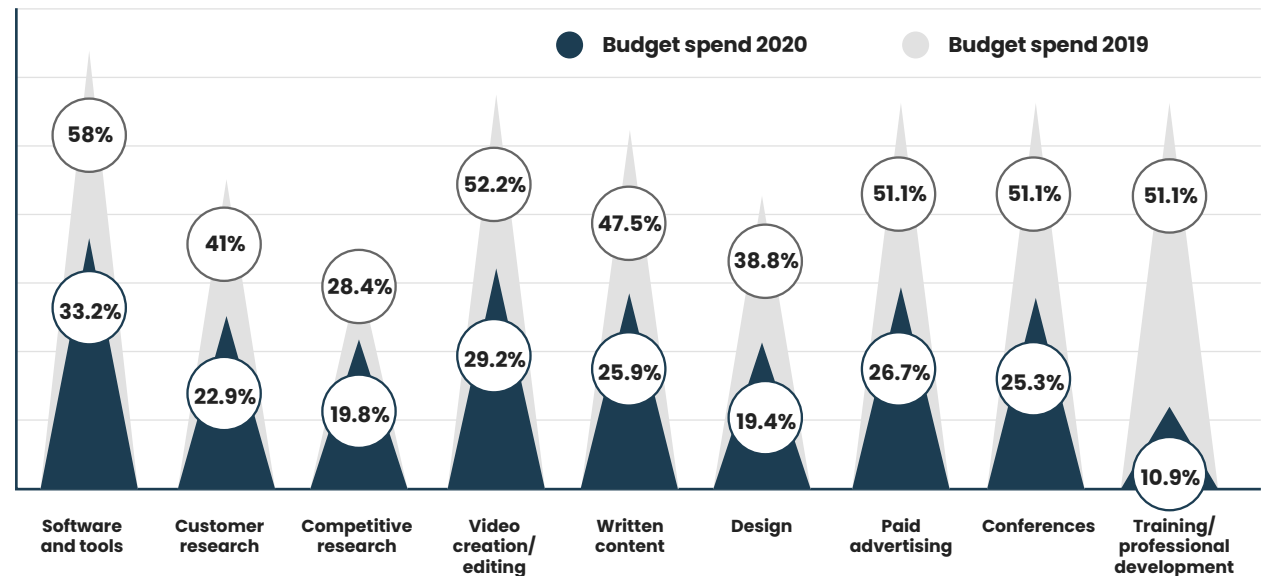
# Product marketing budgeting

## Where is the product marketing budget spent?

Different companies prioritize different areas depending on their targets and OKRs, with this dictating where product marketing budgets are spent.

We spoke with PMMs who have received investment in their team, and it seems there's an onus being placed on enhancing the efficiency of the product marketing role, with the majority of money (**33.2%**) being spent on upgrading software and tools, as was also the case in 2019. Resources are also being used to improve the quality of content, with **29.2%** of companies choosing to invest in video content/editing, and a further one-quarter of firms investing in written content.

One area where companies could still place more emphasis is their investment in training and professional development. Only **10.9%** of people surveyed said their employers invest in the development of their staff, a trend that will have to change if the full potential of product marketing is to be fulfilled.



# Part 6

## PMM Tools

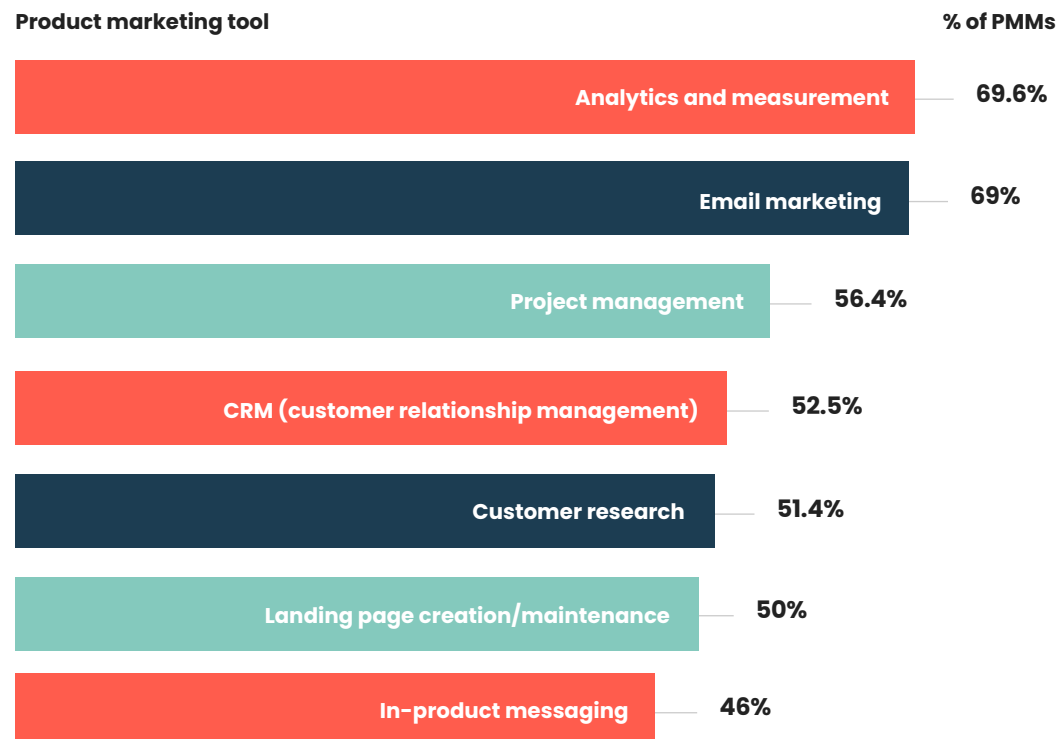


# PMM tools

Every profession requires tools to complete the job at hand. A mechanic uses tools to fix a car, a writer uses word processing programs to write a document, while a builder needs bricks and cement to build houses, and product marketers don't buck the trend.

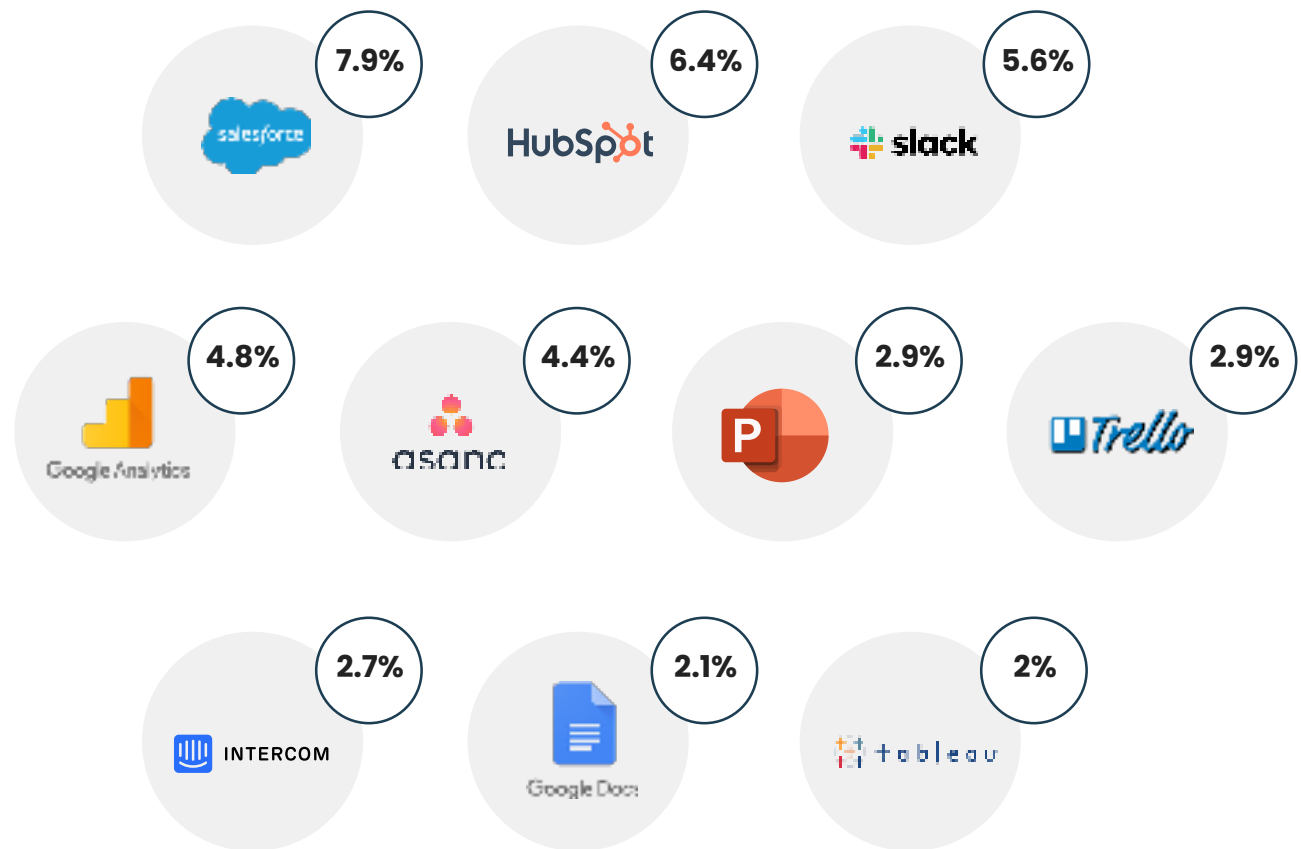
PMMs rely on a variety of tools, with some used on a more widespread basis than others. The most common tools used were to aid analytics and measurement and email marketing, with each of these tools used by almost three-quarters of PMMs, with the aforementioned tools also identified as being pivotal in the 2019 report.

Interestingly, the use of customer research tools has decreased by **9.3%**, a surprising statistic, considering the overall importance placed on customer feedback during the product marketing process.



## PMM tools

We also asked product marketers which tools they **“couldn’t live without”**, and the likes of Google Analytics, email automation programs such as MailChimp, and online survey tools such as SurveyMonkey were identified as being essential in the day-to-day operations of their respective product marketing teams. Here are the top 10 tools PMMs said they couldn’t live without:



# **Part 7**


## **Sources of fulfillment for product marketers**


## Sources of fulfillment for product marketers


Product marketing is an exciting field, offering a range of challenges, hence why more people are deciding to take the plunge and pursue their career as a product marketer.

As is the case with every profession, there are particular elements of the role workers enjoy most.


When product marketers were asked what appeals to them about their position, we received a range of responses, with working in sales, the cross-functional nature of the role, and the creation of compelling content amongst the positives identified by PMMs. Let's take a look at what else sets a PMM's pulse racing:


 "I find it extremely rewarding to see an idea I've been working on taking shape. There's nothing better than molding an initial concept and seeing it through all the necessary steps, before receiving sign-off for a mass launch."

 "I relish the breadth of responsibility our Product Marketing team has been given by my employer. We're key to the success of the business, as a whole."


 "It's great being able to piece the puzzles in the background during product launches. The product team feels proud, our support team has the collateral to promote it, while the design receives praise for the slick interface/brand assets."


 "In my view, there's nothing better than diving into customer problems and attempting to understand their mindset. I also enjoy collaborating with sales, marketing, and product to bring new products to market and crafting messaging and position statements to tell a story, as well as helping sales teams win new business and retaining customers."


 "It's fantastic connecting the product team with the marketing and sales functions. Plus, it's satisfying in helping to shape the product positioning and influence the roadmap."


 "Generally speaking, I'd say the variety of work is unlike most roles I've had before. Specifically, I love managing the customer lifecycle, from onboarding to churn prevention using email, app, and chat messaging."


## Sources of fulfillment for product marketers

 “I find it intriguing keeping up with the market landscape to figure out the right message to tell, as the client needs change. I love being able to bring that market/client insight back to the team to shape our story.”

 “PMM is an incredibly cross-functional role. I’ve had team members describe product marketing like the “brain” where we put a customer-centric lens on everything and synthesize insights so everyone can glean from it and apply it back to their initiatives. Much of this comes from the fact that strategic narrative & storytelling is core to this role.”

 “The utilitarian, jack-of-all-trades mix of all things we get to work on. It’s nice seeing the high impact we have on the business.”

 “I enjoy Helping sales teams tell the story in a way that drives the pipeline. It’s great working with SMEs to create content that really resonates with our audience, and then receiving comments like ‘you really get it’. So in short, I like storytelling, sales enablement and driving leads to the pipeline.”

 “I love that product marketing is a highly cross-functional role that touches everything. We are the magic makers. The ones who get to transform technical jargon and details into meaningful stories that drive adoption.

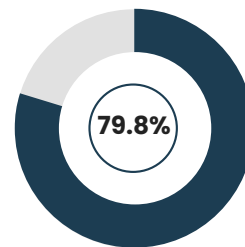
Product marketing’s role is more crucial than ever for companies to be successful.”

# Sources of fulfillment for product marketers

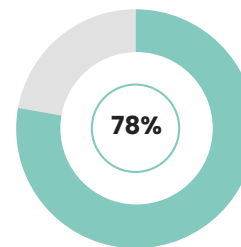
## The foundations of success

We see lots of questions online and in our community around “What skills do I need to be a great product marketer,” so next, we wanted to take a deep dive into what skill sets are considered pivotal.

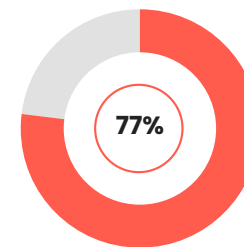
Our results showed teamwork and collaborative traits were valued highly and considered to be amongst the most important skills in succeeding as a product marketer. Over three-quarters of the participants **(79.8%)** said they considered strong communication skills and collaborating with coworkers **(78%)** to be essential for a PMM, as well as the ability to think creatively and solve problems **(77%)**.



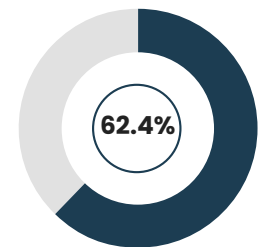
**Strong communication**



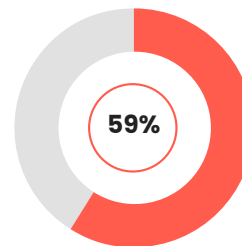
**Collaborating with coworkers**



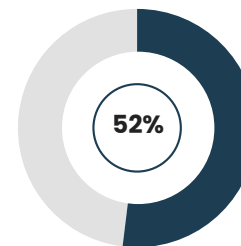
**Creativity and problem solving**



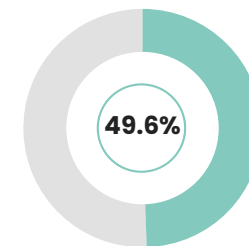
**Strategic planning and business skills**



**Empathy and the ability to connect with customers**



**Research and analytical skills**



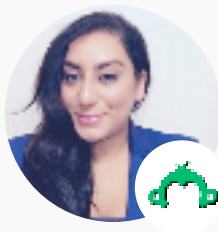
**Content creation and copywriting**

## Sources of fulfillment for product marketers

### Ingredients for the *perfect* product marketer

There's no debate surrounding the importance of the skills identified by PMMs in this survey, but there are other traits an aspiring product marketer needs to nail to establish themselves as a true master of their craft.

Opinions vary, and one PMMs priorities will always differ from somebody else's. Here are the views of experts who've been there, done that, and are flexing the PMM t-shirt:



*"I think one of the key things you need to nail right away is messaging and positioning, they're core to any Product Marketing role. If you're not good at messaging, you really can't do a Product Marketing role. So, be good about figuring out how to message to the right people at the right time."*

*"Positioning is important too, especially if you're working in organizations that have multiple products or have a very competitive industry, so you really need to nail how you position your products either complementary or against each other, however, that is, or within a very competitive industry."*

**Sarah Din**, Director of Product Marketing at SurveyMonkey



*"(In my opinion), relationship building is the first thing I do when I go into any new company. I try to meet as many people as possible, I try to prioritize my time, obviously, with those with whom I would be working most closely with, but understanding them at a very deep level, because without that trust initially going in, you're not going to be able to move quickly and get things done."*

**Elizabeth Brigham**, Head of Morningstar Direct Software (US)

## Sources of fulfillment for product marketers



*"Because Product Marketing is so responsible for cross-functional communication, small group communication as a skill is so important. PMMs rarely ever speak to an audience greater than maybe six people in a room, right? And a lot of the things we do, and I would add conflict resolution as a second skill, is we are communicating in a small group."*

*"More often than not, we're hosting that communication, because we're either trying to make people aware of something or we're trying to get people to consult on something. Generally speaking, we're often the drivers of this effort and workflow. So, the ability to understand the importance of small group communication and the dynamics of small group communication, and how to fundamentally lead a meeting, is so important."*

**Kerensa Hogan**, Lead Product Marketing, Amazon Music



*"As a Product Marketer, you need to be data-informed with a real sense of curiosity, because no-one's going to tell you what data to go look at, or what questions to ask. You have to have this sense of curiosity and kind of a desire to dig under the surface to identify trends and see what's happening with the customers."*

**Tamara Grominsky**, VP of Strategic Growth at Unbounce



*"I think empathy is a core skill to develop for Product Marketers, but it's not just empathy for the users, it's also empathy for the teams you need to involve and the decisions you rely on their expertise to help you resolve. I think one way we were able to elevate our level of influence in the organization was by better understanding those teams, our partners' goals, and the things they think about a lot in their day-to-day."*

**Samantha Yeh**, Senior Product Marketing Manager at Spotify



## Sources of fulfillment for product marketers



*"As a leader, and I think this is slightly different from an individual contribution, one of the big things for me is having that focus and prioritization. As I took on the role, I quickly realized that it's easy for us to let other teams tell us what to do, and that means you're just chasing project after project. So having that focus and prioritization was very critical."*

*"Making sure you have the discipline to say no is important too. As much as you want to be a team player and as much as you want to say "yes, I've got this" and try your best to not be underwater, you will be. You need to be able to know how much you can take on and always keep that 10 to 20% buffer – as idealistic as it may sound because there'll always be projects that will be last-minute or a last-minute fire that we need to put down, and if we don't have that buffer then some other project is going to slip and you don't want to be the reason that happens. So only commit to things you can do and then the others just say no."*

**Div Manickam**, Director of Portfolio Messaging at Dell Boomi



*"We need people who can deeply understand these products because they are the subject matter expert internally for the marketing and the sales organizations. So, they need to be intensely curious, they need to be able to break down this product, and they need to be able to articulate it concisely to peers and customers. So strong product orientation and curiosity is a must."*

**Francis Larkin**, VP of Product Marketing at InVision

# **Part 8**

## **The appreciation of a product marketer**

# The appreciation of a product marketer

As we alluded to in the early stages of this report, and as highlighted in our 2019 write-up, product marketing continues to experience varying degrees of appreciation, and while there have certainly been signs of improvement, there's always room for more.

So, we picked the brains of the product marketers taking part in the survey, in an attempt to gain definitive insight into the level of appreciation their product marketing teams receive from their colleagues and C-Suiters, and the consensus was very much mixed.

Half of the product marketers we spoke with (**49.3%**) said "some people understand the role of product marketing, while others don't", indicating there still isn't a consistent knowledge of what product marketing teams do in many companies. Comparatively, just **5.1%** said other teams and stakeholders **100%** understand the role of a PMM – which is somewhat worrying.

**Dylan Hoeffler**, Head of Product Marketing at Bazaarvoice, shared his thoughts on the awareness Product Marketing has across various industries:

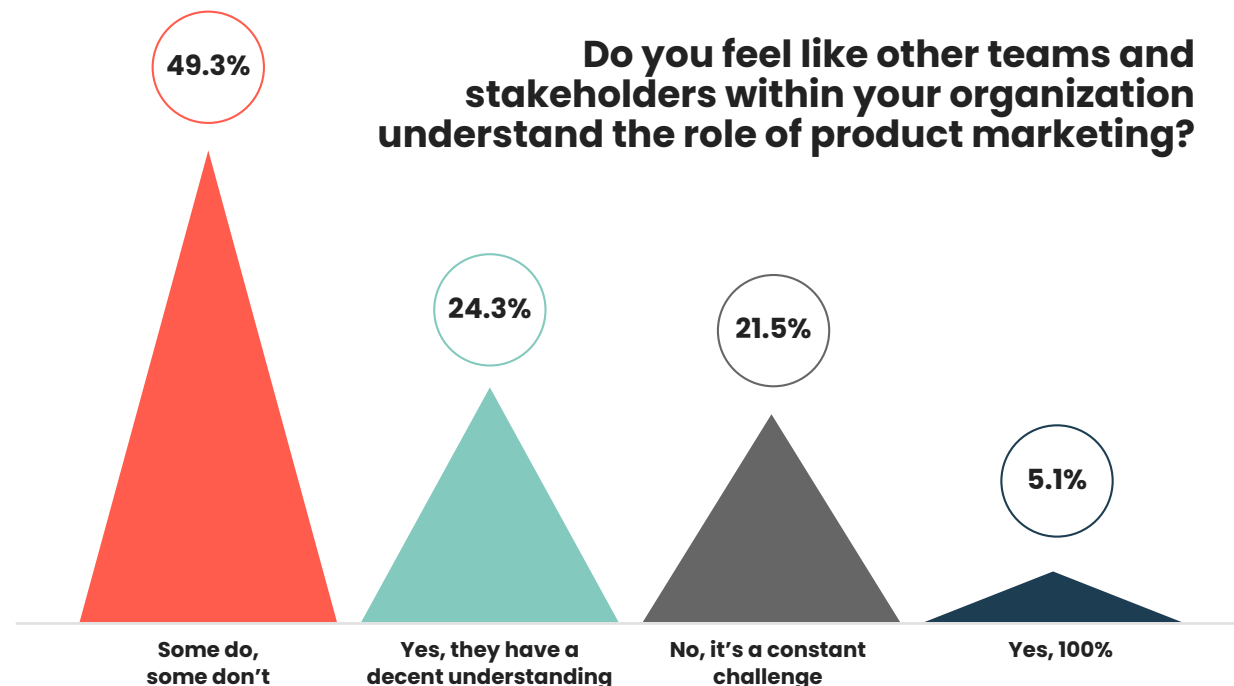


*"Being a new discipline, it's not surprising Product Marketing lacks a shared definition. When I'm speaking with other PMMs, the first thing we talk about is what Product Marketing is like at their company and compare notes."*

*"Improving awareness and improving the impact of the function go hand in hand. In organizations where there is not strong alignment on the definition of the role, you need to work hard to prove your value – managing up and out to get full buy-in. The work doesn't stop there though, even in organizations with a strong recognition of the value of Product Marketing you need to earn the right to be involved in the strategic direction of the company every day. We prove it with our work and in the relationships we build."*

*"The fact is, in most cases, being able to evangelize the PMM team and function is part of the job. The most effective Product Marketers I work with are not only impactful in their work, but also strong representatives of the function when working out in the business. Building those successful processes and relationships strengthens the team where you work, and improves the reputation of the discipline as your colleagues move on to new jobs at new companies."*

# The appreciation of a product marketer



**Tamara Grominsky**, VP of Strategic Growth at Unbounce, gave her two-cents on how product marketers and employees alike can both play a vital role in enhancing the overall understanding of the PMM role:



*"Taking time to internally market the role of PMM is critical to increasing visibility and understanding across the organization, but is something many PMMs de-prioritize. You need to position yourself the same way you would position your product!"*

*"Help your stakeholders understand your unique value and the ways you can solve their problems, and you'll soon have champions in every department."*

# The appreciation of a product marketer

## Let's take a look at influence

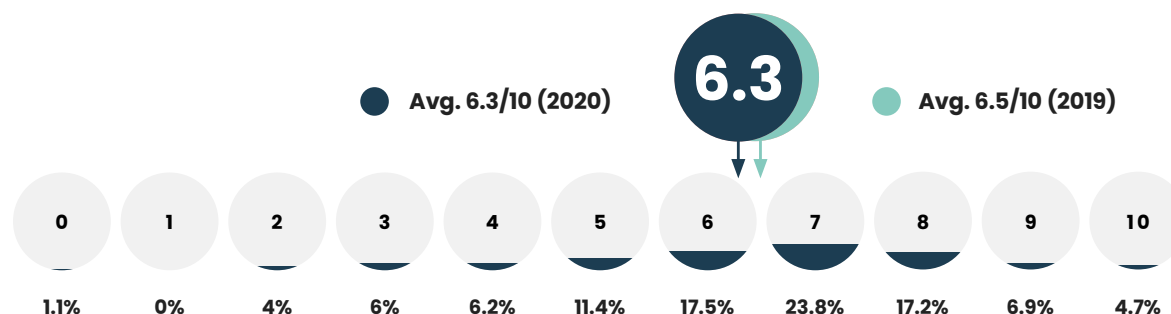
In our 2019 report, product marketers said they had an above-average influence on their respective company's strategy, with the average level of influence sitting at **6.5 out of 10**.

When we spoke with product marketers 12-months down the line, we asked how much influence they felt they had on the company's goals and strategy, on a scale of 0-10, and the results were somewhat disappointing, with the average decreasing slightly to **6.3 out of 10**, an indicator amongst some product marketers they feel their role has less influence at their company than a year ago.

While some might say the decrease is a cause for concern, **JD Prater, Head of Product Marketing at Quora**, adopted a more optimistic approach:

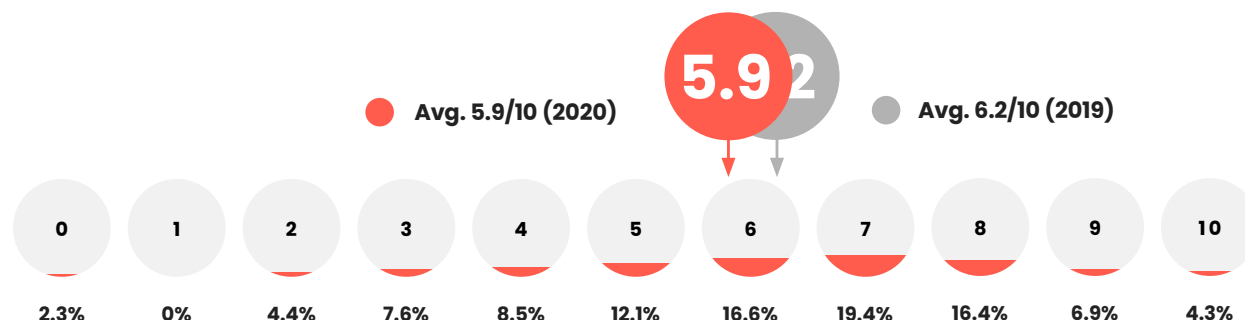


*"There's no need to ring the alarm bells (yet). The slight decrease in this year's responses (6.5 to 6.3) are well within a comfortable range from last year's results. If anything it highlights the consistency of influence that PMMs have on company goals and strategy."*



# The appreciation of a product marketer

We also asked PMMs how much of an influence they think they have on the product they market, also on a scale of 0-10, with responses accumulating an average of **5.9 out of 10**, again representing a slight decrease since the 2019 study when the average was **6.2**.



We spoke with **Phill Agnew**, Director of Product Marketing at Brandwatch, and asked if the decrease from last year's results is a cause for concern:



*"While the slight decrease from 6.2 to 5.9 is interesting, it's not entirely concerning. A 0.3 point drop isn't too great, and several insignificant factors could contribute. What surprises me more is how low this year's and last year's scores are."*

*"PMMs represent the sales, account management teams and the customer. We have insights about the market and the competition that no one else in the business has. Ultimately, PMMs should command extreme influence over shaping products for markets, seeing as they know the market better than anyone else in the business."*

*"Where possible, we should contribute at all stages of product development, helping craft new ideas based on user feedback, honing design to help the sales org and adding functionality to beat the competition. If you (like 2.3% in the survey) feel you have zero effect on shaping your product then you're building products with your eyes shut!"*

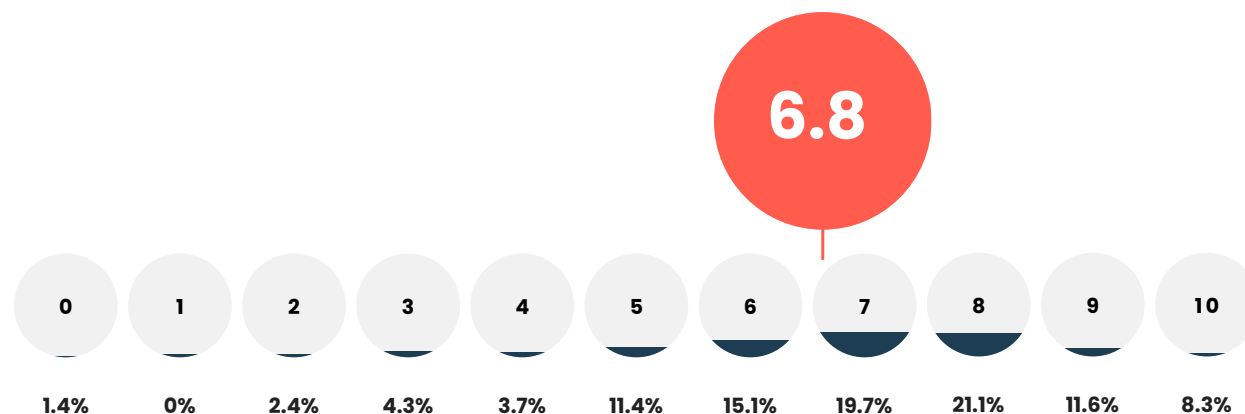
# The appreciation of a product marketer

## Do product marketers feel valued?

Product marketing teams play a huge role in the success stories of many companies, hence why more people are choosing to invest in improving their PMM teams, as we mentioned earlier.

However, it's often been suggested product marketers sometimes fall under the radar and aren't given the credit they deserve, so we went directly to the source and asked PMMs if they feel valued within their place of work, and we were relatively pleased with the results.

PMMs were asked to rank on a scale of **0 to 10** whether they felt valued within their company, and on average, product marketers ranked themselves at **6.8/10**. This could correlate with the number of PMMs who are hoping to prolong their career in the field, something we'll focus on later.



### Did you know?

After completing research into product marketing perceptions among the C-Suite, **56.3%** of senior management attributed value to the role of product marketing across the breadth of their company.

# **Part 9**


## **Pain points of product marketers**





# Pain points of product marketers


Despite over half of the product marketers **(59%)** suggesting product marketing teams are taking on a more prominent role in senior teams (as demonstrated by their regular presence in leadership meetings, and a decent proportion saying they believe the role of a product marketer is being understood), pain points still linger within the product marketing community and these need to be addressed.


Let's take a look at some of the things getting under the skin of product marketers who participated in our survey:

 *"I feel there's a lack of understanding within the business when it comes to product marketing. Product performance is mediocre, and there's a lack of strategy in place."*


 *"There's a genuine lack of understanding of all the things product marketing does and how many hurdles we often have to overcome in our role."*

 *"Very few people understand what product marketing is. I constantly correct people, and have to remind them there's a difference between product marketing and comms. Generally, it's a finance and sales lead company so the level of influence in shaping/transforming from a marketing perspective is minimal, but I'd love to see this change. Other companies I've worked for have been marketing/brand-led and this aligns better to customer needs and retains loyal customers and enables companies to grow. So I have the experience just not the opportunity."*

 *"Executives don't trust the product marketing team to articulate the best value propositions of the product in their voice."*

 *"There's a lack of budget and internal resources in place; not only is the team small, but communication outside the PMM team is poor."*

## Pain points of product marketers

 *"There's a reluctance and lack of investment in hiring professional writers to take core content from product marketing teams and make it sound great. Core content needs to be created in an efficient manager and there should be a writing team in place to establish a perfect tone for the brand."*

 *"People need to appreciate that every product is different; too often, competitor features are compared to our product. We're also asked to spend a lot of time gathering and researching information (i.e editing interviews and feedback reviews from transcripts)."*

There's no escaping the fact some product marketers have been aggravated by some shortcomings at their respective companies. Looking at the broader picture, sought-after progress has been made in the product marketing domain, so what do the future ambitions and career aspirations look like for PMMs down the line?

## **Part 10**

# **What does the future hold for product marketers?**


# What does the future hold for product marketers?


## The future's bright...


Those who took part in our report have been bitten by the product marketing bug – and it'd seem the after-effects are pretty tough to shake off. A significant proportion of PMMs surveyed (**66.5%**) want to explore the next stage of the product marketing career ladder, with one fifth happy to continue working in their current product marketing role.

Self-employment is on the rise; in the US alone, **30%** of workers are launching independent ventures. This mindset has reached the world of product marketing too, with **8%** of PMMs expressing an interest in embracing their entrepreneurial traits within the next two years.


On the whole, the indications point to a bright future for product marketing, but it's impossible to keep everyone content; **4.5%** want to bring their product marketing career to a close and seek pastures new, citing a range of reasons for their decision to change vocation:

 *"As I grow in PMM roles, the technical expertise continues to be more demanding. I'd like to stay more on the marketing side and avoid crossing the line into product management. It seems many organizations struggle with blurred lines between the roles."*

 *"I don't think the worth of product marketers is acknowledged, and I think I could use my drive and brain in something more meaningful."*

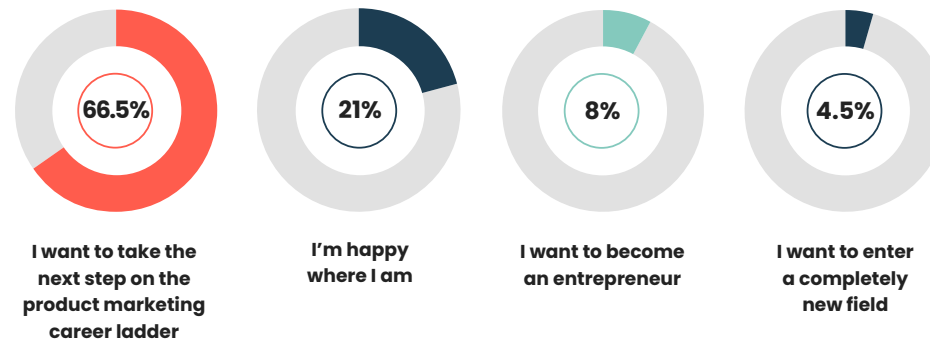
 *"Honestly, I'm tired of trying to explain what product marketing is. I find the most joy in working more closely with products, but as a product marketer you end up needing to fill the gaps which are generally on the go-to-market side."*

 *"It's too difficult to continue proving the value of the product marketing field and fighting for a seat at the table. I'd prefer to go into a role that's tied to revenue, and receive the respect and resources needed to do my job."*

 *"I want to focus on a scientific field, such as behavioral science or design, and become a behavioral practitioner."*

## What does the future hold for product marketers?

### What are your career aspirations for the next year or two?

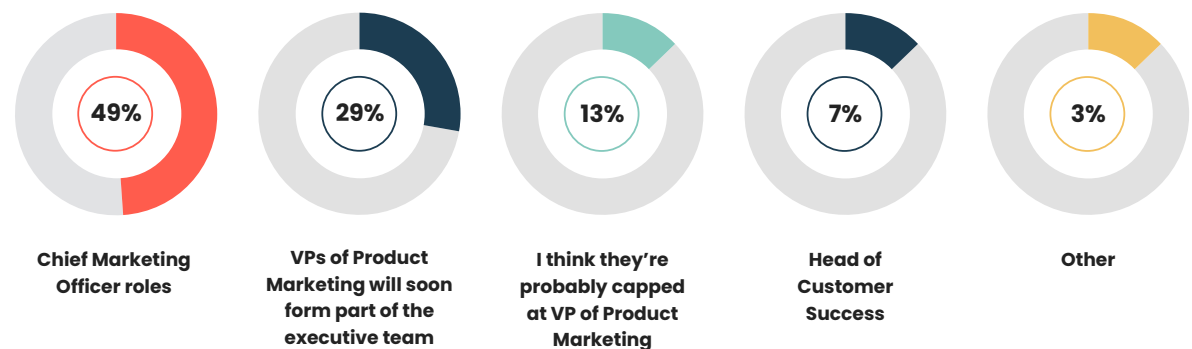


Overall, the goals and ambitions being set by product marketers are encouraging, yet the fate of many will be determined by senior management teams.

Here's what people in the C-suite think could be around the corner for those with their eyes firmly set on moving up the ladder, having already reached Director/VP status.

**What we asked:** In terms of progression, which direction do you see senior/director/VP-level product marketers advancing in?

### What they answered:





# What does the future hold for product marketers?


## Recommended changes to product marketing


Product marketing is a field on the up. No question. Sure, some opinions are harder to change than others, but that drives us and other product marketing experts to work harder until skeptics appreciate how product marketing teams contribute to day-to-day business operations.

Despite some of the challenges being faced, many product marketers continue to thoroughly enjoy their role. But, as is the case with any profession, there's always room for a degree of change to drive improvement. So, what changes did PMMs in the survey say they'd like to see in the not-too-distant future?

 *"I think many product marketers would like greater recognition and utilization of product marketing functions by the board/senior management. I'm not sure everyone at the top-table understands how beneficial product marketing can be when it's used properly; it can be a very powerful business growth tool."*

 *"A clear distinction between roles needs to be established. I've found that product marketing becomes the catch-all – if another marketing function doesn't believe it is their job, it becomes the responsibility of the product marketing team. I'd also like to have more influence over the product in the early developmental stages."*

 *"I'd like product marketing to be a stand-alone function, or report more directly to the C-suite. In B2B software, PMM is a CEO or CRO track role. Appreciation for (and appropriate compensation for) the role would be amazing."*

 *"Because product marketing is still an up-and-coming function and occasionally brand new to an organization, communication from executive leaders to the broader company about what the role is and why it's important can go a long way. It'd also be great if product marketing became part of the core marketing curriculum (university courses, certifications, etc.) to begin introducing the role to people earlier. I had no idea product marketing existed until a peer suggested I apply for an open role."*

# Part 11

## Conclusion

# Conclusion

## **At the start of this survey, we had one question on our minds: ‘Since 2019, has the state of product marketing improved?’**

Having spoken with product marketers, we certainly think product marketing has and continues to show signs of progress. Companies are investing money in a bid to improve their product marketing efforts, PMMs are present within leadership meetings, and not only are existing product marketers choosing to stay in the field, professionals from other fields are making the transition and diving on the bandwagon.

Granted, there’s still room for improvement, but this needn’t alter the fact the pipedreams many product marketers held in 2019 are becoming a reality.

Such is the beauty of product marketing, it never has, and never will stand stationary. Instead, the industry continues to evolve, and it’s essential PMMs and those working with product marketing teams evolve with it, given the huge role it plays, as outlined by **Harvey Lee, Global Product Marketing Leader and Consultant**:



*“From the early days of the Internet to now, the Product Marketing role has evolved in line with the Internet. From a base of nearly a 100% B2C role, the PMA membership reflects this technology shift by B2B cloud SaaS companies accounting for the majority of the membership. B2C PMM is just around 6%!*


*“Marketing in general has evolved, sprouting out into areas of speciality such as Digital, Marketing Communications and Performance, all of which are the tip of the iceberg. Product Marketing represents the iceberg below the waterline. It represents the majority of the foundational work in Marketing yet it’s work that often goes unseen.*


*“If Marketing Communications are the ‘colouring in’ department, then Product Marketing designed, manufactured and launched the crayons!”*





# Conclusion


So, as we begin to enter the next phase of our mission to propel the reputation of Product Marketing, what tips would PMMs give to those looking to enter the field?

 *“Know your customer. Speak with them, follow them on all forms of social media, and subscribe to their newsletters. Your product messaging is only ever going to be as good as your understanding of what customers need to hear.”*

 *“Get used to working and thriving in an environment with constant change, whether they be expectations, delivery timelines, market dynamics, and perceptions, etc. and develop tactics that help you keep up with, and ideally ahead of, the change.”*

 *“Clearly define your role and set boundaries early on. It’s a fine line to walk being as helpful as possible while not neglecting your core responsibilities.”*

 *“Don’t rush the process. Thought, clarity of strategy and tactics and ultimate execution are the most important aspects of a Product Marketer. Without these, we are swimming in the deep with minimal impact to the customer or business.”*

 *“Make friends with your customers – they hold all of the secrets to why your products are a success or failure. Listen, understand, and share their journey with others.”*

# Conclusion



And here a final few words from **Richard King**, Founder of PMA:

*“We were blown away by how well last year’s State of Product Marketing report went down and I’m confident 2020’s edition won’t disappoint. There are some really interesting stats in here and being able to now compare many of them, like-for-like, to 2019’s data has provided us – and hopefully you – with a really rich source of data.*

*“On the whole, both in and outside of this report, I think it’s fair to say the role of Product Marketing is well and truly on the up and gaining momentum worldwide, but there are definitely some areas in need of improvement – for example, with the level of influence PMMs have, how many say they feel valued, and the number of Product Marketers who say their internal counterparts 100% understand the nature and value of their role.*

*“These are all areas we’re going to work hard on addressing in the next 12 months and we’re already looking forward to seeing what next year’s data brings. Bring on 2021’s State of Product Marketing report!”*

# Conclusion

## Make your voice heard; we're all ears

Here at Product Marketing Alliance, we believe communication is at the heart of progression and we're always delighted to hear the views of fellow product marketers.

If you'd like to contribute or let us know your views about a topic we may (or may not) have covered in our report, please do get in touch with us, it'd be great to hear from you. Share your views with us and 1,000s of other PMMs via our Slack community, or via our LinkedIn, Twitter, or Facebook pages.



**Thank you for taking the time to read this year's State of Product Marketing report.**

A special  
thank you

## Producers



### Lawrence Chapman

#### Copywriter

Lawrence is our Copywriter here at PMA who loves crafting content to keep readers informed, entertained, and enthralled. He's always open to feedback and would be thrilled to hear from you!



### Richard King

#### Founder of Product Marketing Alliance

Rich is the Founder of Product Marketing Alliance and is endlessly thinking of ideas to help elevate the PMM role. He's responsible for what happens next with the community and if you've got ideas you think can help, he's happy to listen!



### Bryony Pearce

#### Content Marketer

Bryony's our in-house content guru and takes charge of all things content. She's responsible for all the words in this report and if you've got any feedback, she'd love to hear it!



### Jon Sayer

#### Graphic Designer

Jon is our graphic designer and looks at all our design requirements. He's responsible for the layout and visual elements in this report and is always happy to hear your thoughts!

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## Interview contributors:

**Yoni Solomon**, Director of Product Marketing & GTM at G2

**Sarah Din**, Director of Product Marketing at SurveyMonkey

**Div Manickham**, Director of Portfolio Messaging at Dell Boomi

**Priya Doty**, VP of Product Marketing at IBM

**Elizabeth Brigham**, Head of Morningstar Direct Software (US)

**Kerensa Hogan**, Lead Product Marketing, Amazon Music

**Tamara Grominsky**, VP of Strategic Growth at Unbounce

**Samantha Yeh**, Senior Product Marketing Manager at Spotify

**Francis Larkin**, VP of Product Marketing at InVision

**Dylan Hoeffler**, Head of Product Marketing at Bazaarvoice

**JD Prater**, Head of Product Marketing at Quora

**Phill Agnew**, Director of Product Marketing at Brandwatch

**Holly Watson**, Associate Director of Product Marketing at Sprinklr

**Harvey Lee**, Global Product Marketing Leader and Consultant

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## Survey contributors:

And thank you so much to the 2000+ product marketers who took the time to share their thoughts, experiences, and feelings in the survey. We couldn't have created this report and started this conversation without you.

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