

# EMAIL LIST GROWTH

FROM THE SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE

ASCEND2 RESEARCH CONDUCTED  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ALLEGRA



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MARKETING

PRINT

MAIL

DESIGN

WEB

SIGNS

## Email List Growth from the Small and Medium-sized Business Perspective

Ascend2 Research conducted in partnership with Allegra



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# The Importance of Email List Growth for SMBs

**For a majority of small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs), email list growth is “very important” to the overall success of their marketing program.**

*But how will SMBs overcome the new challenges to email list growth in the year ahead?*

To find out, Ascend2 and Allegra fielded the Email List Growth Survey and completed interviews with 186 marketing, sales and business professionals from around the world.

The data in this edition of the study titled *Email List Growth from the Small and Medium-sized Business Perspective* represents the opinions of the 186 small and medium-sized businesses participating in the survey. We thank these busy professionals for sharing their insights with you.

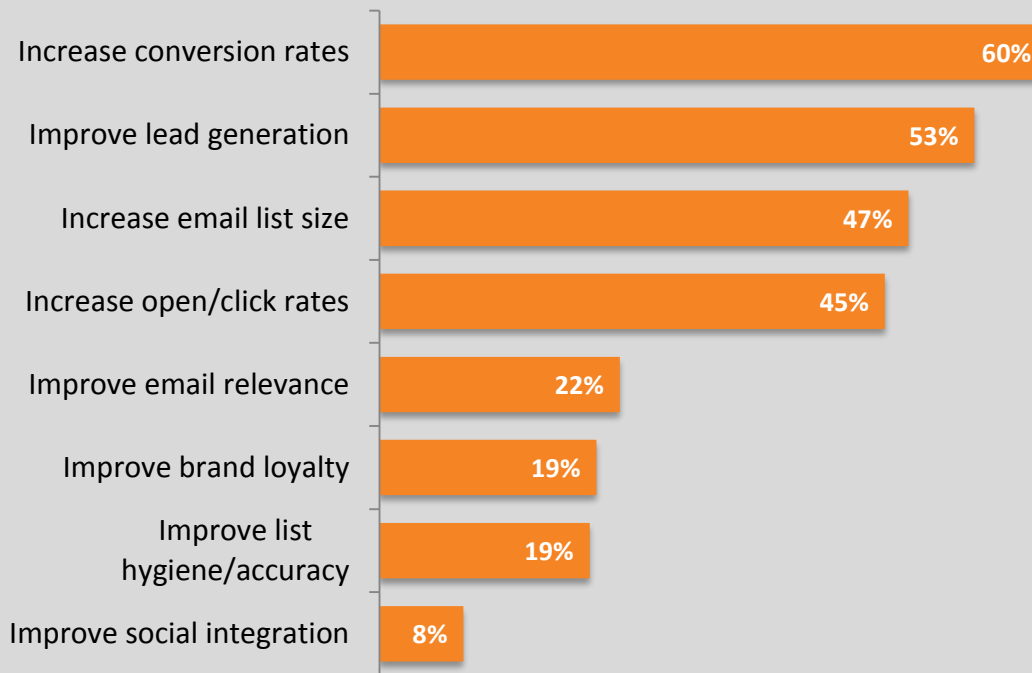
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# Most Important Email Marketing Objectives

The only things SMBs want more than an increase in email list size are more leads and conversions. Email is often used to accomplish two tasks; identify leads in a list and convert them to customers. Consequently, the larger the email list, the more likely it is to achieve more of both.

## What are the MOST IMPORTANT OBJECTIVES for your email marketing strategy in the year ahead?



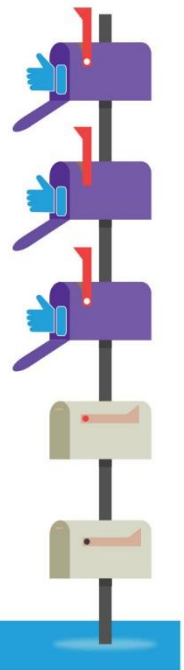
Email List Growth Survey, N=186 SMBs Ascend2 and Allegra, Published Jan 2015

## Email + Snail Mail

Go multi-channel for lead generation.

Three out of five say they enjoy getting postal mail from brands about new products, according to an Epsilon study.

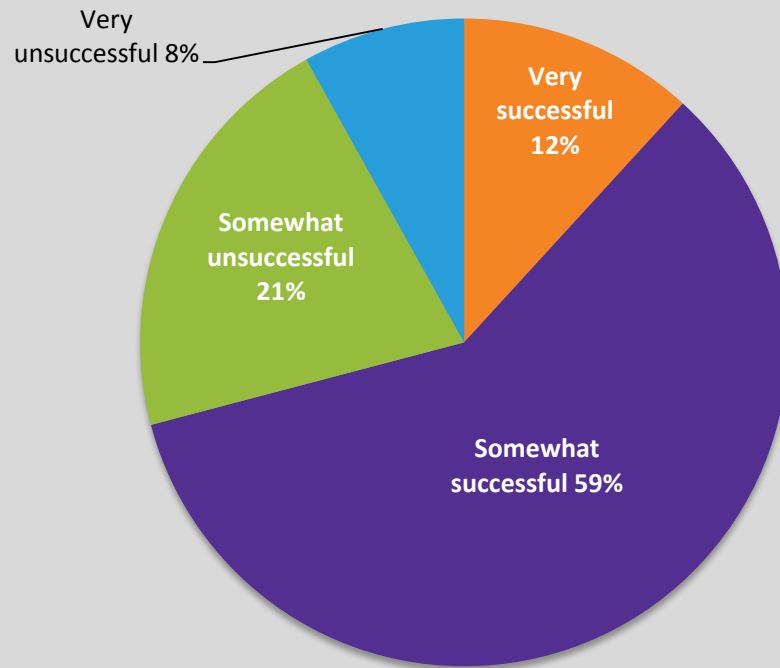
**TIP:** Include the option to sign up for your e-newsletter in your direct mail campaigns to continue nurturing your leads online and off.



# Rating Email Marketing Success

Email is a prevalent marketing channel. However, only 12% of SMBs rate their email marketing as “very successful” at achieving important objectives. The following charts represent strategies and practices used to achieve one very important objective; email list growth.

**How do you RATE THE SUCCESS of your email marketing strategy to achieve important objectives?**

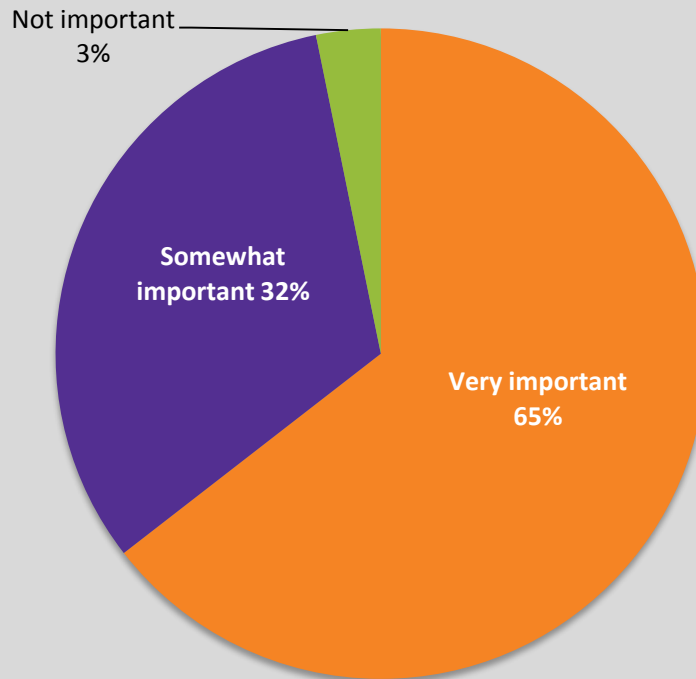


Email List Growth Survey, N=186 SMBs Ascend2 and Allegra, Published Jan 2015

# How Important is Email List Growth to SMBs?

Two-thirds (65%) of small and medium-sized businesses consider email list growth “very important” to the overall success of their marketing program. Email list growth is “not important” to overall marketing success for only 3% of SMBs.

## How important is EMAIL LIST GROWTH to the overall success of your marketing program?



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## Tie an Incentive to Sign-up

According to a Constant Contact survey, 58% subscribed to a company's email outreach to receive discounts and special offers.

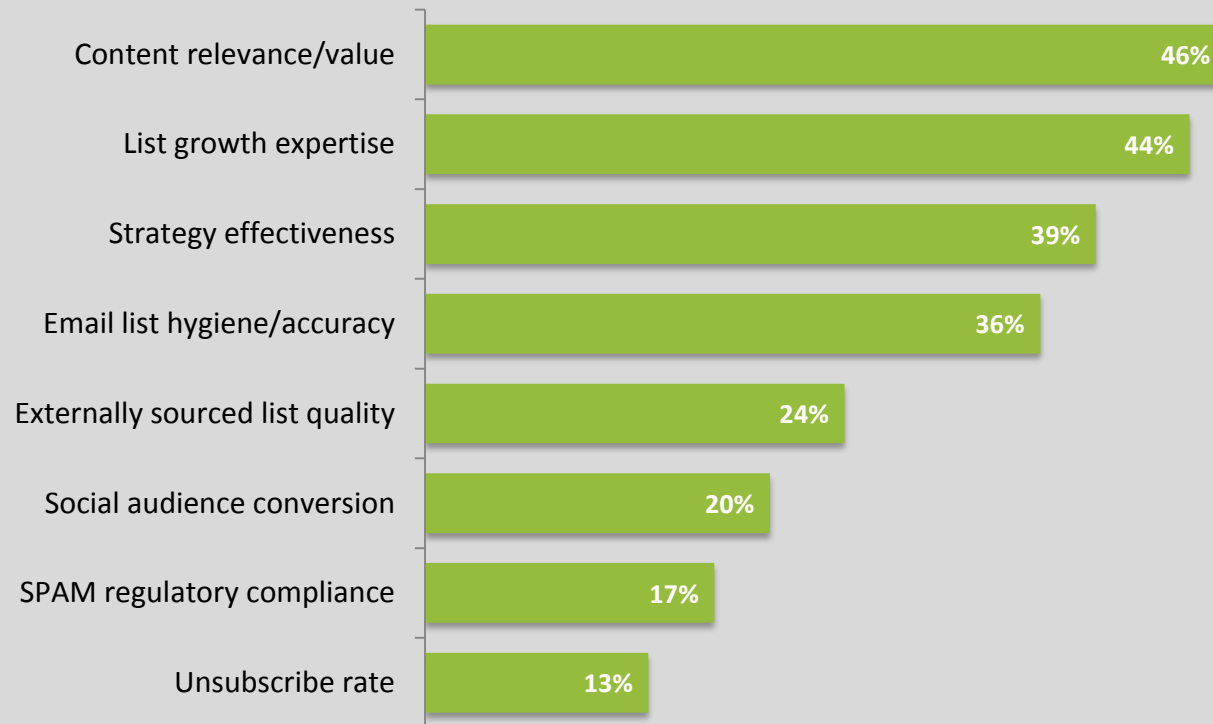


**TIP:** Promote an incentive for initial sign-up to inspire opens of future emails.

# Most Challenging Obstacles to Success

For many SMBs, achieving email list growth requires overcoming several challenging obstacles. These range from the lack of relevant and valued content, list growth expertise, an effective strategy and email list hygiene that results in more accurately targeted and productive campaigns.

## What are the MOST CHALLENGING OBSTACLES to your email list growth success?



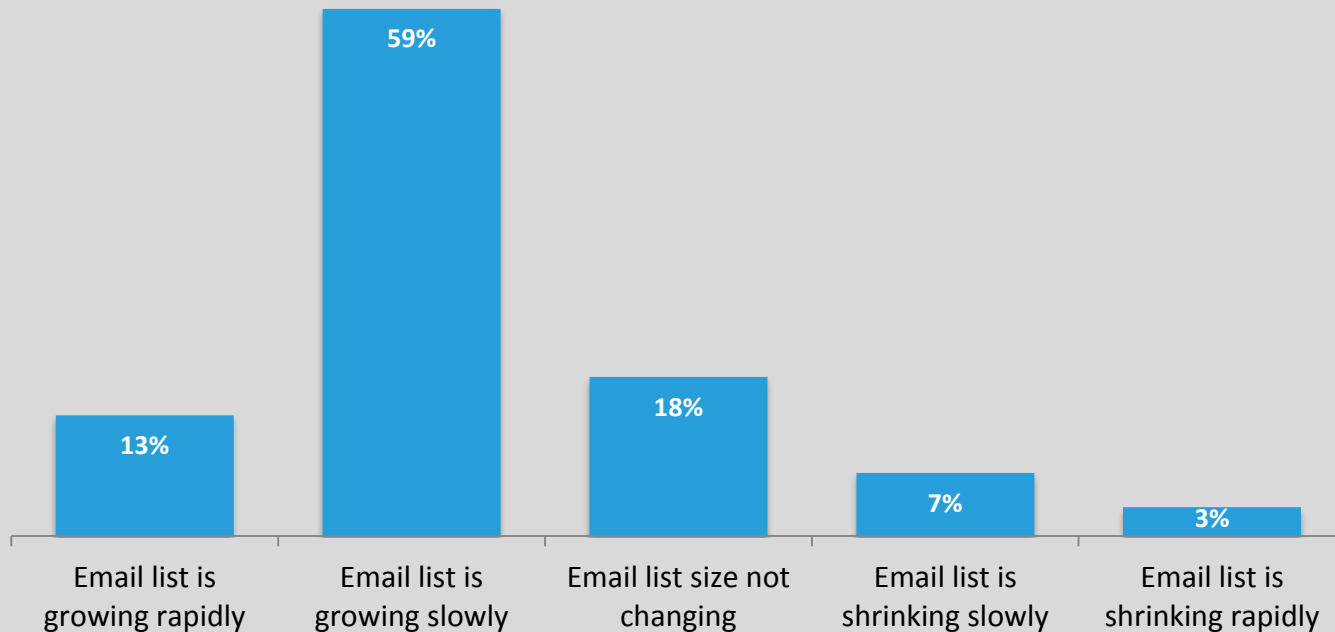
Email List Growth Survey, N=186 SMBs Ascend2 and Allegra, Published Jan 2015



# How is Email List Size Changing?

Despite challenges, email lists are growing slowly for 59% of SMBs and growing rapidly for another 13%. Email list size for the remaining 28% is not changing or worsening.

**Which best describes how your EMAIL LIST SIZE is changing?**

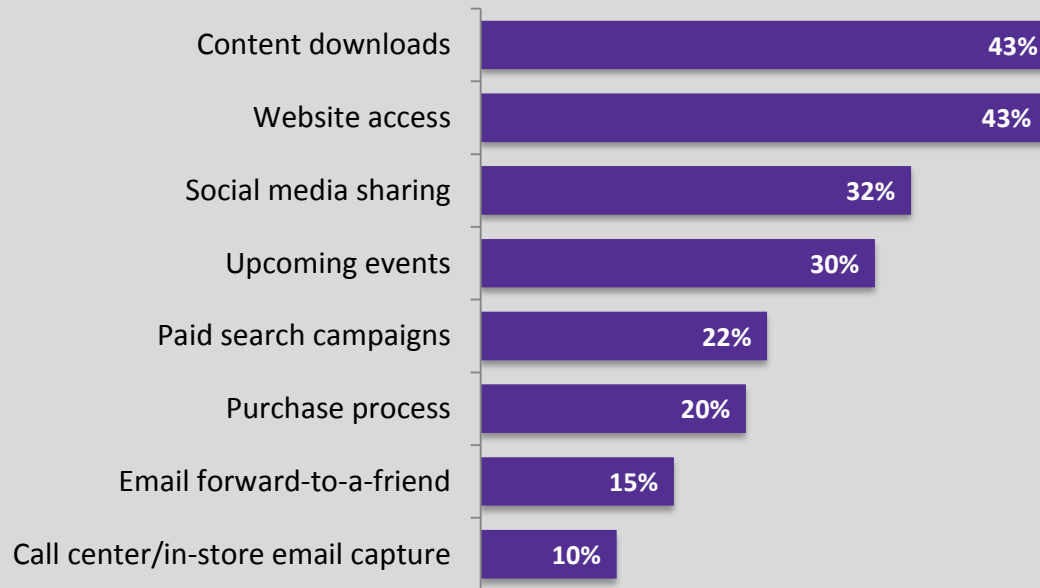


Email List Growth Survey, N=186 SMBs Ascend2 and Allegra, Published Jan 2015

# Most Effective List Growth Tactics Used

Tied at the top of the most effective tactics used for email lists growth purposes is making relevant content available for downloading, and providing access to private, value-added sections of a website.

## What are the MOST EFFECTIVE TACTICS you use for email list growth purposes?



Email List Growth Survey, N=186 SMBs Ascend2 and Allegra, Published Jan 2015

## Top Data Capture Fields

Nine out of 10 marketers agree: the most important data to collect is an email address, followed by name, phone number and lead source, according to a MarketingSherpa lead generation survey.

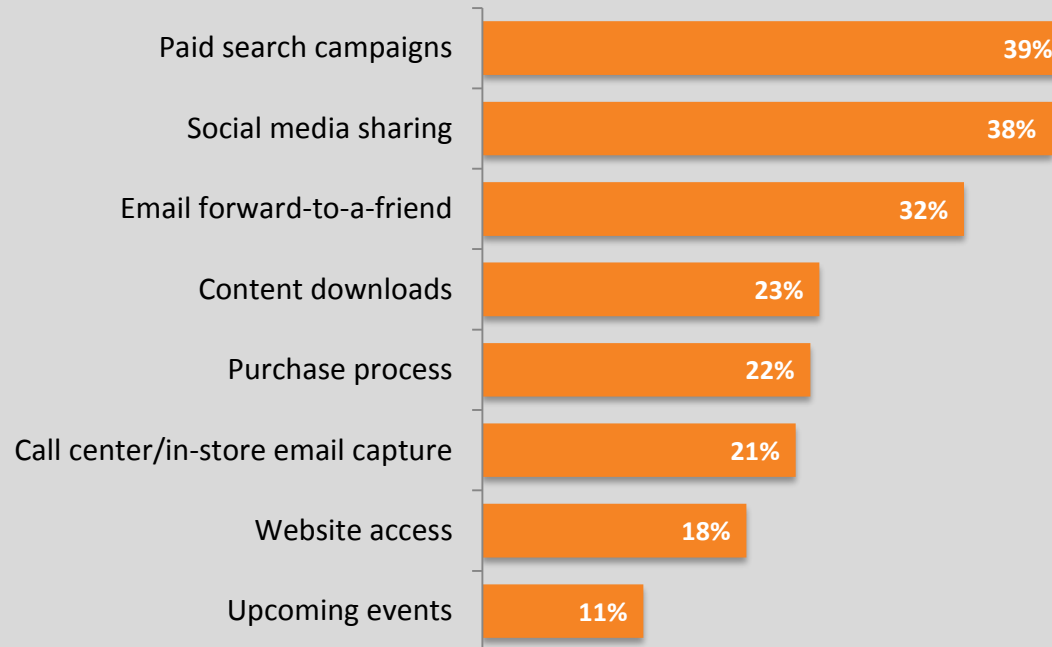
**TIP:** Additional information to capture in a long form? Company name, address and postal code.



# Most Difficult List Growth Tactics to Execute

For one company, a tactic like paid search campaigns that requires a specific set of skills may be perceived as difficult to execute due to the lack of in-house expertise. For another company with minimal marketing resources, a time-intensive tactic like social media sharing may rate as difficult.

## What are the MOST DIFFICULT TACTICS to execute for email list growth purposes?



Email List Growth Survey, N=186 SMBs Ascend2 and Allegra, Published Jan 2015



## When Less is More

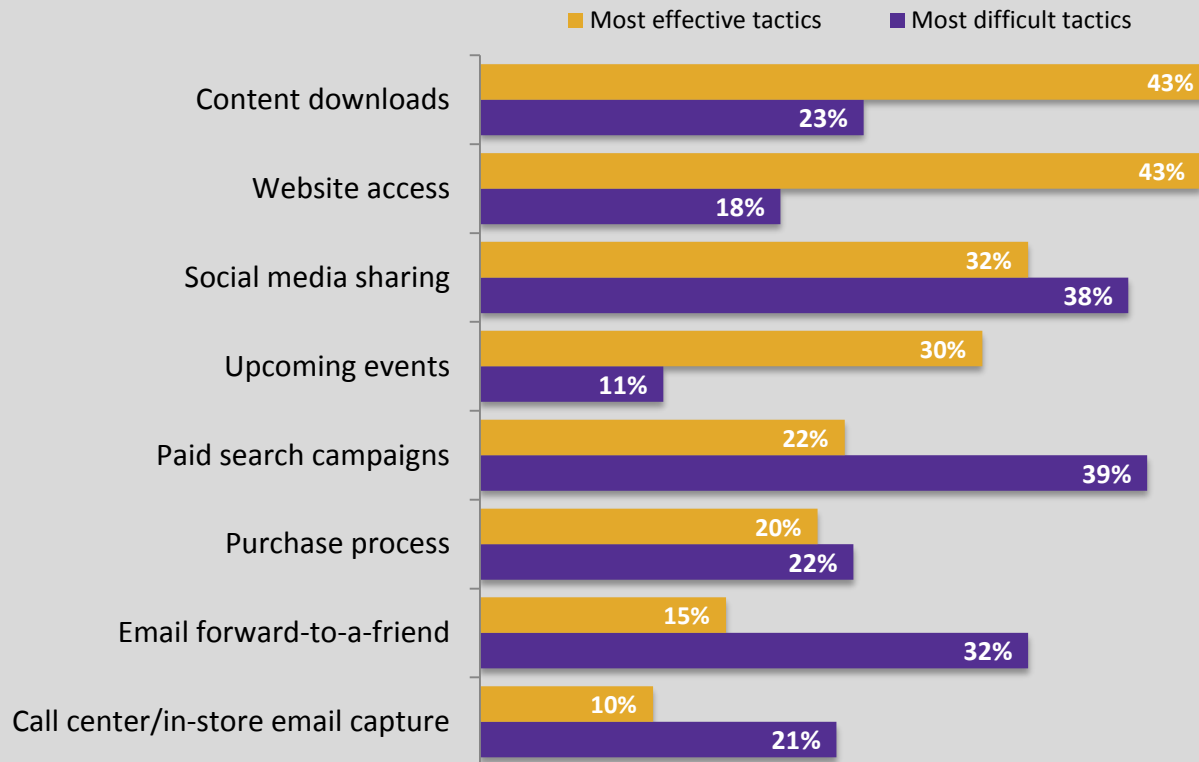
Delivery time, day and frequency are just a few variables to test to improve results.

**TIP:** Unhappy with some of your analytics? Cleanse your list at regular intervals to avoid sending emails to fake or old addresses. They may be negatively impacting your open and click-through rates.

# Tactical Effectiveness Versus Degree of Difficulty

Content downloads and website access are far more effective to use than they are difficult to execute. As opposed to paid search campaigns and email forward-to-a-friend which are far more difficult than they are effective for SMBs to use.

**Most effective tactics used versus most difficult tactics to execute**

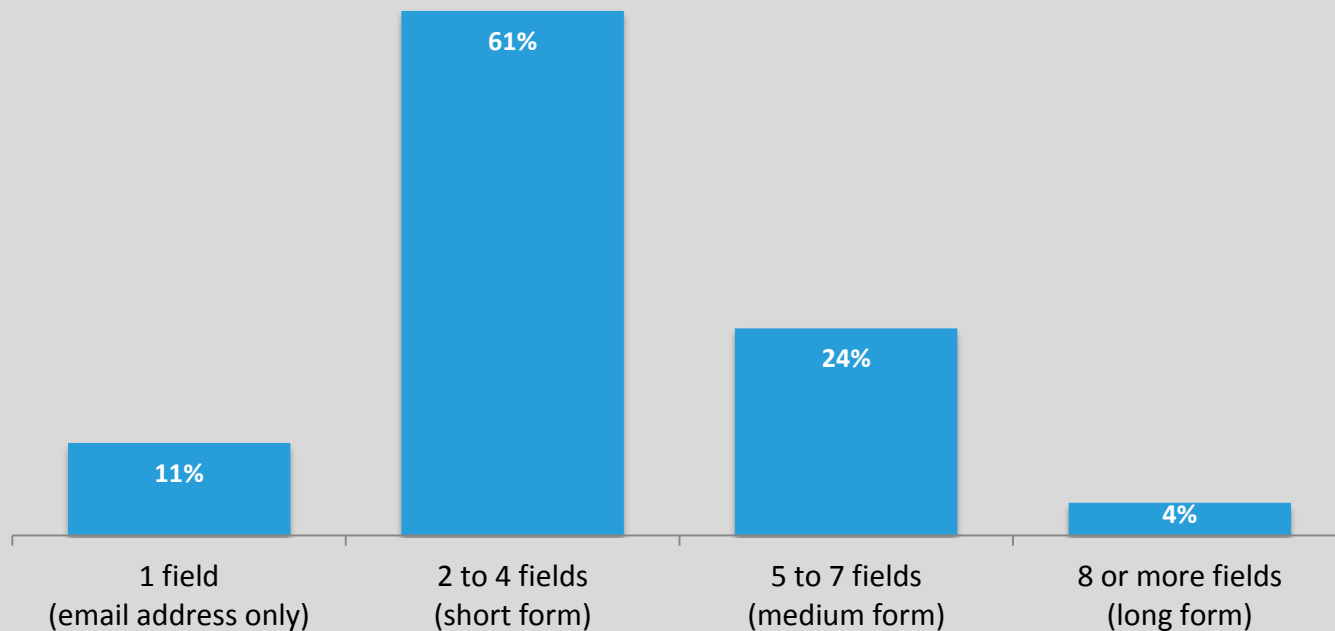


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# Number of Form Fields Used for Email List Growth

Most email list growth tactics require a registration form to capture subscriber information. The number of fields in a form may vary, but the optimization principles remain the same: Fewer fields generate more, less qualified subscribers. More fields generate fewer, more qualified subscribers.

**What is the average NUMBER OF FIELDS you require on registration forms used for email list growth purposes?**

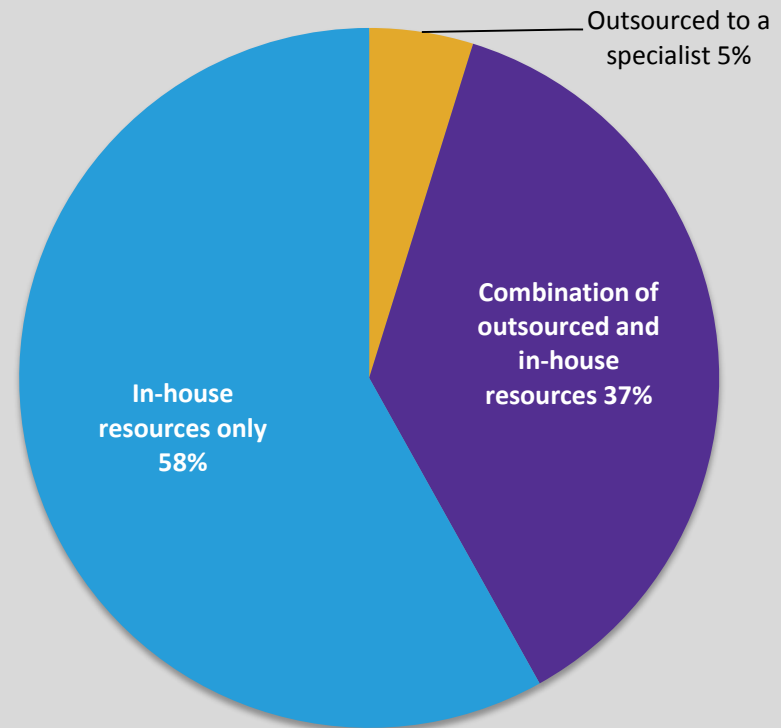


Email List Growth Survey, N=186 SMBs Ascend2 and Allegra, Published Jan 2015

# Resources Used to Execute Tactics

While most (58%) of SMBs used in-house resources only to execute email list growth tactics, 42% outsource all or part of email list growth to access specialized skills and expertise not available in-house, and to improve marketing program performance.

Which best describes the **RESOURCES USED** to execute email list growth tactics?



Email List Growth Survey, N=186 SMBs Ascend2 and Allegra, Published Jan 2015

# Survey Methodology and Demographics

Ascend2 benchmarks the performance of popular digital marketing strategies and practices using a standardized questionnaire, research methodology and proprietary 3-Minute Survey format. Findings are examined in a quantitative context by experienced analysts and reported objectively.

This survey was conducted online from a panel of more than 50,000 US and international marketing, sales and business professionals representing a range of demographic roles, channels and company sizes. The segment of survey responses used for this report are at right:

## Number of Employees

|               |     |
|---------------|-----|
| More than 500 | 0%  |
| 50 to 500     | 35% |
| Fewer than 50 | 65% |

## Your Role in the Company

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| CEO / COO / CMO / CSO etc.        | 37% |
| Marketing VP / Director / Manager | 33% |
| Sales VP / Director / Manager     | 3%  |
| Marketing or Sales Staff          | 16% |
| Other                             | 11% |

## Primary Marketing/Sales Channel

|                            |     |
|----------------------------|-----|
| B2B (Business-to-Business) | 71% |
| B2C (Business-to-Consumer) | 29% |

# About the Research Partners



When today's equation for powerful marketing communications involves print + digital + mobile, count on our experienced team to put YOU first. We'll find solutions to help grow your company or organization by reaching your most important audiences through the right mix of channels. Whatever strategies you need – whether it's print + mail, writing + design, Web + signs or an equation all your own – you have a local resource that can do it all with just one call.

**Allegra:** Your single source for strategic communications with measurable results.

Learn more or find a location nearest you at **[www.AllegraNetwork.com](http://www.AllegraNetwork.com)**.



## **Research-Based Demand Generation for Marketing Solution Providers**

Marketing software, data companies and agencies partner with Ascend2 to reliably generate demand and supplement marketing content. Our Research Partner Programs are transparent – spotlighting your brand and the interests of your market.

Learn more at **[www.Ascend2.com](http://www.Ascend2.com)**.



# Looking for More Marketing Insights?

For best practices and new ideas to help your business grow, talk to an Allegra professional about these other valuable resources. Just ask your local Allegra for a printed or digital copy; we'll be happy to deliver it to you.



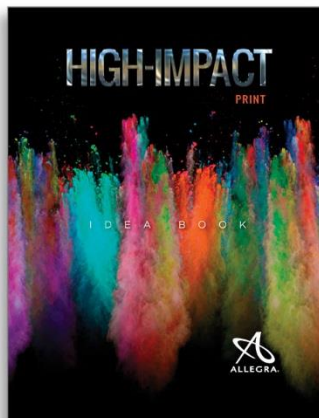
## **YOUR BRAND: UNRAVELED ... OR UNRAVELED?**

A business self-assessment guide to help you build awareness, create interest and drive growth



### **Your Brand: Unraveled?** *A Business Self-assessment Guide*

Do a quick self-appraisal of your current activities, and see where they could be performing better.



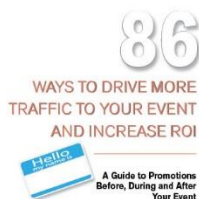
### **HIGH-IMPACT Print Idea Book**

New technology, materials and printing techniques have made it easier to make an impact like never before.



### **The Ultimate Direct Mail Marketing Guide** *Proven Tips and Techniques You Can Use Today*

Learn how to break through the clutter and create powerful direct mail campaigns that reach the right people with the right message.



### **86 Ways to Drive More Traffic to Your Event** *A Guide to Promotion Before, During and After Your Event*

These sure-fire techniques from event industry insiders will boost your next event or trade show.



The Realist's Guide to Successful Local Marketing

### **No Silver Bullets!** *The Realist's Guide to Successful Local Marketing*

Use these six cross-channel strategies to find more local customers and drive new sales.



### **The Complete Guide to Customer Growth** *Getting to the Aha Moment*

Gain a better understanding of your customers and use that information to strengthen your relationships and grow new sales.