State of Original Research for Marketing 2019
Marketers are confident original research has a positive impact
94% agree original research elevates a brand’s authority, and 88% of those who use research plan to conduct additional research in the next 12 months.

Survey-based research is the most common type of research marketers use
65% of those who publish research use surveys, but there are several ways most marketers can improve their process.

The vast majority of marketers believe their research is credible
9 in 10 marketers believe the research they publish is based on credible data, but other findings signal room for improvement. For instance, 39% aren’t disqualifying respondents who aren’t a fit, and only 2 in 3 publish a methodology.

About half of marketers who are currently not using research are considering it
97% of those who are considering research believe it will elevate their brand’s authority, but only half know how to execute a project like this.
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State of Research
39% of marketers published original research in the past 12 months

Has your marketing team created and published original research in the past 12 months?

- 57% No
- 39% Yes
- 4% I don't know

n=644

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STATE OF RESEARCH

Research is meeting or exceeding expectations for most marketers

How would you characterize the success of your most recent original research?

- 12% Research exceeded our expectations
- 49% Research met the majority or all of our expectations
- 30% Research met some of our expectations
- 4% Research did not meet our expectations
- 6% Unsure

n=249

What are “successful” marketers doing differently than those whose research didn’t meet all their expectations? Look for this icon throughout the report to learn about these key differences.

** For the purpose of this report, successful marketers are the 61% of those who characterize their research as exceeding or meeting the majority of their goals.
Marketers have a lot of confidence in the value of research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>88%</th>
<th>94%</th>
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- Plan to conduct additional research in the next year
- Agree original research elevates their brand’s authority in their industry

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“There’s no shortage of so-called thought leadership. On any given topic, you could subscribe to hundreds of newsletters, read thousands of articles, or ask multitudes of experts to share their take. The difference—and the thing that cuts through the noise—is data. Data tells the true story.”

HEIKE YOUNG | Salesforce | @YoungHeike
Survey-based research is the most common form of research

What type of original research are you publishing?

- Survey-based research: 65%
- Data analysis from third-party sources (e.g., U.S. Census): 44%
- Analysis of our proprietary data: 37%
- Interview-based research: 30%

n=214
Blog posts are the most popular type of content created from research

What types of content do you produce from your original research?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Content</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blog post(s) on our website</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infographics</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social sharing assets</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articles on other websites</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Static charts</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press releases</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry presentations</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videos</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webinars</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printed research that can be mailed or handed out in person</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive graphics</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online quizzes or assessments</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Those who are successful with research are more likely to produce every single type of content on this list. Challenge yourself to publish at least 5 additional pieces of content from your findings.
Social media shares, mentions and backlinks are the top benefits marketers see from research

What marketing-focused benefits have you seen as a result of your original research?

- Social shares: 66%
- Mentions from media, PR, influencers, bloggers, etc.: 63%
- Backlinks to your website: 60%
- Leads (i.e., contacts passed to sales): 55%
- Improved search rankings: 44%
- Subscribers (e.g., new subscribers to email, blog, etc.): 43%
- Invitations to speak, write, etc.: 31%

n=248
## State of Research for Marketing 2019

**7 in 10 marketers collaborate when creating research**

How do you collaborate with others when you create research?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaboration Method</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We ask others to share/promote our research findings</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We ask industry influencers for quotes to include in the findings</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We partner with other organizations to help us get survey respondents</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We ask others to write about our findings</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We do not collaborate when we create research</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Successful marketers are more likely to collaborate with others on their research. One idea: Identify at least 5 influencers in your industry and ask them to be quoted. Use these quotes in your findings and share.

n=246

BuzzSumo | Mantis Research | 2019
“To get the maximum value from the research effort, make sure that influencers (columnists, bloggers, editors) know about it. But rather than waiting for it to go live and then reaching out, reach out before you publish. Include their insights as a contributor quote. Stack the deck prior to publishing and fill your research and analysis with the writers you plan to promote it to.

ANDY CRESTODINA | Orbit Media | @crestodina
Survey-based research
The majority of marketers are using survey technology to help them generate valuable data

Are you able to customize your survey questions based on how survey participants respond to previous questions (i.e., survey logic)?

- Yes: 70%
- No: 19%
- I don’t know: 11%

Do you disqualify people from taking your survey if they do not fit your target profile?

- Yes: 65%
- No: 23%
- I don’t know: 13%

Survey tools used:
- SurveyMonkey: 46%
- Google Forms: 45%
- Typeform: 13%
- Qualtrics: 9%
- SurveyGizmo: 9%
- QuestionPro: 3%
- Zoho Survey: 2%

n=161
n=160

Successful marketers are more likely use survey logic and disqualify respondents.
The majority of marketers use their own list to get survey respondents

How do you currently get survey respondents?

- **We use our own list**: 69%
- **We partner with another organization that has access to our audience**: 49%
- **We use social media**: 41%
- **I reach out to my personal network**: 29%
- **We pay for panels**: 23%

38% agree/strongly agree it is difficult to get people to respond to their survey.

Successful marketers are more likely to use social media, partner with another organization or pay for panels to get responses.
The majority of marketers have up to five people test their surveys

How many people test your survey before it is released?

- The person/team working on the survey: 16%
- 1 - 5 people: 43%
- 6 - 10 people: 13%
- More than 10 people: 16%
- Unsure: 7%
- We do not test our survey: 4%

n=161

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SURVEY-BASED RESEARCH

Marketers are generally confident they can tell great stories from their data

Marketers’ perceptions about original research

- "Once the data is available, we can identify the best stories to tell.":
  - Strongly agree: 36%
  - Agree: 54%
  - Neutral: 8%
  - Disagree: 2%
  - Strongly disagree: 2%

- "My team knows how to write survey questions that will generate interesting stories."
  - Strongly agree: 32%
  - Agree: 43%
  - Neutral: 22%
  - Disagree: 2%
  - Strongly disagree: 1%

- "My team creates effective data visuals from our original research."
  - Strongly agree: 33%
  - Agree: 41%
  - Neutral: 22%
  - Disagree: 4%
  - Strongly disagree: 1%
“Any research or study you publish will have a higher chance of successfully getting covered by the media if it’s emotional. Content that elicits an emotional reaction often compels people to connect with it and want to share it. So don’t just think about the results of your research -- think about its true impact on people, how its insights can help people overcome challenges and pain points, and, at the end of the day, simply why people should care.”

AMANDA MILLIGAN | Fract | @millanda
The vast majority of marketers are confident their survey-based research is credible.

Believe the survey-based research they publish is based on credible data.

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The two most important ways to bolster credibility are:

1. Describe research findings accurately. Avoid statements that embody claims the findings and underlying data don’t actually support.
2. Provide an accurate description of the research methodology used, and include a description of the limitations that come with that methodology.

DAVID DODD | Point Balance | gdaviddodd
2 in 3 publish a methodology but many are incomplete

Do you publish the methodology for your research?

- Yes: 66%
- No: 28%
- I don’t know: 6%

Successful marketers are more likely to publish demographic info about respondents.

What the methodology includes:
- Sample Size: 92%
- Dates of survey collection: 70%
- Demographic details: 68%
- How participants were selected/qualified: 56%
- Possible biases in respondents: 24%

n=160

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1 in 3 marketers never gates their research findings

Do you gate your survey-based research findings?

- Yes: 35%
- Sometimes: 30%
- No: 33%
- Unsure: 3%

n=160
SURVEY-BASED RESEARCH

2 out of 5 marketers spend at least 3 months on a survey-based research project

How long does your survey-based research typically take—from strategy to final publication?

- At least a month: 30%
- At least 2 months: 22%
- At least 3 months: 28%
- More than 3 months: 15%
- Unsure: 4%

Successful marketers are more likely to spend more than 3 months on a project. Be realistic when starting your project—and allow yourself ample time. Consider using a panel to get responses if time is tight.

n=162

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“Taking on a survey research project for the first time can be daunting, so having a solid project plan is the first step. Answer these questions before getting started: (1) What is your content goal? Driving leads? Generating media coverage? (2) Who needs to be involved? (3) What’s the timeline? Do you need the report live before a big event? From there, you can get to the fun part of brainstorming research topics and survey questions.”

MORGAN MOLNAR | Survey Monkey | @MorganMLehmann
Data analysis
Marketers are most likely to analyze proprietary data

What kind of data do you analyze?

- Proprietary data (e.g., data only you have access to such as internal user data): 72%
- Third-party analytics (e.g., BuzzSumo, Moz, Google Analytics): 47%
- Government data sources (e.g., US Census, data.gov, DOJ, FDA): 43%
- Other open-source institutions (e.g., World Bank, IMF, WHO, public & private foundations): 41%
- Social APIs (e.g., Twitter API, Facebook API, Instagram API): 32%
- Licensed data: 12%

Do you pay for the data you analyze?

- Always: 6%
- Sometimes: 48%
- Never: 41%
- Unsure: 5%

n=152

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Marketers who analyze data are most likely to be challenged by finding the right data and identifying the best stories to tell.

What challenges do you face when executing research projects based data analysis?

- Finding interesting/useful data sources to study and analyze: 50%
- Identifying the best stories to tell from the results: 48%
- Verifying the quality of data: 40%
- Cleaning the data: 38%
- Visualizing data: 29%
- Finding research experts: 20%
- Choosing technology partners: 13%

n=151

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Attitudes of those *not* using research
More than half of non-users are considering research

Are you considering using original research for content marketing in the future?

- 39% Yes, in next 12 months
- 23% No
- 23% Uncertain
- 14% Yes, but we need more than 12 months

n=396
The majority of non-users are considering survey-based research for purposes of thought leadership and leads.

What type of research are you considering?

- Survey-based research: 70%
- Analysis of public and third-party data: 51%
- One-on-one interviews: 43%
- Analysis of proprietary data: 32%
- Unsure: 12%

The top goal marketers want to accomplish with research:

- Thought leadership: 32%
- Leads (i.e., contacts passed to sales): 30%
- Mentions from media, PR, influencers, bloggers, etc.: 12%
- Backlinks to your website: 11%
- Subscribers (e.g., new subscribers to email, blog, etc.): 9%
- Social shares: 4%

n=214
ATTITUDES OF THOSE NOT USING RESEARCH

Marketers believe research will have an impact, but aren’t confident they will be able to execute the project

Perceptions about original research from those who are considering it

- Will elevate our brand’s authority: Strongly agree 61%, Agree 36%, Neutral 3%, Disagree 1%, Strongly disagree 3%
- I plan to create more content: Strongly agree 20%, Agree 51%, Neutral 16%, Disagree 11%, Strongly disagree 1%
- I know which topic to study: Strongly agree 20%, Agree 49%, Neutral 18%, Disagree 11%, Strongly disagree 2%
- I know how to find interesting data: Strongly agree 21%, Agree 42%, Neutral 19%, Disagree 15%, Strongly disagree 3%
- I have a plan for getting respondents: Strongly agree 10%, Agree 49%, Neutral 21%, Disagree 17%, Strongly disagree 3%
- I have buy-in: Strongly agree 24%, Agree 32%, Neutral 38%, Disagree 5%, Strongly disagree 2%
- I know how to execute research: Strongly agree 12%, Agree 38%, Neutral 31%, Disagree 15%, Strongly disagree 4%
- I can easily get budget: Strongly agree 6%, Agree 25%, Neutral 41%, Disagree 22%, Strongly disagree 6%
Marketers aren’t considering research for a few reasons

Why aren’t you considering publishing your own original research?

- It’s not the right type of project for my business: 44%
- We don’t have budget: 27%
- We are not sure how to execute research: 22%
- It did not occur to us to use it: 14%
- We used research in the past, but it was unsuccessful: 3%

n=184

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Methodology
Methodology

The second annual State of Original Research for Marketing surveyed 644 marketers worldwide in May and June 2019. Respondents were asked to participate via email and social media outreach from BuzzSumo and Mantis Research. Demographic information is reported below.

For more granular research findings, please visit https://mantisresearch.com/state-of-original-research-for-marketing-in-2019/
Where to go from here?

When we began this project, we wanted to take a deep dive to understand how marketers use research, and where they’re most likely to need help.

If you want to learn more about original research for marketing, download our 44-page guide, *How to Publish Survey-Based Research for Content Marketing*.

**About BuzzSumo**

We help people create the best content. BuzzSumo offers instantly accessible insights from 5 billion indexed blog posts and articles. Our customers are content marketers, publishers, public relations experts, and bloggers.

**About Mantis Research**

We help marketers tell data-driven stories. Mantis offers a range of research services – from research strategy and data science to data journalism and amplification.