



Partner Marketing Study 2024

Partner marketing's success breeds confidence and investment

Partner marketing programs continue to deliver excellent results across a range of channels, particularly at companies with well-documented processes and goals. Although marketers struggle with short-term thinking, budget restraints and a lack of clarity on how to access marketing development funds, they generally give high marks to the success of their programs and plan to invest more in the future.

Those are among the results of Foundry's fourth Partner Marketing Study. The survey of 353 marketing leaders who give and/or receive partner marketing funds at their companies is intended to document the perceived value of partner marketing programs, trends in tactics and budgets, and the obstacles marketers encounter. Respondents are involved in a wide range of marketing decisions, including evaluating partners, setting budgets, determining strategy and authorizing investments in channels, programs, and partners.

Large firms and senior executives expressed the most confidence in partner marketing's value and have the most aggressive plans to expand their programs. Marketers at the smallest companies showed less enthusiasm and greater caution. This isn't surprising, given that such firms are likelier to occupy niche markets and be less attractive targets for investment from industry giants.

Partner marketing, a collaborative strategy in which businesses unite to market their

■ **Partner marketing, a collaborative strategy in which businesses unite to market their products or services**, offers many benefits. Through co-branding, joint promotions, and resource sharing, businesses can reach a wider audience, enhance their customer value proposition, and maximize their resources.

products or services, offers many benefits. Through co-branding, joint promotions, and resource sharing, businesses can reach a wider audience, enhance their customer value proposition, and maximize their resources. The programs, typically funded by both parties, further their joint interests and contribute to mutual success.

Steady improvement

Foundry's Partner Marketing surveys were previously conducted in 2014, 2019 and 2022, and the results have been consistently positive. In most key areas, such as spending, satisfaction, and return on investment, they have documented a steady and significant improvement in marketers' perception of partner marketing's value. In this year's study, for example, 68% of overall respondents - and 76% at the executive level - said they see partner marketing as a necessary

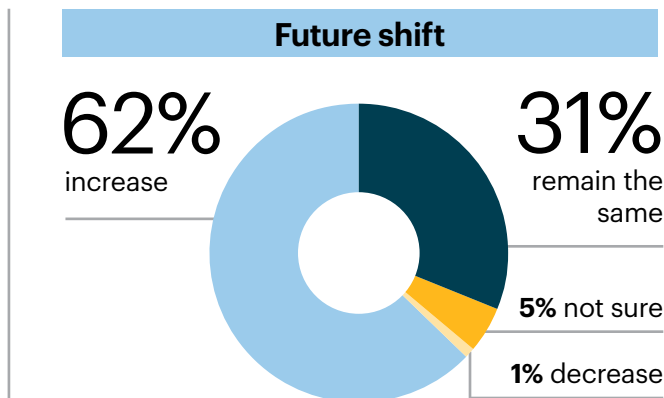
68%
view partner marketing as a necessary tactic that provides great value.
Perception differs by company size:
<1,000 57% 1,000+ 78%

tactic that provides great value. That's up from 64% in 2022 and 62% in 2019. This upward trend in value perception is particularly strong at companies with more than 1,000 employees, 78% of whom assigned a "great value" category compared to 57% at smaller firms.

The growing investments in partner marketing programs should instill confidence in their potential. This year, an average of 37% of marketing budgets

Realized value leads to increased spending toward partner marketing activities

37%
of overall marketing budget was spent on partner marketing activities in the past 12 months.



are being spent on these activities, up from 28% in 2014. There was a slight decrease in the percentage of marketers who expect to increase spending over the next 24 months, but that most likely reflects the maturity of existing programs and uncertain market conditions.

89%

of organizations have some version of a partner marketing strategy.

Senior executives are especially bullish on this question, with 76% planning to increase spending compared to 40% of marketing staff. Smaller companies are less ambitious; nearly 48% of tech marketers at companies with less than 100 employees expect no change in spending compared to 30% at the largest firms. The average overall planned increase of 19% points to the effectiveness of partner marketing programs. Just 8% expect spending to decrease.

Partner marketing programs receive and give; nearly two-thirds of marketers—and 78% at companies with fewer than 100 employees—said they both receive and dispense funds from their programs. On average, 35% of the average marketing budget consists of funds contributed by partners in the last 12 months, and 60% of respondents expect that figure to increase. Small companies were outliers on this question, with just 12% of their marketing budget made up of partner funds.

Respondents hailed from various organizations, with a nearly even split between marketing services/ad agencies,

technology vendors and consultants/system integrators. Close to 90% recommend marketing channels and partners; 80% control budgets and marketing strategies. Not surprisingly, enterprise partner marketers are more likely to have global responsibilities; 63% of those at 1,000-plus employee companies are international in scope compared to 39% at smaller firms (<1,000 employees). Asia-Pacific (APAC) marketers are more likely to have global coverage responsibility than other regions.

Most strategies are documented

An overwhelming 89% of respondents reported having some version of a partner marketing strategy this year (69% formal/documented and 20% informal), compared to 85% in 2022 and 82% in 2019. Large enterprises are more likely to have a plan, with 93% reporting they have either a formal or informal strategy compared to 86% of companies with fewer than 1,000 employees. Marketing organizations with a global scope are also more likely to have a formal/documented strategy in place by a margin of 73% to 60% over those with a country-specific focus.

A documented strategy is considered a best practice because it ensures that funding is accounted for, spending is appropriately directed, and waste is

Which do marketers consider their most important partners?

1. Independent software vendors
2. Cloud service providers
3. Consultants/system integrators
4. Channel/resellers/VARs
5. Hardware providers/OEMs

minimized. Over the years, Foundry's Partner Marketing Studies have shown that a documented strategy correlates positively with desired outcomes such as qualified leads, revenue, and market share growth.

Partners come in many forms, including strategic partner alliances (with 86% of technology marketers claiming to oversee these partnerships), cloud service providers (79%), independent software vendors (78%), systems integrators (76%), hardware providers (71%), and resellers (68%). Close to half (47%) of tech marketers use all those channels.

Which partnerships matter most

All partnerships are important, but some are more critical than others. When asked to choose their single most important partner, respondents split nearly evenly between independent software vendors

(26%) and cloud service providers (24%), but consultants (21%), resellers (15%) and hardware providers (12%) also received a significant number of mentions.

The opinions of large and small organizations differed sharply on this question, as 30% of enterprise marketers pegged ISVs as the most important partner category compared to 11% of those at the smallest companies. Conversely, small companies said they favor channels/reseller partners by a nearly three-to-one margin compared to enterprises. This is probably because smaller tech companies are more likely to be niche-focused and less likely to have relationships with large ISVs.

One interesting finding on this question was that 82% of technology marketers said they are shifting toward value-creation partners and away from straight resale/ fulfillment partners. This change has played out over the past three surveys as the percentage of respondents considering channel and reseller partners important has dropped from 41% in 2019 to 35% this year, while positive mentions of strategic alliance partners grew from 46% to 52%.

82%

are seeing a shift towards value creation partners away from straight resell/fulfillment partners.

Top five partner marketing program success metrics

	2024	2022	2019
Overall number of qualified leads generated	1	5	4
Increase in number of actual customers	2	1 (tied)	2
Growth of market share	3	4	5
Total revenue generated from programs	4	1 (tied)	1
Partner engagement/relationship	5	3	3

This trend undoubtedly mirrors changes in the market. The growth of cloud computing has forced many resellers to shift from selling hardware to value-added services, and technology vendors have changed their go-to-market strategies accordingly to focus on channels that deliver higher perceived value.

Success metrics evolve

The success of partner marketing programs is measured across a wide range of key performance indicators, and some changes have occurred over time. Fifty-five percent of respondents look for an increase in the overall number of qualified leads, 54% measure the increase in the customer base, 51% track market share growth, and about half focus on total revenue generated, partner engagement, new partner recruitment, and feedback from the sales team. Thirty percent look to shorten the sales cycle and bulk up the pipeline. There was no meaningful difference by company size on this question. APAC

respondents emphasize total revenue generated and market share growth significantly more than their peers in other regions.

Some of these metrics have changed over time. For example, the qualified leads KPI jumped from 42% in

2022 (#5 key metric) to 55% this year (#1 key metric). Just over half of respondents cited market share growth as important this year, up from 38% five years ago. These results may be influenced by competitive shifts in the IT market triggered by the emergence of generative artificial intelligence startups that have drawn buyers' attention away from some traditional categories and increased the importance of lead generation.

Partner engagement is a critical success component of partner marketing programs as engaged partners contribute more value to the sales process. Technology marketers measure engagement across a spectrum of metrics led by revenue growth rate (cited by 55% overall and 67% at the smallest companies), partner satisfaction surveys (45%), training and certification completion rates (44%), lead conversion rates (43%), deal registration (43%), and engagement in co-marketing activities (41%).

More than one-third also cited frequency of communication, joint participation in

How is partner engagement measured?

1. Revenue growth rate
2. Partner satisfaction surveys
3. Training and certification completion rates

training events, joint sales revenue, social media engagement and Net Promoter Score. Smaller companies and APAC-based marketers rated revenue-based metrics more highly than large firms and those in the Europe/Middle East/Africa (EMEA) and North American regions.

Challenges persist

Despite high satisfaction rates with partner marketing programs, 89% of marketers experience measurement barriers. About one-third cited data integration and quality, privacy and data sharing regulations, limited visibility into partner activities, and changing market dynamics. Resource constraints and diverse partnership models also received numerous mentions. APAC respondents rated cultural and language barriers as challenges by a 36%-to-22% margin compared to North Americans.

Nearly three-quarters (71%) said getting partners to engage with programs and

use marketing development funds is challenging, and 74% said planning and executing within partner funding timelines is difficult. A similar 71% said establishing a point of inquiry to tie pipeline opportunities to specific partners is challenging.

Marketers use a variety of strategies to increase partner engagement, including working with media agencies (noted by 52%), investing in self-service portals to make it easier for partners to find/activate programs (50%), developing multi-partner online experiences (47%), building portals to help scale partner programs, investing in concierge agencies around pre-packaged programs, and building multi-partner online experiences. Those at the smallest companies are less likely to invest in any of those strategies than their counterparts at large firms. The largest companies are the most active in building online and self-service portals to help them manage large partner networks.

Despite the challenges, 81% of all respondents agreed that “our company’s current programs with our

71%

of partner marketers say that getting partners to engage with programs and use marketing development funds is a challenge.

Investing in strategies to increase partner engagement

- Working with media agencies to help engage partners **52%**
- Developing multi-partner packages to take directly to partners **50%**
- Investing in self-service portals to make it easier for partners to find/activate programs **50%**

network of channel partners are very effective.” The response was similar across all company sizes and titles.

Funding shifts

This year’s study saw notable overall upticks in programs that will receive partner marketing funds during the next 12 months. This was led by lead nurturing, mentioned by 44% of marketers this year (55% in APAC and 34% in North America), up from 23% in 2022. Thought leadership was noted by 40%, up from 25% two years ago. Demand generation programs rose from 34% adoption in 2022 to 46% this year.

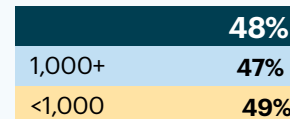
One notable trend in this area is the rise of social media as a partner marketing priority. The 48% who said they plan to invest in that area is up from 42% in 2022 and 30% in 2020. The figure was consistent across all company sizes and regions. The growing importance of peer reviews and content

channels like LinkedIn may be responsible for much of this focus. Spending on events significantly declined from one-third of programs in 2022 to 24% this year, probably reflecting an overhang from COVID-19.

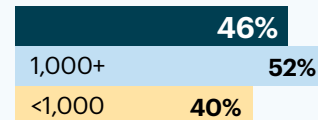
There were some notable variations by company size on this question. More large

Partner marketing budget spend in the next 12 months

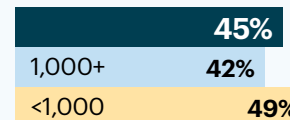
Social media presence



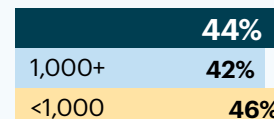
Demand generation



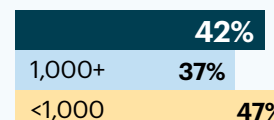
Content development



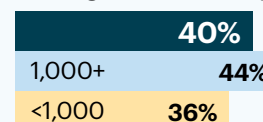
Lead nurturing



Branding



Thought leadership



organizations than smaller ones indicated plans to invest in demand generation and thought leadership, whereas smaller firms pursue content development and branding more aggressively.

Regardless of spending plans, respondents reported 83% to 90% effectiveness and satisfaction rates in their partner marketing efforts around thought leadership, events, content development, demand generation, social media presence, lead nurturing, and branding.

How many partners are too many?

As partner marketing programs have proliferated, practitioners have confronted challenges in managing scale. Overall, 83% reported that members of their partner marketing team manage relationships with multiple partners, a figure that was consistent with previous studies and across companies of all sizes.

The average organization works with 25 technology partners, 23 system integrator partners, and 25 channel/reseller partners. However, between 15% and 20% report working with 40 or more partners in each category. Managing relationships on this scale introduces stress. A clear sweet spot emerged in the middle when asked about their comfort level managing different quantities of partner relationships.

Specifically, 58% to 64% of marketers rated their comfort level as “just right” when working with between 10 and 49 technology partners, systems integrators and channel partners/resellers. Comfort levels plunged to the single digits when 50 or more relationships needed to be managed.

Partners in marketing

Agencies are seen as a lifeline in this area. A majority, 56%, of marketers often turn to agencies for partner marketing help, another 20% consult with agencies sometimes, and 16% report to always work with agencies on partner marketing programs. Just 8% said they rarely or never work with agencies on their programs. Only about half of companies with fewer than 100 employees use agencies compared to 75% of the largest firms. This is probably a function of budget size.

72%

always or often work with an agency or third party on partner marketing programs.

This is mostly due to their:

- 1.** Expertise and specialization
- 2.** Objective perspective
- 3.** Innovative tools and technologies

80% agree that partner marketing programs managed with agencies produce greater results than those run in-house.

Agencies' appeal mostly revolves around expertise and objectiveness, values cited by 37% and 31% of marketers, respectively. Other agency strengths include innovative tools and technologies, faster time-to-market, cost efficiency, and access to a broader network. Smaller companies

value expertise and specialization significantly more than large ones.

A significant 80% agreed that partner marketing programs managed with agencies produce greater results than those run in-house; the figure was consistent across companies of all sizes.

Similar opinions were evident when respondents were asked about working with digital media partners. Digital specialists provide various services to help businesses and organizations create, manage, and optimize their online presence. Just over 70% often or always work with such agencies, and 89% describe the results as effective or very effective.

The top reasons for working with digital media partners include improving audience engagement (cited by 46%), expanding market reach (42%), enhancing brand awareness (34%), co-creating original content (34%) and strengthening thought leadership (31%).

A pillar of technology marketing

Foundry's fourth Partner Marketing Study underscores the ongoing success and value of partner marketing programs across industries and regions. Despite challenges such as short-term thinking, budget constraints, and complexities in accessing marketing development funds, most marketing leaders report high satisfaction and plan to continue investing in these programs. The documented improvements in spending, satisfaction, and return on investment reflect the growing recognition of partner marketing as a critical component of marketing strategy, particularly among larger enterprises and those with well-documented processes.

Partner marketing programs will continue to evolve in response to market dynamics and technological advancements. The

71%

always or often work with a digital media partner to help advance their partner marketing programs.

This is mostly to:

1. Improve audience engagement
2. Expand market reach
3. Enhance brand awareness and Co-create original content

increased focus on value-creation partners over traditional resale partners, the rise in social media as a key budget item, and the significant role of agencies in managing and optimizing these programs highlight their adaptability. Partner marketing remains vital for businesses aiming to expand their reach, enhance their value propositions, and achieve sustainable growth.

Next steps for marketers

- The value of partner marketing is continuously seen within organizations. While the marketing budget allocated to partner initiatives is expected to increase, ensure your budget is secured to continue the growth of partner programs and engagement.
 - Although the amount of money may not be an issue, getting partners to use marketing development funds and executing programs within partner funding timelines can be challenging.
- Maintain appropriate relationships in order to stay on top of initiatives.
 - Partner marketers are investing in a variety of programs, including social media, demand generation, content development, and lead nurturing. Confirm your investments are providing value by creating a list of success measurements each year.
 - The effectiveness of partner marketing also comes down to partner engagement, which is evaluated based on revenue growth rate and satisfaction surveys. Overcome the barriers to partner engagement by enabling integration and communication.
 - Those with a documented, formal partner marketing strategy see increased effectiveness and ROI satisfaction within their partner programs, specifically in lead nurturing and events. If you haven't done so already, be sure to build out and follow a structured, formal partner plan.

About the survey

This research was conducted to better understand partner marketing efforts within the technology industry, associated benefits and challenges, and budgetary trends with the goal of providing actionable advice for partner marketers regarding those marketing efforts. Results are based on 353 respondents and all are involved in partner marketing decisions for their organization. This is a global research study with 55% of respondents based in North America, 23% in EMEA and 22% in APAC.

Key global differences

Is your marketing scope region-specific?
Explore the key research findings from North America, Europe, and Asia-Pacific below.
Contact us to dive deeper into the regional results.

North America

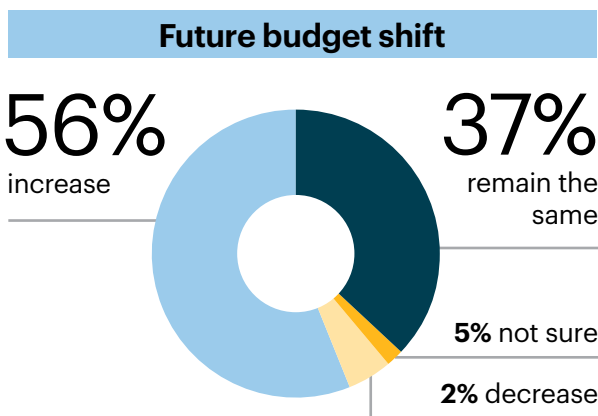
89% view partner marketing as a necessary marketing tactic that provides great or some value.

81% state that their company has some version of a partner marketing strategy.

- **62%** formal/documented
- **19%** informal

Value leads to increased investment

38% of overall marketing budget was allocated to partner marketing activities over the past 12 months



Top five partner programs spending budget on in North America

- Content development
- Lead nurturing
- Social media presence
- Demand generation
- Thought leadership

Success metrics for North America partner marketing programs

- Increase in number of actual customers **54%**
- Overall number of qualified leads generated **53%**
- Total revenue generated from programs **48%**

80% experience barriers to measuring partner engagement, with the main challenges being:

- Limited visibility into partner activities
- Changing market dynamics
- Privacy and data sharing regulations
- Data integration and quality
- Resource constraints

To overcome these barriers, **51%** are working with media agencies to help engage partners.

70% always/often work with agencies/ third parties on their partner marketing programs, mostly due to their expertise, objective perspective, and faster time to market.

77% say that their organization's work with an agency or 3rd party is very effective/effective.

EMEA

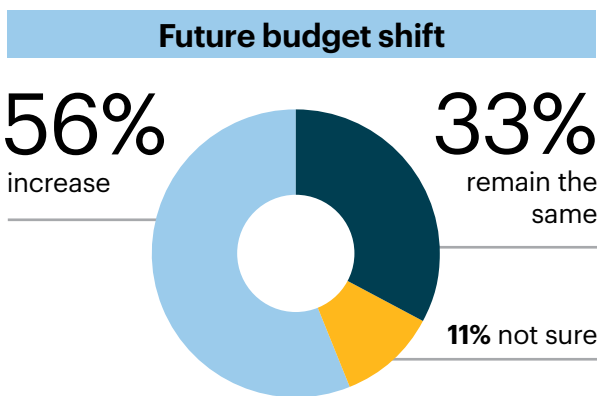
90% view partner marketing as a necessary marketing tactic that provides great or some value.

97% state that their company has some version of a partner marketing strategy.

- **68%** formal/documented
- **29%** informal

Value leads to increased investment

33% of overall marketing budget was allocated to partner marketing activities over the past 12 months



Top five partner programs spending budget on in EMEA

- Demand generation
- Social media presence
- Branding
- Thought leadership
- Lead nurturing

Success metrics for EMEA partner marketing programs

- Overall number of qualified leads generated **54%**
- Partner engagement/relationship **52%**
- Growth of market share **50%**
- Number of new partners/partner recruitment **46%**
- Increase in number of actual customers **44%**

98% experience barriers to measuring partner engagement, with the main challenges being:

- Data integration and quality
- Limited visibility into partner activities
- Changing market dynamics
- Privacy and data sharing regulations
- Resource constraints

To overcome these barriers, **50%** are working with media agencies to help engage partners.

71% always/often work with agencies/third parties on their partner marketing programs, mostly due to their expertise, objective perspective, and cost efficiency.

76% say that their organization's work with an agency or 3rd party is very effective/effective.

APAC

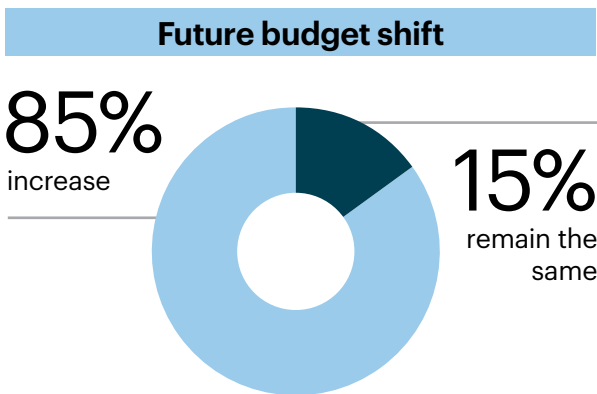
95% view partner marketing as a necessary marketing tactic that provides great or some value.

100% state that their company has some version of a partner marketing strategy.

- **87%** formal/documented
- **13%** informal

Value leads to increased investment

42% of overall marketing budget was allocated to partner marketing activities over the past 12 months



Top five partner programs spending budget on in APAC

- Branding
- Social media presence
- Lead nurturing
- Demand generation
- Content development

Success metrics for APAC partner marketing programs

- Growth of market share **74%**
- Total revenue generated from programs **67%**
- Increase in number of actual customers **65%**
- Overall number of qualified leads generated **62%**
- Number of new partners/partner recruitment **58%**

98% experience barriers to measuring partner engagement, with the main challenges being:

- Privacy and data sharing regulations
- Changing market dynamics
- Cultural and language barriers
- Data integration and quality
- Limited visibility into partner activities
- Diverse partnership models

To overcome these barriers, **55%** are working with media agencies to help engage partners.

77% always/often work with agencies/third parties on their partner marketing programs, mostly due to their innovative tools, expertise, and objective perspective.

83% say that their organization's work with an agency or 3rd party is very effective/effective.

Examining the marketplace

Research is an invaluable way for marketers to better understand customers and prospects, with the goal of building quality connections. At Foundry this is one way we are focused on building bridges between tech buyers and sellers. Our first-party relationships with the most important tech buyers and influencers around the world, allows us to apply value across our customers marketing stack. Our research portfolio explores our audiences' perspectives and challenges around specific technologies—from analytics and cloud, to IoT and security—and examines the changing roles within the IT purchase process, arming tech marketers with the information they need to identify opportunities.

To see what research is available, visit foundryco.com/tools-for-marketers.

For a presentation of full results from any of these studies, contact your

Foundry sales executive or go to foundryco.com/contact-us.

Buying process

Each year we take a deep dive into the enterprise IT purchase process to learn more about who is involved and who influences decision-making, what sources purchasers rely on to keep up to date with technology—and throughout the purchase process—and how they want to engage with the vendors they are working with. Visit foundryco.com/customerjourney for more information.

Buying process studies

- Customer Engagement
- Role and Influence of the Technology Decision-Maker

Technology insights

Each year we explore the technologies that are top of mind among our audiences to understand the business challenges, drivers, and adoption within the enterprise. These research studies are designed to help IT marketers understand what their customers are focused on and where the market is moving.

Role and priority studies

- CIO Tech Poll: Tech Priorities
- State of the CIO

Technology-specific studies

- AI Priorities
- Cloud Computing
- Security Priorities

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About Foundry

Foundry's vision is to make the world a better place by enabling the right use of technology, because we believe that the right use of technology can be a powerful force for good.

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Our trusted brands inform our global data intelligence platform to identify and activate purchasing intent, powering our clients' success. Our marketing services create custom content with marketing impact across video, mobile, social and digital. We simplify complex campaigns that fulfill marketers' global ambitions seamlessly, with consistency that delivers quality results and wins awards. Additional information about Foundry is available at foundryco.com.