

# 2024 ISV BENCHMARKING REPORT

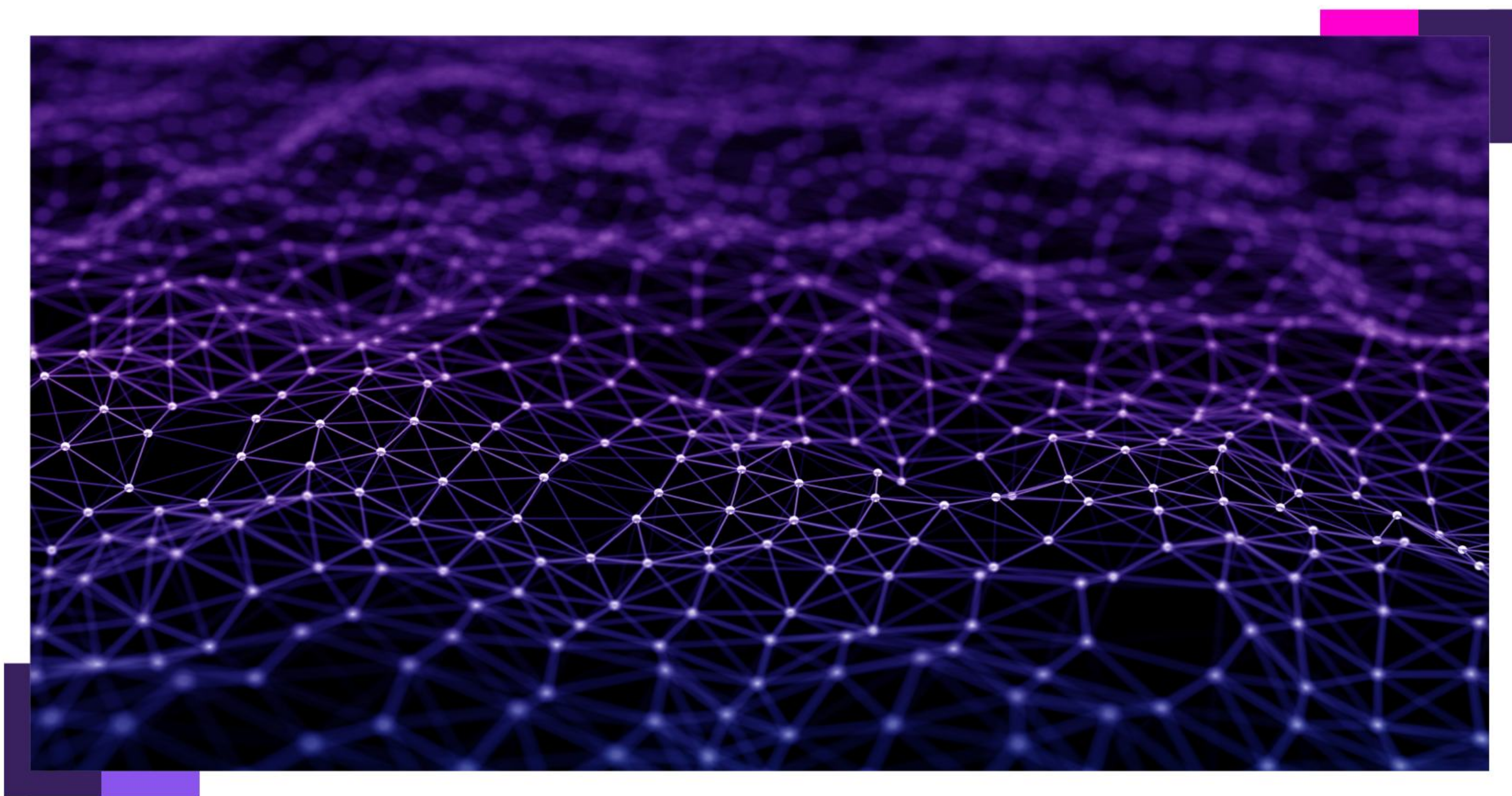
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 **BRANCH  
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# WHY WE CONDUCTED THIS REPORT



There are over 7,000 Salesforce ISVs and 1,400 consulting partners active globally.

But the sheer size of the ecosystem also makes difficult for people to find the right products, and for you to stand out.

That's why Salesforce Ben has partnered with integrated marketing agency, Branch Road to help ISVs and SIs tell the right stories, to find and engage the right buyers and sell their products.

Dive in to find out what your peers are doing to thrive in 2024.



# A FOREWORD FROM SIMON CLIFFE ON THE ISV MARKET TEMPERATURE



Working alongside ISVs in 2023, we watched budgets and headcount shrink as marketing strategies and tactics came under greater scrutiny. With fewer hands and dollars directed at building company awareness and nurturing prospects into paying customers, ISVs saw pipelines dry up and revenue slow down.

However, the data in this report paints an optimistic outlook for 2024. Last year's cutbacks have honed ISV leaders' understanding of marketing's role in growth, and helped refine which strategic and tactical levers to pull to best generate more revenue in the coming year.

This report compiled from ISV founders, executives, and senior leaders, with insights from our partners at Get There, dives into how your peers are thinking about marketing as we move through the year and the strategies and tactics they plan to prioritise to sell more over the next 12 months.



Simon Cliffe, CEO

Branch Road



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# WHAT WORKED

## FOR ISVs IN 2023

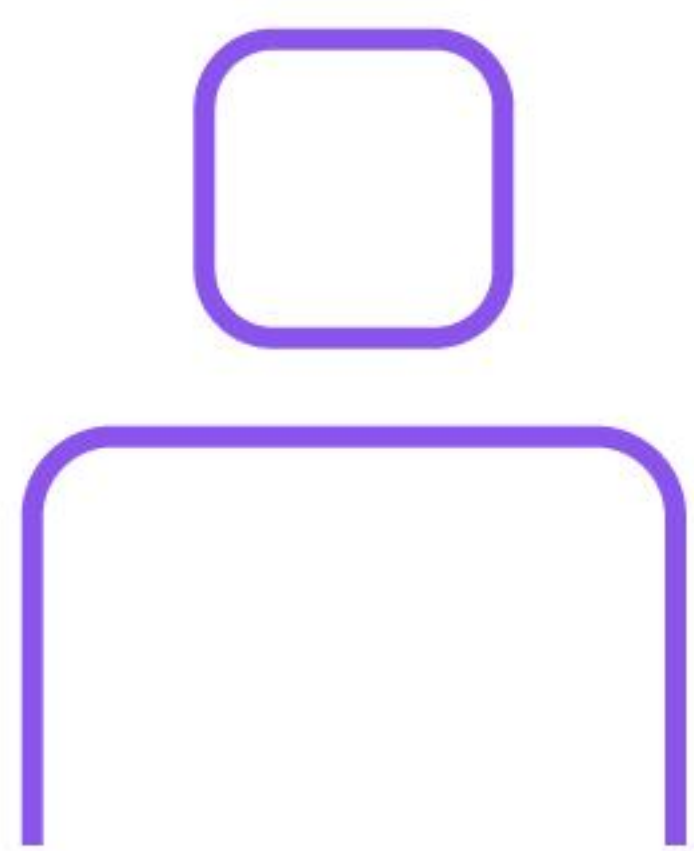


# IT PAYED TO BE PERSONAL

To cut through the noise and convert attention into revenue, ISVs found serious value in personalising content in 2023.

**47%** of ISVs said that creating content tailored to specific buyer personas drove the best results of any marketing tactic. While **40%** said personalization has been very successful at helping them reach lead-gen KPIs.

Personalization should be a top-of-the-list tactic for ISVs in 2024 and beyond. And with the rise of generative AI tools, creating personalized content for specific buyer personas at scale is only going to get faster and easier for ISVs.



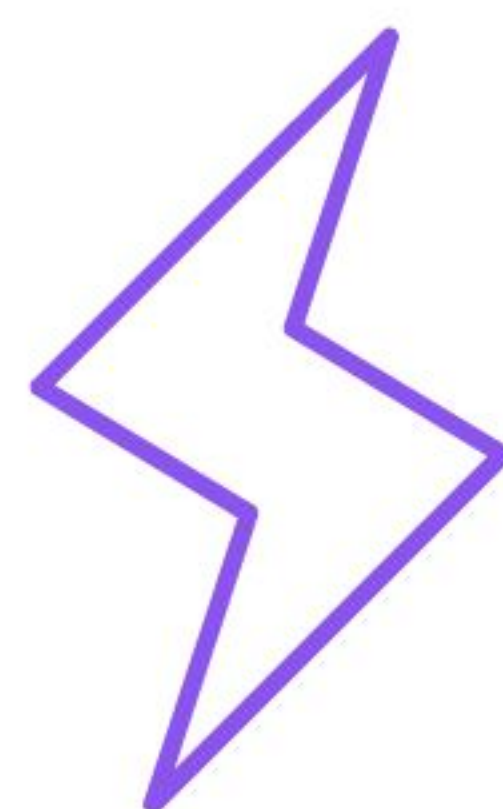
**47%**

of ISVs found tailoring content to sepcific buyer personas drove the best results of any tactic



**40%**

of ISVs have found personalization very successful for reaching lead-gen targets and KPIs



**81%**

of ISVs have created industry-specific content that aligns with their target audience

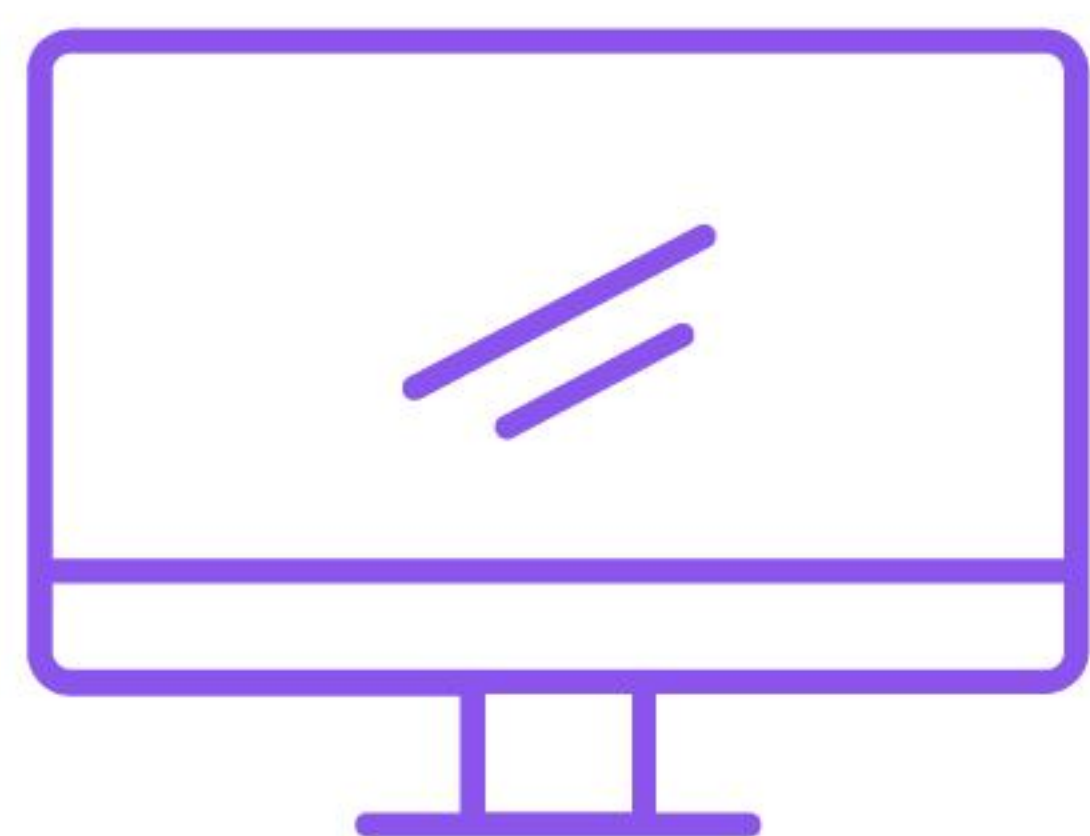


# APPETITE FOR VIDEO KEPT GROWING

Consumers are hungry for video content, and the numbers show it's an increasingly popular marketing strategy.

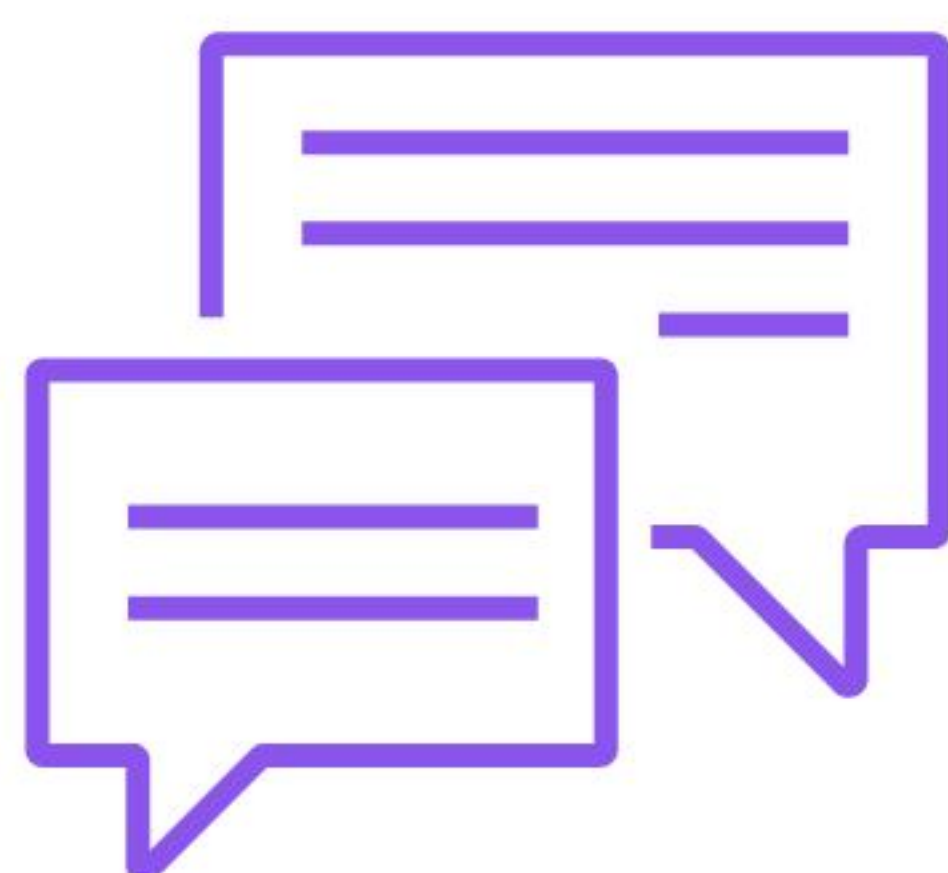
**66%** of respondents said that long- and short-form video formats drove the most engagement and leads from buyers in 2023.

Why? Video is more engaging. Visually explaining a product or service in a digestible way is much less of a time and effort investment than reading a 1000-word blog.



**66%**

of ISVs said long- and short-form videos drive engagement and leads amongst buyers



**14%**

of ISVs said long-form written content drives engagement and leads amongst buyers

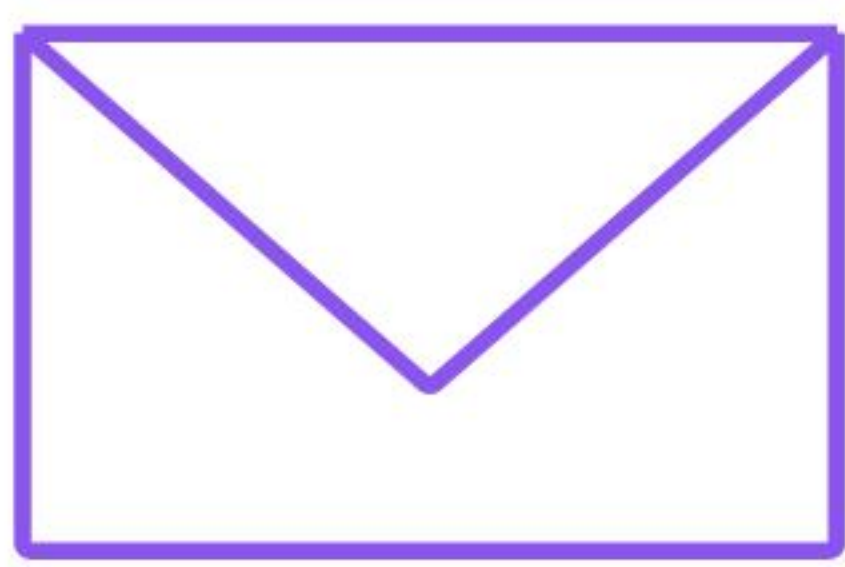


# EMAIL MARKETING **(STILL)** ISN'T DEAD

People have proclaimed email's death for years.  
But our data shows email is as strong as ever.

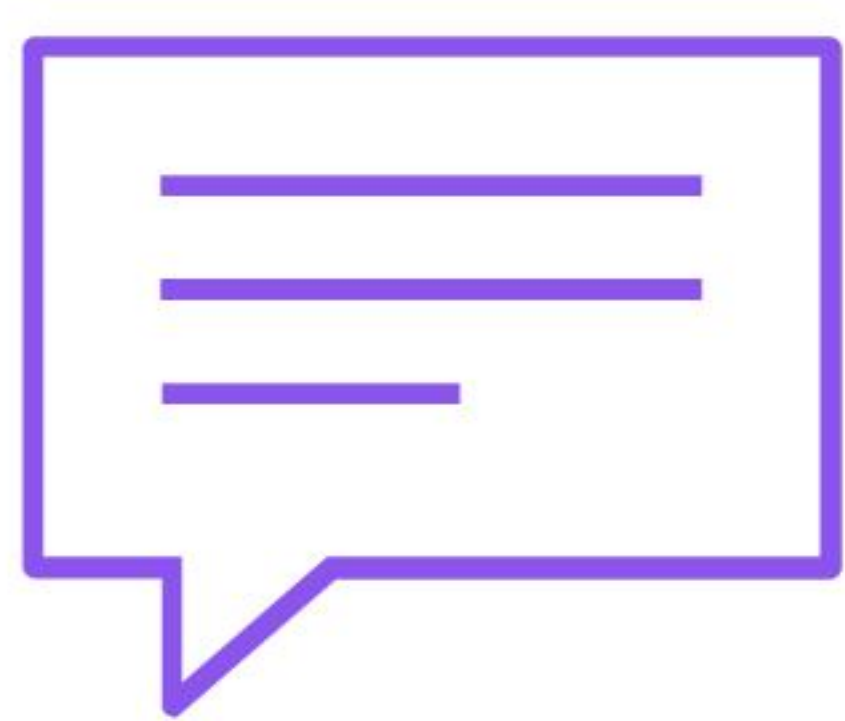
**48%** of respondents listed email as the top channel for ROI, narrowly edging out webinars (**47%**) and organic website traffic (**38%**) for the top spot.

As long as email remains the default communication method for business, we see it as a critical tactic for ISV marketing. And with tools like AI to personalise at scale, streamline testing, and improve.



**48%**

of ISVs said email drove ROI as a marketing channel



**47%**

of ISVs said webinars drove ROI as a marketing channel



**38%**

of ISVs said organic website traffic drove ROI as a marketing channel

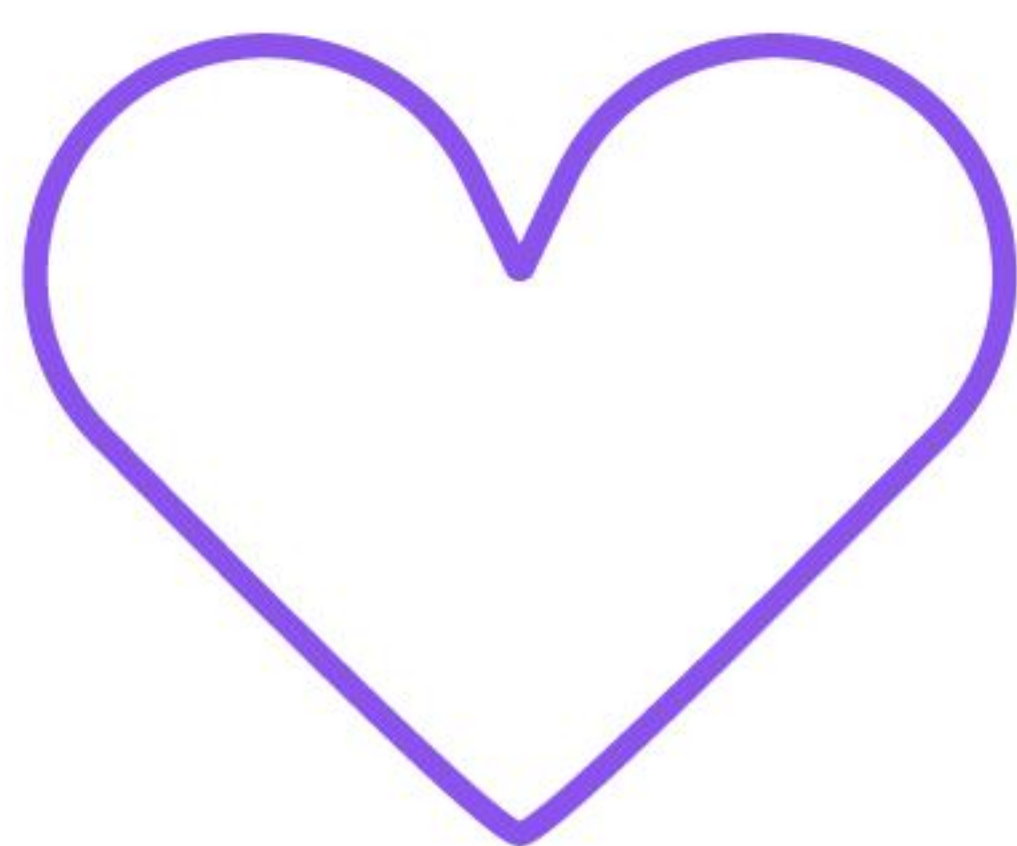


# MARKETING UNDER THE INFLUENCER

Tapping into a bevy of industry influencers who know about your niche is a growing opportunity for ISVs to forge more meaningful connections with their audience in 2024 and 2025.

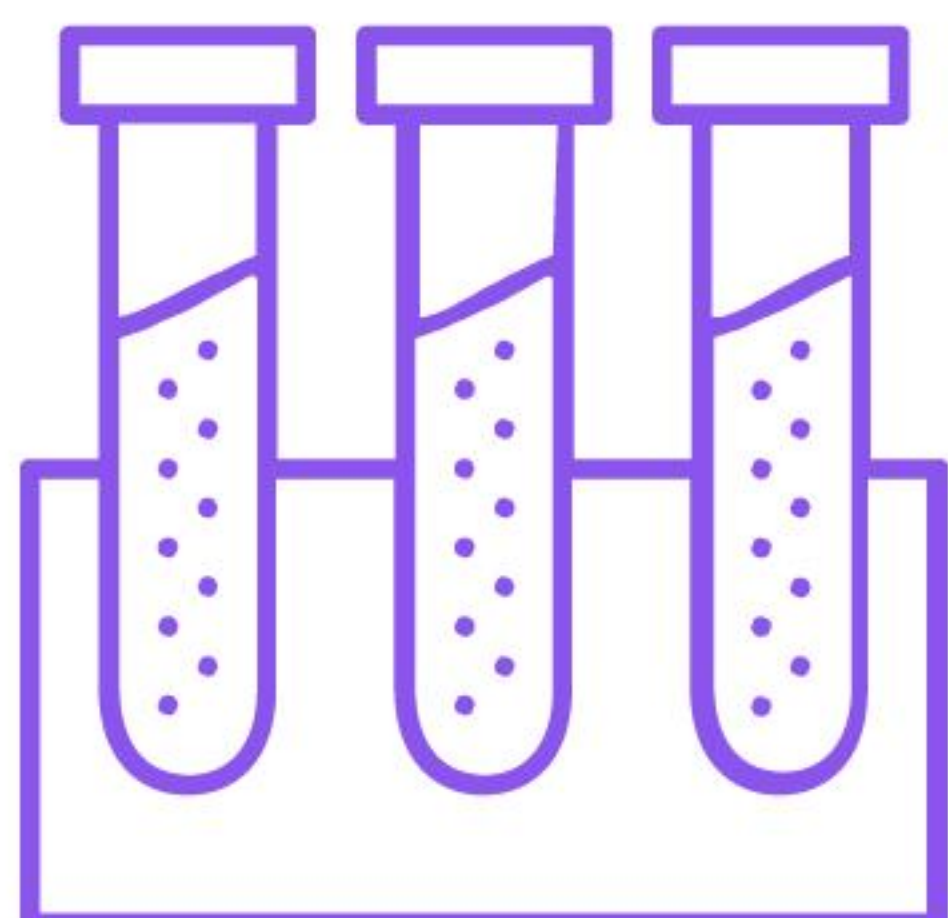
**65%** of ISVs leveraged influencer marketing in 2023, and a further **44%** said they'd found success driving engagement and leads through industry influencers.

Today's buyers crave authenticity. And influencer marketing is a great way to put a familiar face behind a brand and get more exposure across the social platforms their fans are using.



## 65%

of ISVs said they have leveraged influencer marketing to promote content



## 44%

of ISVs said influencer marketing increased engagement or leads



# OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES IN THE SALESFORCE ECOSYSTEM



# SURVEYING THE SALESFORCE ECOSYSTEM WITH BEN MCARTHY

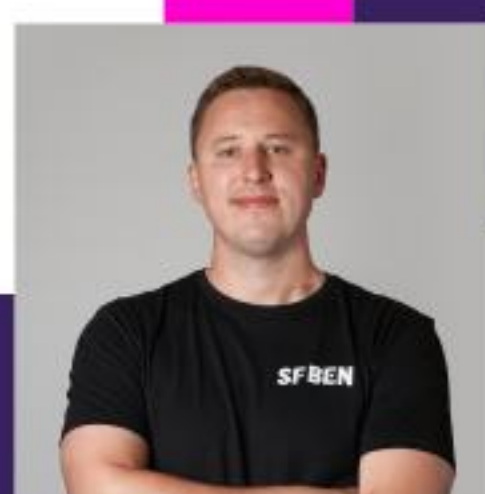


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In 2023 the Salesforce ecosystem backed a host of new capabilities, like Salesforce Einstein, generative AI, and industry clouds.

As the Salesforce platform continues to innovate, which is attracting a broader range of users, it's becoming even more of a must-play ecosystem to reach highly engaged prospects.

But to win, ISVs must approach their Salesforce marketing with the right messaging and solid knowledge of the leading ROI tactics to make the most of next year.



Ben McCarthy, Founder  
Salesforce Ben



# SMALL EVENTS OFFER BIG RETURNS

When it comes to driving leads, local and community events provide ISVs the most engagement and potential returns.

**69%** said smaller-scale events were the biggest driver of leads and ROI, followed by large-scale events like Dreamforce (**48%**), and Salesforce user groups (**41%**).

Smaller events have a lower attendance, but their more 'candid' nature means greater opportunities to deeply engage with potential customers.





# ISVs CASH IN ON THE APP EXCHANGE

The AppExchange is a major lead generator for both Salesforce ISVs and software partners – **60%** of ISVs said that the Salesforce AppExchange was the most effective marketing channel in driving leads.

Building a clearly defined, targeted, and engaging offer for your target audience not only opens the door to you being discovered through the AppExchange, it's also a powerful place to direct potential customers to add Salesforce credibility to your solution and drive leads.



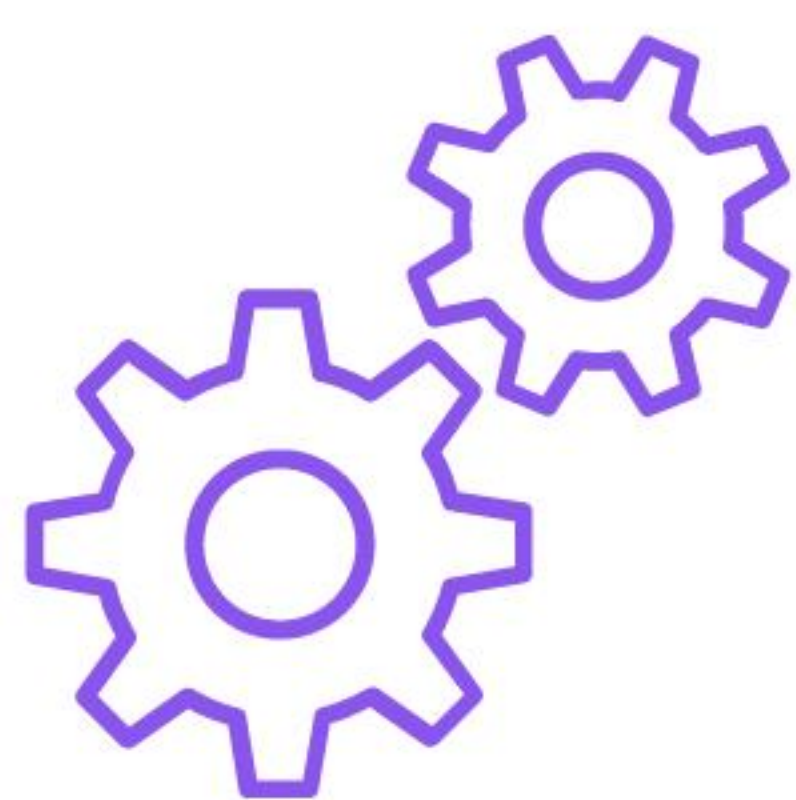


# SALESFORCE'S **INTERNAL MARKETING** PROGRAM HAS ROOM TO IMPROVE

Salesforce's paid AppExchange co-marketing program provides opportunities to reach a wider Salesforce audience.

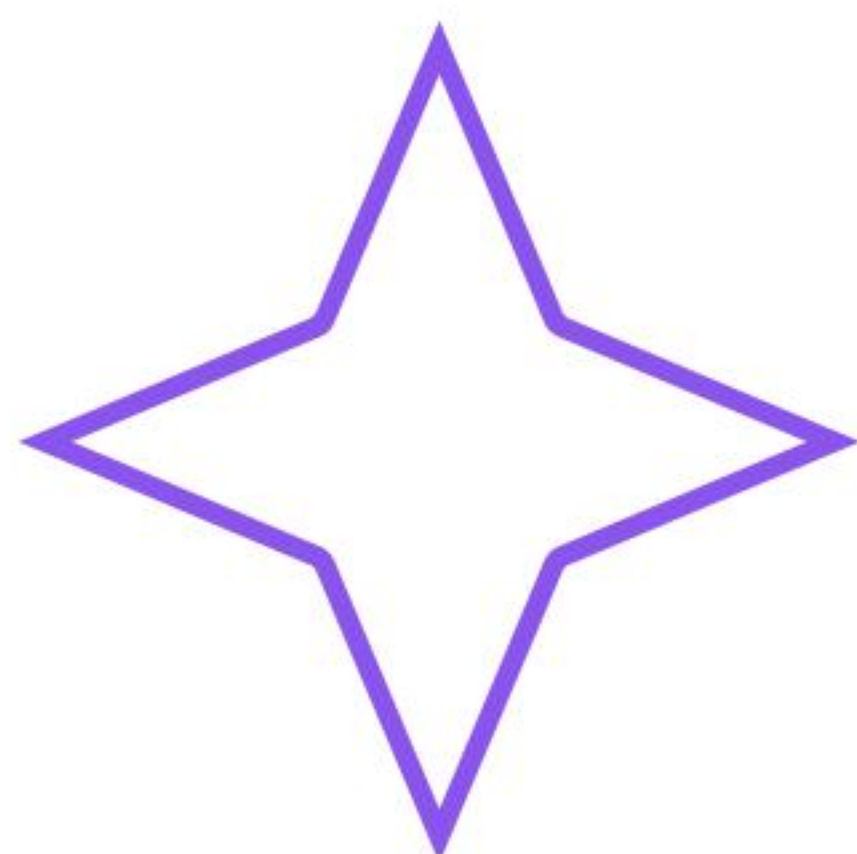
Although, while **71%** of ISVs actively work alongside Salesforce to generate leads from account executives through referrals, **35%** neither agree nor disagree the marketing program drives satisfying results.

A remaining **30%** agreed the program drove positive results, and **23%** disagreed.



**71%**

of ISVs actively work with Salesforce to generate leads from AEs



**35%**

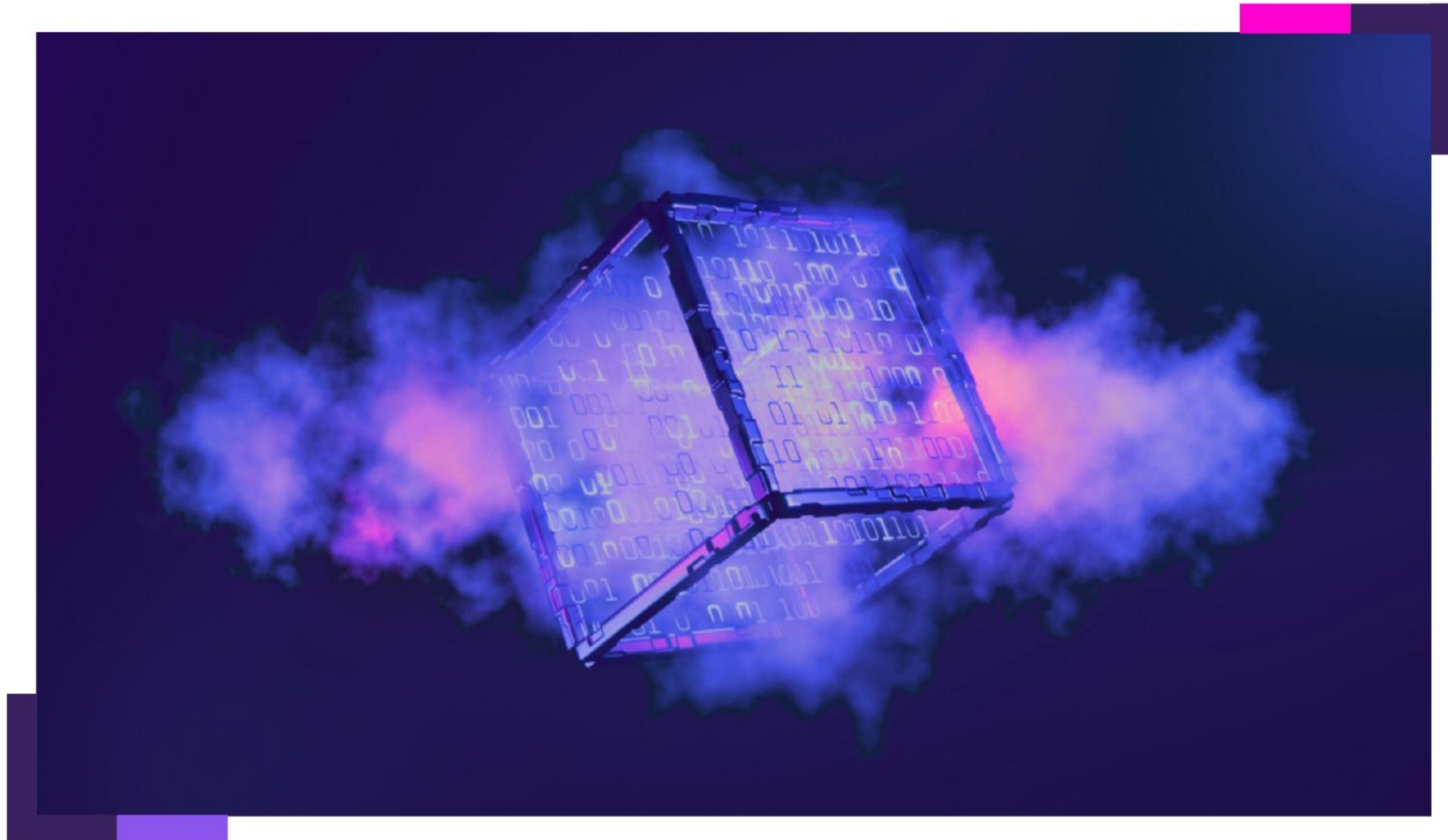
neither agree nor disagree that Salesforce marketing programs drive satisfying results



# TOP STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR ISV MARKETERS IN 2024



# THE **KEY** TO ISV GROWTH ACCORDING TO ANDREW SPALDING



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In my experience, a critical factor to an ISV's growth is how joined-up the Sales and Marketing functions are. In some cases, this can be one team – or even one role – though, in most, they are separate. However structured, it's imperative that the two are in lockstep.

Now, this is of course easier said than done – in my career, I've worked for, and with, companies where the two were awkward bedfellows at best! The direction and culture set by a company's management/leadership team will have a major impact on how successful this collaboration can be. When the two do see eye-to-eye, with teams openly collaborating toward common goals, the results can be quite magical.



Andrew Spalding, Managing Director  
Get There



# STEADYING THE SHIP...

The future is brighter in 2024, with **54%** of ISVs saying marketing budgets have “increased slightly”, while leads and KPI targets mostly remain unchanged from last year.

There’s also greater stability: **70%** said marketing headcount has held steady, and **49%** said budget for agency support has stayed the same going into 2024.



**54%**

of ISVs said marketing budget has increased slightly in 2024



**70%**

of ISVs said internal marketing headcount has stayed the same



**49%**

of ISVs said budget for agency support has stayed the same



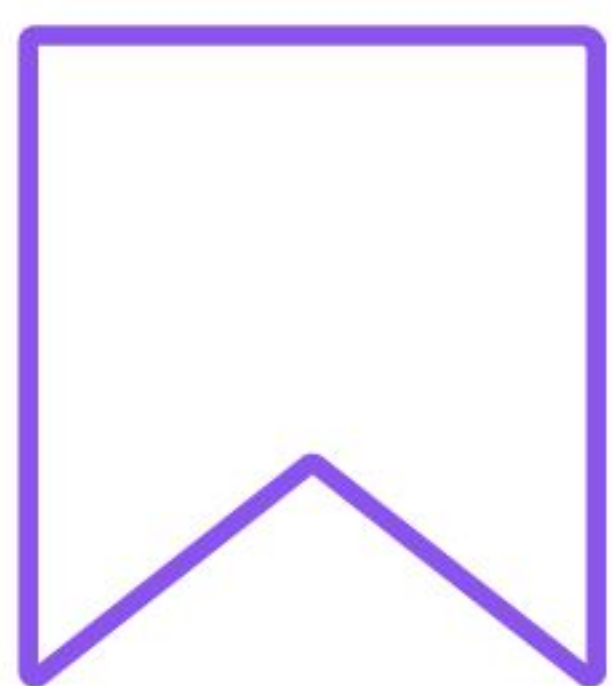
# BRIDGING THE SALES MARKETING DIVIDE

The war wages on: marketing blames sales for not converting leads, and sales argues the leads aren't serious buyers.

So unsurprisingly, 44% of ISVs indicated mixed feelings about marketing and sales alignment, with neither agreeing nor disagreeing the teams worked well together last year.

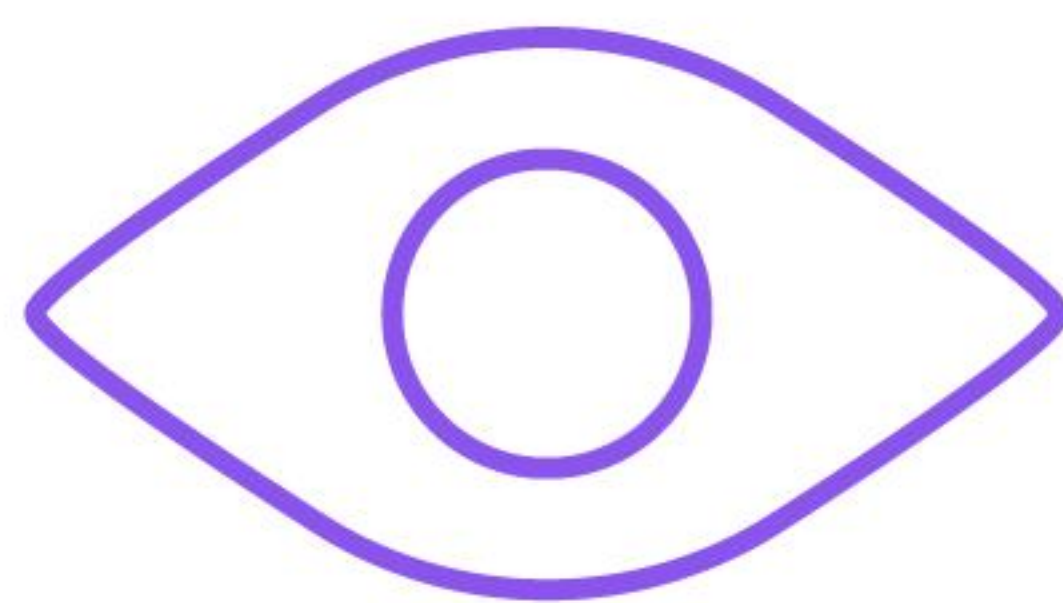
The impact of misalignment is confusion when it comes to measuring marketing success, with the most popular metric being MQLs (59%), rather than deals closed (41%).

Before ISVs start executing tactically, aligning sales and marketing behind functional metrics and aligned incentives must be a top priority in 2024.



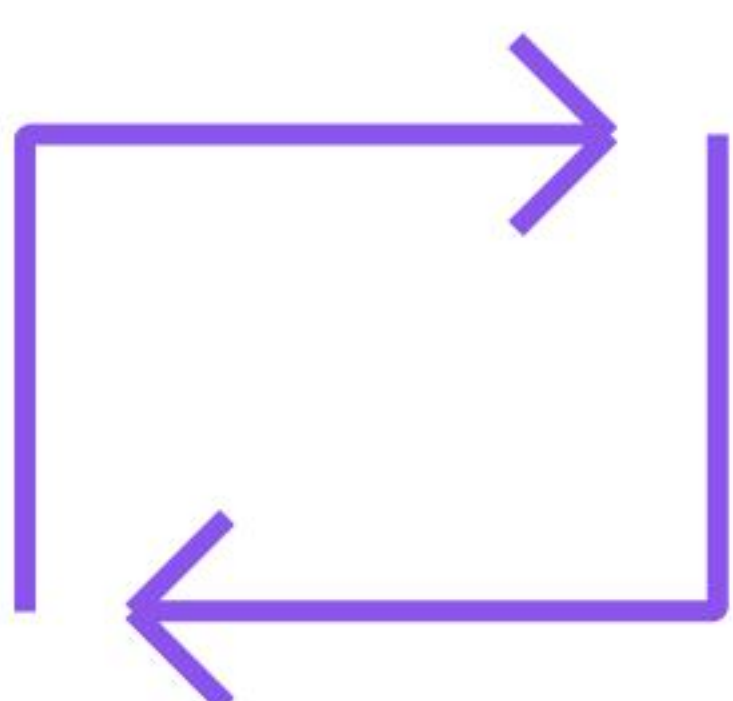
**44%**

of ISVs had mixed feelings about sales and marketing alignment



**41%**

of ISVs use 'deals closed' to measure marketing success



**59%**

of ISVs use MQLs to measure marketing success



# STAYING TRUE TO MARKETING FUNDAMENTALS

Despite a flurry of new tactics and tech, ISVs listed their top three priorities in 2024 as:

- Audience engagement - **68%**
- Lead generation - **56%**
- Lead nurture - **49%**



These priorities go hand in hand with the classic marketing funnel – attracting prospects, qualifying them, and guiding them to purchase. As ISVs venture through 2024, it's worth staying true to the basics and not being distracted by the shiny “next big thing” credibility to your solution and drive leads.



# OUR PREDICTIONS FOR 2024/2025



# WHAT DO BRAND ROAD AND SFB'S **BEST** AND **BRIGHTTEST** SEE ON THE HORIZON?



**While the tactics will change, fundamental marketing principles will remain the backbone of ISV growth.** Those companies that understand who their audience is on a deep level and say things that resonate with that audience on the channels they interact on will find the most success.

**Resource-strapped marketing teams will turn to tools like generative AI to do more,** whether that's creating more content, delivering greater personalization, or better understanding audience's needs. The question for marketing teams then becomes: is that machine pointing at the right people?



Simon Cliffe, CEO  
Branch Road

**CRM and the Salesforce space will become more verticalised** and industry specific as users customise for their use cases. The ripple effect is a massive opportunity for the ISVs that hone their niche and focus on the verticals they can best serve.



Ben McCarthy, Founder  
Salesforce Ben



# BUILDING A MARKETING SUPPORT NETWORK

Despite an optimistic outlook to 2024, we found the majority of ISVs are researching marketing best practices from Google search (**53%**) – while convenient and easy to access, it's unlikely to provide the best results.

Our research found ISVs need the most support in three key areas:

- Identifying the content/topics that will resonate with their audience - **68%**
- Setting up an end-to-end marketing model - **54%**
- Reaching buyer personas - **44%**

Rather than wandering the web, savvy ISVs are seeking support from marketing experts.

If you're looking for a marketing partner or just want to talk marketing for your ISV, Branch Road and Salesforce Ben are ISV marketing experts – inside and out of the Salesforce ecosystem.

Let's talk



# METHODOLOGY

This survey was conducted online by Branch Road and Salesforce Ben between January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024 and February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

It polled founders, CEOs, and senior marketing leaders at Salesforce ISVs.

For further questions on the data in this survey, email [Rhys@branchroad.media](mailto:Rhys@branchroad.media)