

MarketingWeek



THE LANGUAGE OF
EFFECTIVENESS

2025

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH **KANTAR** / Google

Foreword



Russell Parsons
Editor-in-chief
Marketing Week

Since we ran Marketing Week's first Language of Effectiveness survey in 2022, it's fair to say a lot has changed and a lot has stayed the same.

Back then, we were emerging from a pandemic with little understanding of what the long-term shifts in customer behaviour and the wider marketplace would ultimately be.

Businesses across various sectors were in the grip of a supply chain crisis pushing up costs as the global economy tried to restart its engines after Covid. Many transactions – in both consumer and B2B channels – had moved into online channels and we didn't know what proportion would move back. And yet, even in spite of the uncertainty, marketing departments were starting to get a firm hold on a data-driven, evidence-based approach to marketing effectiveness that had begun in earnest over a decade earlier with the work of thinkers such as Byron Sharp, Les Binet and Peter Field.

Fast-forward to 2025, and we've got a fair idea that digital channels are significantly more important than they were. However, costs for businesses and consumers remain stubbornly high, and growth across the UK economy is still bumping along the ground.

The everyday reality for UK marketers, as we see in The Language of Effectiveness 2025, is that businesses and their leaders are focused on bolstering top-line revenues from month to month, quarter to quarter. They know the value of a healthy, trusted brand, but generally can't wait a year or even half that to see it bear fruit. And so, while marketers are getting better all the time at measuring and proving the effects of their marketing activities, the short term is taking more of their focus from the long.

The vast majority of brand marketers who responded to our survey have seen increased focus on sales growth in the past year. They're also more likely to be increasing short-term marketing activity (designed to deliver returns within six months) than long-term. Brand marketing, nonetheless, is the tactic they see as most important for them in 2025, yet we can observe a lack of confidence in proving its full effects in comparison to those of performance marketing - particularly when it comes to the resulting ability to raise prices and increase profitability.

It's impossible to know whether marketing effectiveness practices would have evolved even more quickly since 2022, had brands been enjoying sustained growth with less pressure on driving short-term returns from their marketing investments.

In any case, knowledge and practice have come a long way, and the longer brands' search for growth continues, the more apparent it will surely be that the winners are those taking care of both the pennies and the pounds, the short term and the long. And those most able to invest will be those best able to prove their achievements.



Si Atherley
*Head of Marketing
Effectiveness Practice*
Kantar

In a year where marketers are forced, more than ever, to walk the tightrope between short-term performance and long-term brand building, The Language of Effectiveness Report 2025 arrives at a critical moment. It offers a timely and comprehensive view of how UK marketers are navigating this enduring challenge – and insight into how the top-performing brands are surging ahead.

The tension between brand and performance is not new, but it is intensifying. Economic flashpoints like recent tariffs loom large and have sharpened the focus on short-term ROI: 63.1% of marketers report increased spend on performance marketing, which is notably more than on brand-building activity. Paradoxically, the report shows that marketers recognise that brand advertising is a winning formula. This ‘say -do’ gap of marketing effectiveness endures, and remains a drag factor that could halt recovery.

The Language of Effectiveness remains an apt name for the report. What’s increasingly clear is we can no longer talk in different terms about effectiveness – across the industry and within our organisations. Success comes from mastering a broad but common vocabulary of effectiveness, which helps us describe in a more vivid way both the immediate and lasting effects of marketing on sales and profitability.

Encouragingly, we are observing a growing recognition of brand strength as a pricing lever. Kantar has long championed how ‘Meaningfully Different’ brands deliver real value that is worth a premium. On average these brands are bought at a two-times higher price,¹ yet only 40.2% of marketers feel able to quantify a link between brand equity and price elasticity. This is a missed opportunity that we all need to address as inflation and cost-of-living concerns persist.

The report also provides a timely update on AI and its role in creativity. AI is now widely used to generate and scale creative ideas, yet measurement lags behind. Less than half of marketers are evaluating creative effectiveness, and even fewer are using advanced tools such as facial coding and eye tracking to help optimise. The report contains valuable perspective on how leading brands are adopting AI to stimulate and tailor content creation and measure the effectiveness of it. As Simon McIntyre of Totalmobile astutely points out: “AI doesn’t replace creativity, it supercharges it.” Read on for a compelling case to close any capability gaps you may have.

Perhaps most importantly, the report underscores the need for a shared understanding of what effectiveness means. Too often, definitions vary, tools are inconsistently applied and accountability is unclear. High-performing brands are addressing this by embedding a culture of effectiveness – one that aligns teams around common KPIs, fosters collaboration with finance and uses data to tell compelling stories that resonate with the C-suite.

I encourage you to explore the findings, reflect on your own organisation’s maturity and take inspiration from the examples within. When you’re ready to turn insight into action, Kantar’s Marketing Effectiveness Practice is here to help. By combining our wide-ranging expertise, the latest AI tech and proven brand growth frameworks, we can help you master the tightrope of effectiveness to get ahead.

Enjoy the report.

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¹ Kantar, [Blueprint for Brand Growth](#)



Biren Kalaria
*Managing director
of data, measurement
and analytics*
Google

Balancing short-term performance with long-term brand growth has always defined great marketing. Today, this challenge is greater – and more urgent – than ever. Rapid shifts in consumer behaviour and evolving digital ecosystems demand smarter, more accountable marketing.

At Google, we believe true effectiveness isn't just about measurement. It's about making creativity accountable, connecting brand investment to business outcomes and bringing confidence to every marketing decision. Through our partnerships with brands and agencies, we see first-hand how the right tools, data and insights unlock sustained long-term value.

Yet marketing still struggles to justify its value. As one global FMCG marketing director has shared: "Marketing is still often the first thing that's taken off the table if you need to hit quarterly numbers." This ongoing pressure makes balancing immediate targets with long-term growth more challenging than ever. Recent Kantar and Google research quantified this divide: while 63% of marketing decision-makers believe they're driving long-term business growth, only 35% of their finance counterparts agree.² Bridging this gap means better connecting brand and performance, showing how both contribute to business outcomes across the full funnel. But without strong data infrastructure and measurement frameworks – like attribution, experimentation and marketing mix models – those links remain difficult to prove.

This measurement gap is one of the biggest barriers marketers face today. It's particularly acute for brand-building campaigns, where over 50% of sales impact occurs between months five and 24 – yet most measurement tools focus only on the first one to two months.³ While data-driven decision-making is improving, many teams lack the structure and dedicated roles to support marketing effectiveness. Digital attribution is widespread, but advanced approaches like econometrics and experimentation remain underused – especially in smaller organisations. This limits marketers' ability to connect brand strength to business metrics like price sensitivity. Our research shows only 40% of business decision-makers have clear effectiveness goals, and just 20% agree on how to measure them.⁴ Despite these challenges, there's cause for optimism. Many leaders recognise the value of brand building alongside performance marketing – they just need better ways to demonstrate it. AI is already transforming idea generation and creative development, but its greatest potential lies in reshaping the entire campaign lifecycle – from forecasting impact before launch to enabling privacy-safe, comprehensive measurement.

Too often, these opportunities go unrealised. With quality data and the right tools, marketers can create a clearer picture of brand building's long-term value and make a compelling case for sustained investment. Effectiveness-first planning doesn't just justify marketing – it secures it. It shows what your investment delivers and why it matters. And communicating those results more clearly across the business makes it far more likely you'll be heard.

But we know it's not easy – building media effectiveness takes time and the right internal support. It's not just about new tools, but new habits – setting clearer goals, testing what works and connecting creative ideas to business outcomes. The marketers making the most progress are those treating effectiveness as a discipline, not just a deliverable.

As marketers, we've always told compelling stories. What's changed is how we measure their impact. With better data and clearer measurement, marketers can influence not just consumers – but the boardroom. At Google, we are committed to equipping marketers with the tools, insights and confidence they need to demonstrate real impact – and together, build a more effective future.

² Kantar and Google, Understanding perceptions of advertising effectiveness within the marketing community, 2023

³ Kantar and Google, Effectiveness Equation Report, 2025

⁴ Kantar and Google, Effectiveness Equation Report, 2025

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Executive summary

The Language of Effectiveness 2025 paints a comprehensive picture of the state of marketing effectiveness in the UK today. Below are some of the key takeaways:

- Eight out of 10 marketers say defending and growing sales has increased as a priority in the last year. Correspondingly, 63.1% have increased marketing activity that is expected to deliver short-term returns (within six months), while 46.6% have increased longer-term activity.
- Most brands have a bias towards either brand or performance marketing, with similar proportions leaning either way. Marketers name brand marketing their most important single tactic for the year ahead, yet six out of 10 say their organisation is average or worse at proving the effectiveness of brand marketing.
- The vast majority of marketers recognise a strong brand equates to an ability to charge a premium. But a minority (40.2%) agree they can quantify the link between price elasticity and brand strength, and only 12.0% strongly agree.
- Less than half of marketers are measuring the effectiveness of their creative, even though it is widely recognised among the most influential factors in overall marketing effectiveness. More than half of marketers are using AI in creative production, but less than a quarter use any single tech-enabled creative measurement tool.
- There is widespread acknowledgement of greater focus on marketing effectiveness in the past three years, though most marketers still don't see it as a well defined business function, and few are using econometrics (32.0%) or controlled experiments (35.3%) in their analysis.
- There remains a strong upside to improving marketing effectiveness, since 51.0% of marketers say they have seen their budgets rise after focusing on it. Convincing the business requires consideration of leaders' priority metrics: ROI, business outcomes, new customer acquisition, conversion rates and brand awareness.

Methodology

The Language of Effectiveness 2025 is the fourth annual edition of this report. It has been produced using an online survey of 1,091 brand marketers conducted by Marketing Week in partnership with Kantar and Google between 17 March and 8 April 2025.

In the report, answers to certain questions are segmented by 'high performers' and 'mainstream' respondents. The former are defined as those who say their organisation is currently performing better than its competition; the latter are those who say they are performing worse than or in line with the competition.

SMEs are classed as businesses with fewer than 250 employees.

Some charts do not display all possible answer options. This is marked on the charts to which it applies. Statistics cited from the survey are rounded to the nearest 0.1%.

Marketing Week would like to thank the following executives, who contributed qualitative insight to this report through interviews:

- **Fadi Abi-Nader**, *vice-president of demand for global emerging markets, Mars Wrigley*
- **Natalie Botha**, *marketing excellence lead – creative, Arla Foods*
- **Munnawar Chishty**, *chief marketing officer, Carlsberg Britvic*
- **Michele Gettins**, *chief marketing officer, iamproperty*
- **James Henderson**, *sales and marketing director, Simplyhealth*
- **Simon McIntyre**, *marketing director, Totalmobile*
- **Jane Myron**, *marketing effectiveness lead, Kellanova Europe*

Introduction: Marketers walking a tightrope

Marketers are grappling with competing pressures in 2025.

On the one hand, persistent economic headwinds are driving a relentless focus on immediate sales growth, with businesses requiring clear and proven ROI on marketing investments. As a result, almost eight out of 10 marketers say defending and growing sales has increased as a priority in the last year, according to The Language of Effectiveness 2025 survey, conducted by Marketing Week in partnership with Kantar and Google.

What's more, 63.1% of respondents have increased marketing activity that is expected to deliver short-term returns (within six months). By comparison, 46.6% have increased activity designed to pay back the investment over a longer period.

On the other hand, the proliferation of choice for customers, simultaneously grappling with their own set of financial pressures, has cemented the necessity of strong, values-focused brands. With long-standing customer loyalties eroded, this is central to achieving sustainable growth. Consequently, marketers name brand advertising their highest-priority tactic for the coming year, cited by 54.7% of survey respondents in their top three. This compares to 40.5% for second-placed performance marketing.

How have your brand or business's priorities changed over the past 12 months? (Increased substantially or a little)



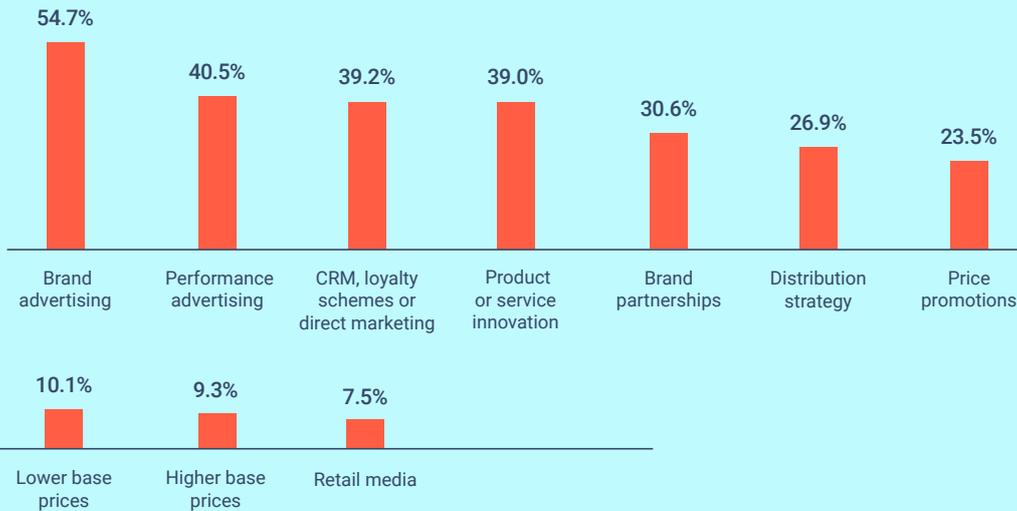
SOURCE: MARKETING WEEK, 'THE LANGUAGE OF EFFECTIVENESS 2025'

Long- and short-term focus

Marketers are juggling the twin imperatives of delivering immediate sales while also building brand – and as this report demonstrates, this is shaping the current state of marketing effectiveness strategies in the UK. In the following pages, we'll examine brands' capability and preparedness to meet this challenge and prove the importance of marrying long-term brand stewardship with short-term tactics.

At the same time, through both quantitative data and qualitative interviews with marketing leaders, The Language of Effectiveness 2025 establishes the most comprehensive view of marketing effectiveness practices in use by UK brands today.

Which of the following marketing tactics do you think will be most important for achieving your business objectives this year?



SOURCE: MARKETING WEEK, 'THE LANGUAGE OF EFFECTIVENESS 2025'

1. A bias towards performance or brand persists

In today's multichannel landscape, the boundaries between brand and performance marketing campaigns are barely given a thought by customers. Yet marketers continue to draw clear distinctions between the two.

In their seminal publication 'The Long and the Short of It', Les Binet and Peter Field proposed an ideal ratio of 60% of marketing budget going towards brand building and 40% to sales activation. The Language of Effectiveness 2025 survey reveals that organisations tend to have a bias for one or the other approach in almost equal proportions, with only 13.3% of saying their organisation focuses equally on both.

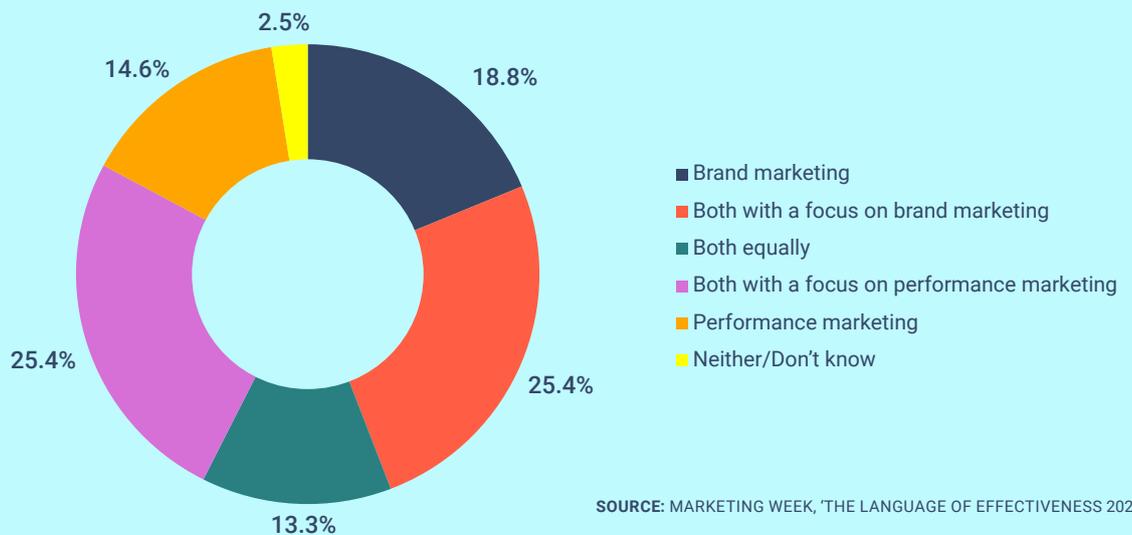
For the 44.2% that lean more towards brand marketing, marketers state the choice is influenced primarily by an effort to maintain mental availability and their senior leadership's appreciation of how brand health fuels long-term business performance. Conversely, the 40.0% whose companies place more emphasis on performance marketing say they're driven by pressure to achieve targets and a perception that it's easier to communicate returns.

Finding a balance

Ideally, marketing strategies will serve both ends, according to Fadi Abi-Nader, vice-president of demand for global emerging markets at Mars Wrigley. "The question for me is not either-or," he says. "You need to find a balance. Brand marketing builds the equity and performance is the last mile." But he accepts, when it comes to assessing effectiveness, performance continues to win out. "Performance marketing is a much more effective way of measuring return on investment (ROI) and accordingly – given economic pressures, given inflation – many, many marketers feel more inclined to go there because they can justify it, they can see the impact of every dollar spent."

This is starting to change, he adds. "There's much more data, media mix modelling, etcetera. We apply some approaches that allow us to draw a better correlation between brand marketing dollars and output and sales, though it's still not to the level of performance marketing."

When it comes to brand marketing vs performance marketing, where does your company's strategy place most focus?



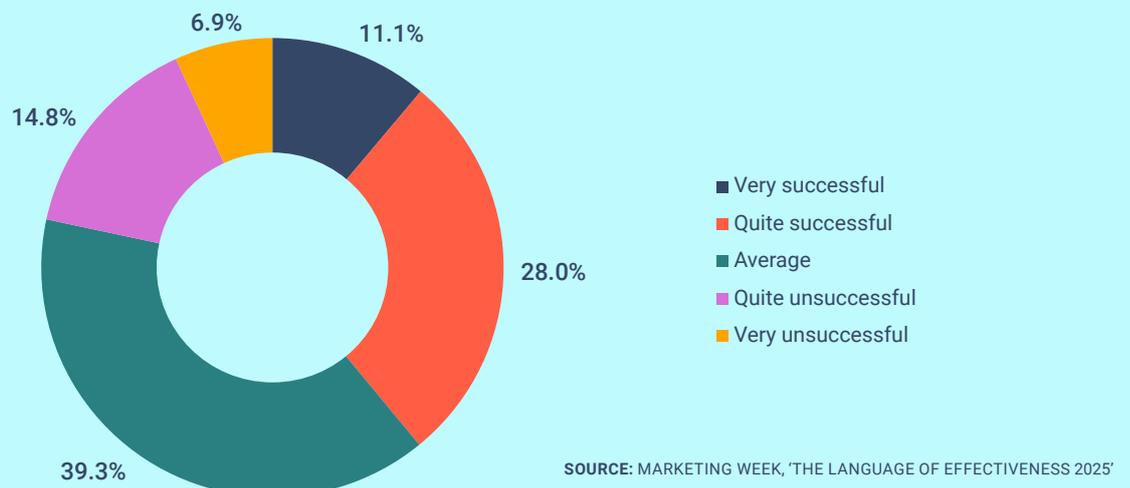
Clear link to results

"There's definitely more pressure on marketing teams to generate demand and quantifiable opportunity into the business," in the view of Michele Gettins, CMO at property business iamproperty. "At the same time there's less understanding and appreciation for the value that brand-based activity brings from the C-suite, due to it being much harder to measure and define impact."

In sectors such as B2B software, performance-based marketing is undoubtedly "king" at the moment, says Simon McIntyre, marketing director at Totalmobile.

"You're operating in an environment where you're needing to prove an ROI and say, for this amount of money, we got this amount of pipeline or this amount of revenue," he adds. "Performance-based marketing tends to have a more linear correlation between the activity and the end results," he adds. "That's therefore more likely to satisfy wider leadership teams, whereas brand marketing may potentially be viewed as a little bit of a luxury."

How successful do you believe your organisation is at proving the effectiveness of brand marketing specifically?



Marketers accept that in many ways the binary distinction is a false one: around three in five say performance marketing is at least somewhat effective at building brands, while a similar number say brand marketing is at least somewhat effective at driving short-term returns.

Measuring brand effectiveness

The perceived challenges around gauging the effectiveness of brand marketing persist, even though there are more tools to do so. Nearly three quarters of marketers agree it's very or somewhat easy to measure the media effectiveness of performance marketing, but that falls to only a third for brand marketing. Around six out of 10 say their organisation is average or worse at proving the effectiveness of brand marketing – and only 11.1% say they're very successful. Their main barrier is a lack of attribution or modelling data linking brand to sales.

It also remains difficult to convince senior leadership teams of the validity of brand marketing metrics, points out McIntyre. "There are certainly tools that can be used but the challenge is in convincing boards and C-suites that those metrics are as viable or hold as much weight as those that you would be able to use with performance-based marketing," he says.

"In brand marketing, people have always been able to point towards things like market sentiment, brand recognition, even engagement activities with things like conversions, social following, etcetera, and that's great. But if the demand in the business is immediate commercial growth, then the focus is on metrics that are more pound-sign orientated." Overcoming this is "about trying to bring that leadership team on the journey with you and be aligned in your ways of thinking", he adds.

What would you say are the biggest barriers to measuring and understanding the impact of brand marketing on your organisation's overall marketing effectiveness?



SOURCE: MARKETING WEEK, 'THE LANGUAGE OF EFFECTIVENESS 2025' / EXCLUDES 'DON'T KNOW'



Performance marketing is a much more effective way of measuring return on investment [...] many, many marketers feel more inclined to go there because they can justify it.

Fadi Abi-Nader, Mars Wrigley

2. Quantifying marketing's impact on price

Boosting their capability to prove the effectiveness of brand marketing alongside performance is clearly in the interests of both marketers and their organisations. There's good evidence that stronger brands can charge a price premium over competitors – and thus be more profitable.

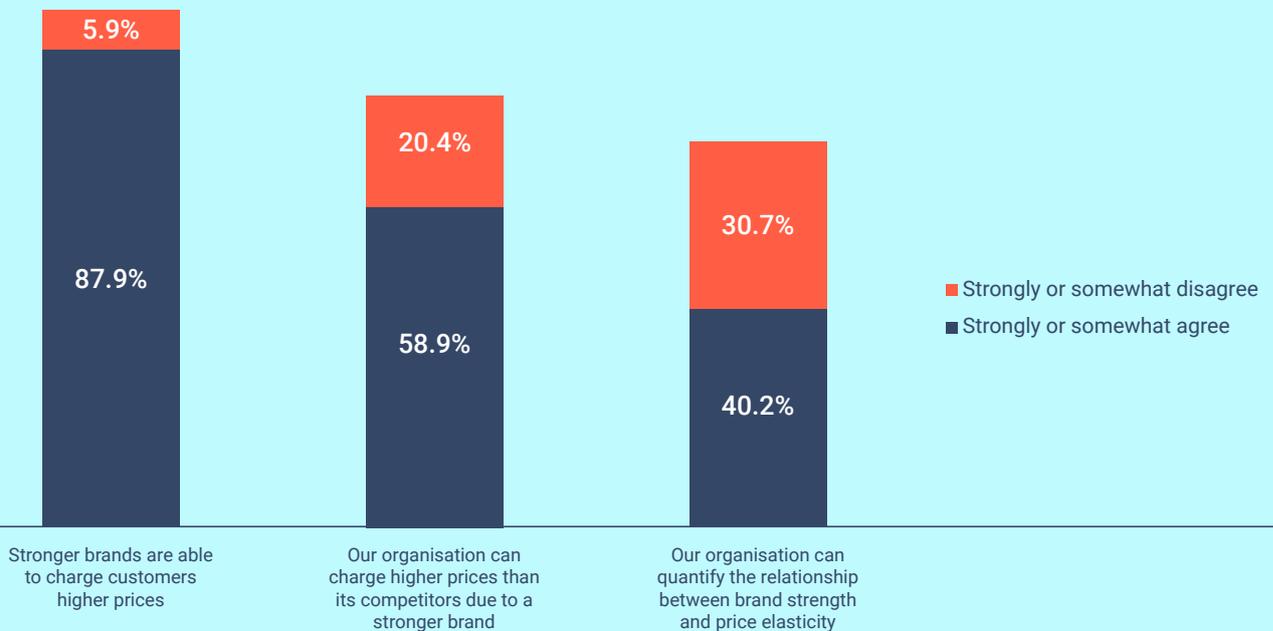
Research from Kantar shows that consumers pay a two-times higher price for brands they are positively predisposed towards. Kantar's measure of Pricing Power shows how well a brand justifies its price point based on how 'Meaningful, Different and Salient' it is. Metrics like these are helpful to prove marketing's holistic impact on profitability and price elasticity, not just sales volumes.¹

Similarly, 87.9% of marketers in The Language of Effectiveness 2025 survey agree stronger brands can charge higher prices – a connection that has become more critical during a period of high inflation and a cost-of-living crisis.

But despite this level of conviction, marketers are struggling to use their brand-building efforts to influence pricing strategies and by extension profit, in large part because they feel ill-equipped to rigorously demonstrate the relationship exists. A minority (40.2%) of marketers agree that they can quantify the link between price elasticity and brand strength at all, and only 12.0% strongly agree.

Meanwhile, marketers at high-performing companies are much more likely than those at mainstream brands to agree their organisation can charge more than its competitors due to its brand strength. Marketers at bigger companies are more likely than those at SMEs to say the same.

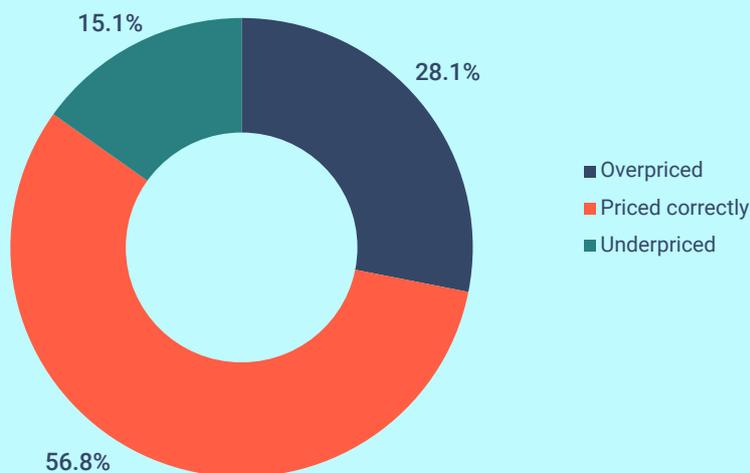
Thinking about the marketplace and organisation you work in, how strongly do you agree with the following statements?



SOURCE: MARKETING WEEK, 'THE LANGUAGE OF EFFECTIVENESS 2025' / EXCLUDES 'NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE' AND 'DON'T KNOW'

¹ <https://business.google.com/uk/think/measurement/pricing-power-marketing-brand-growth>

Considering your brand's strength relative to its competitors, would you say on the whole it is...



SOURCE: MARKETING WEEK, 'THE LANGUAGE OF EFFECTIVENESS 2025'

Linking price and brand strength

Leading brands are finding different ways to link brand and price. At Kellanova Europe, whose portfolio includes Grahams Crackers, Pringles and Pop-Tarts, methods for measuring the relationship are threefold, marketing effectiveness lead Jane Myron explains.

The team uses research to understand consumers' willingness to pay more and which product attributes would justify a higher price point; A/B testing and experimentation to gauge what types of advertising influence price perceptions; and also a robust brand strategy. "If you really understand your brand and have a strategy where you've diagnosed all the issues, then typically a marketer can come to the table and say this target is much less price-sensitive and investments [in that direction] will go much further," says Myron.

The process of drawing a line between brand marketing efforts and pricing can be an "uncomfortable" one, admits James Henderson, sales and marketing director at Simplyhealth. But he reiterates how critical it is for marketers to have a firm grip on pricing dynamics. At the health insurance provider, pricing isn't only understood through a financial lens but using a brand measurement metric labelled 'pricing resilience'.

"The market that we operate in is very value-led, but it can be price-led at the same time, and our hypothesis is that the stronger our brand, the more resilient our pricing. [In other words] we won't need to drop the price as much or as easily to be able to compete, because the brand strength will mean that our premium is clear," he says.

The team proves this hypothesis by aligning the upward trajectory of brand metrics, such as awareness, consideration and share of search, with the average price of products being sold.

Elasticity and pricing strategy

At Carlsberg Britvic, brand equity is measured through Kantar's Brand Power score, says chief marketing officer Munnawar Chishty. Increasing the score "shows you are building a strong brand that can justify a premium", which means investing in brand equity can be linked with pricing.

"We also regularly track the elasticity of our brands and use this to help define future price strategy," she adds. "In addition, we review price as part of our pack price architecture strategy, so it is part of a more holistic approach to brand building."

Most marketers think their brand is priced correctly, according to our survey. Yet, when marketers select their highest-priority marketing tactics for the year, all three pricing-related options rank in the bottom four out of 10. Price promotions get more than twice as much consideration as lower or higher base prices, suggesting many marketers have little influence over the latter.

It's critical that marketers develop a strong understanding of pricing dynamics, says Myron. "Pricing is one of the key ways that marketers can demonstrate the value of their efforts," she insists. "If you have a strong brand, it has less price sensitivity. I've worked on multiple brands with long-term strategies and that's the key."

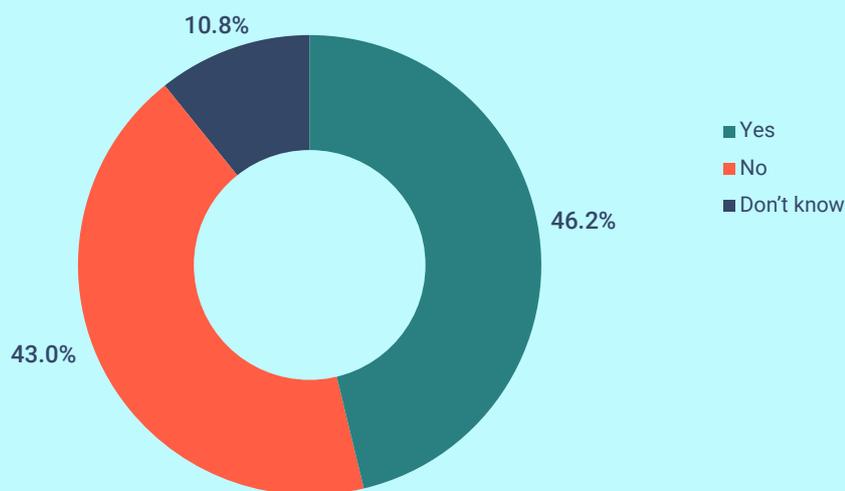
3. Technology is fuelling creativity – but rarely measuring it

Naturally, creativity remains a cornerstone of brand building in 2025, and eight out of 10 of marketers say it's either the most influential factor or one of the most influential in determining overall marketing effectiveness. Almost two thirds say their focus on the quality of creative output has increased over the past 12 months. Yet less than half (46.2%) are actually measuring its impact.

Where they are, they're relying on traditional methods. Less than a quarter are making use of any single tech-enabled tool specifically to measure creative effectiveness – whether that be eye-tracking, facial emotion recognition or neuroscience, for example. Marketers are around twice as likely to be using focus groups and other long-established research techniques for creative testing.

That's despite the fact that 49.4% are unhappy with the analytics currently available to them for assessing creative effectiveness.

Is there analysis in place for measuring creative effectiveness?



SOURCE: MARKETING WEEK, 'THE LANGUAGE OF EFFECTIVENESS 2025'

Idea generation

Technology use is far more widespread at the concept and production stages of the creative process. More than half of marketers (57.5%) say their organisation is using AI to generate content or creative ideas and 44.7% to produce variants of campaign assets. It's clear the technology is helping smaller brands to level the playing field in the volume of marketing output, too, with 63.9% of SME marketers using AI in idea generation.

At Mars Wrigley, AI is being used to help simulate and iterate entire campaigns, to increase speed and scale, says Abi-Nader. "We can respond to consumer trends much faster, and in a much more cost-effective way," he outlines. "In our emerging markets, too, we have hundreds of different languages and cultures, and in the past we'd have to shoot different versions of a campaign or, if that was cost-prohibitive, air copy that might not be relevant in the country. But with generative AI we can adapt and adapt and adapt. It's making creative much faster and much cheaper."

Gettins at iamproperty says that AI can help underpin creativity "from insight synthesis, to supporting the formation of a clear brief, to ideation and creativity in execution". She adds, however: "Having said all that, common sense doesn't always mean common practice, or the ability to measure, test or experiment enough to prove out the hypothesis when budgets are tight."

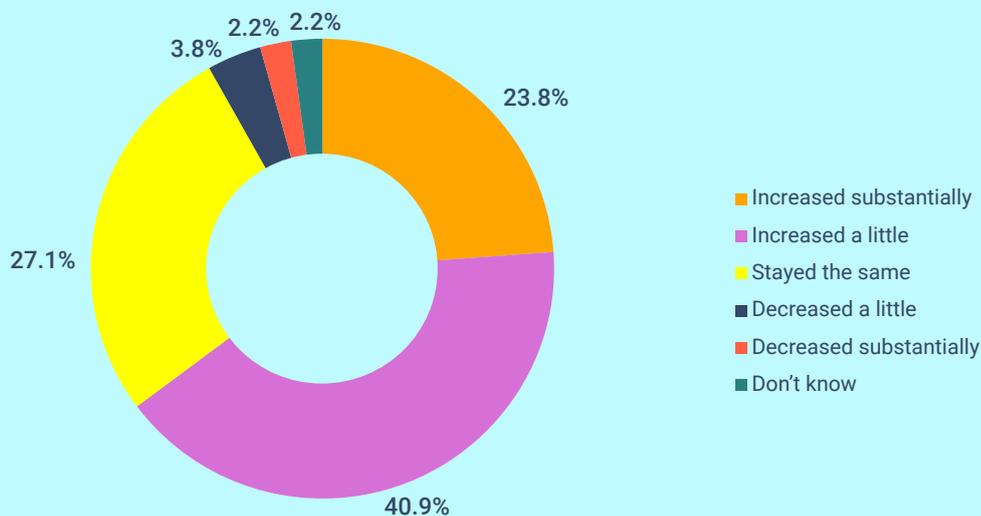
Tech's role in creativity

Marketers tend to be united on one thing. "Creativity is an 'unlock' to a lot of the issues that marketers are dealing with," says Natalie Botha, marketing excellence lead – creative, at Arla Foods. "Strong creative ideas will work harder than reach and frequency, and there is a lot of data out there to prove it. It's fundamental."

"Over recent years marketing has slightly become more commercially orientated; people are more metric-driven and slightly more business-savvy but you can't be losing that creativity element," says Totalmobile's McIntyre. "That's what differentiates marketing as a department."

There remains some hesitancy around AI and its role within creative, he believes. "I do speak to marketers and lots of them are still not 100% sure. I think some of that is being protective of their roles and this fear that still prevails that AI is going to replace you. I've also had people say to me that they feel it's cheating or it's not genuine. But AI doesn't replace creativity, it supercharges it. To maintain maximum effectiveness, it needs to be that intelligent assistant, rather than the [thing] that leads the charge."

How has your marketing department's focus on quality of creative changed compared with 12 months ago?



SOURCE: MARKETING WEEK, 'THE LANGUAGE OF EFFECTIVENESS 2025'

Carlsberg Britvic: Unlocking technology's creative opportunities

There's "huge opportunity" in using technology to drive greater effectiveness from marketing creative, believes Carlsberg Britvic CMO Munnawar Chishty. "We're already incorporating AI into our planning processes to drive more efficiency and gain deeper insights, as well as for audience segmentation and personalised marketing to make our efforts even more targeted and effective," she says.

The brand owner has also been able to utilise augmented reality on the ground in campaigns, "which has been incredibly engaging and exciting to witness". As part of Robinsons' partnership with Universal Pictures film *Wicked*, for example, it launched an augmented reality 'magic mirror' to push awareness of its limited-edition squash in Tesco. The mirrors allowed shoppers to visualise themselves as one of the main characters, Elphaba or Glinda, depending on which flavour they chose for their free sample. It proved an "incredibly exciting and creative way that we can engage with consumers and physically immerse them into our campaigns", says Chishty.

In terms of future plans, she says: "One of the biggest challenges is building AI capabilities quickly and efficiently to fully unlock its potential. This means investing in the right technology and talent to use AI effectively."

4. Evolving effectiveness: The search for consistency

A culture of data-driven decision making is fast becoming the norm for UK marketers. Seventy percent agree that marketing effectiveness analysis is now used to inform their decisions, and nearly three quarters (71.1%) say there's been a greater focus on effectiveness tracking over the last three years.

But despite this, there often remains a lack of joined-up thinking when it comes to marketing effectiveness, with many organisations lacking consensus around what effective marketing looks like, and others lacking the internal structures to make clear where accountability lies. For example, more marketers disagree (44.3%) than agree (39.1%) that marketing effectiveness is a well-defined function in their business.

Need for clarity

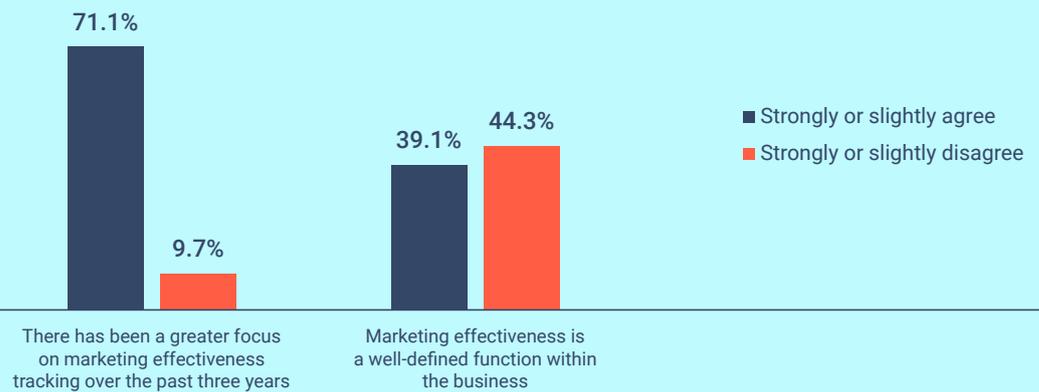
"I don't think that there is a very clear, well-understood picture about marketing effectiveness in the industry," says Arla Foods' Botha. "There are so many different ways to measure success these days, and the proliferation of data points means that measurement can often be inconsistent."

"Marketing effectiveness is an area every marketer should be obsessed with but there's so much ambiguity around what it is," agrees Kellanova's Myron. "Everyone will approach it differently. But the commonality, the one thing I've noticed is that the only way to be successful in a company is to create a culture of effectiveness."

To ensure all teams have clarity on what effectiveness consists of at Kellanova, the team works according to a marketing effectiveness roadmap, Myron explains. This builds up knowledge and skills across seven different areas. Marketing masterclasses around each of these are held to ensure all marketers have the information they need.

"It's a very curated journey around what effectiveness is to us, what tools we have available to integrate and how we're continually driving that capability," says Myron. The focus is on "democratising what we mean by effectiveness", she adds, which gives everyone in the organisation a sense of clarity rather than creating a siloed function.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?



SOURCE: MARKETING WEEK, 'THE LANGUAGE OF EFFECTIVENESS 2025' / EXCLUDES 'NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE' AND 'DON'T KNOW'

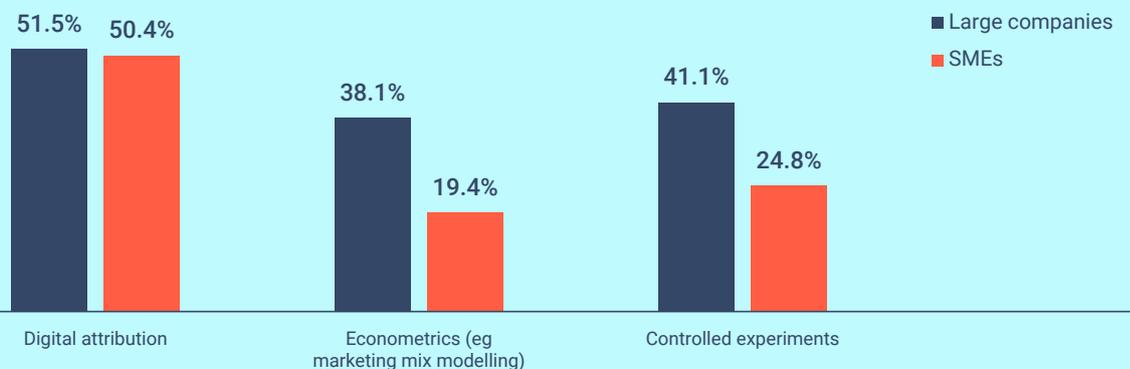
Variations in practice

Even with clarity on the end goal for effectiveness, though, there's huge disparity between different organisations on which tools are being used to measure these outcomes, and how often. Of the so-called 'golden trinity' of effectiveness measurement tools,² only digital attribution is used by a majority of marketers (51.5%), with substantially smaller proportions making use of econometrics (32.0%) and controlled experiments (35.3%). Larger companies are more likely than SMEs to be using the latter two techniques.

Most organisations using digital attribution and controlled experiments carry them out at least once a month. But there's much wider variation in how regularly econometric analysis is performed, with marketers just as likely to be doing it once a year as on a constant ongoing basis.

For Henderson at Simplyhealth, great effectiveness strategies should be "a mix of art and science", blending creativity with "critical" data and analysis. "It comes back to the idea that people are uncomfortable investing in brand because the effectiveness is not understood," he says. "Analytics and econometrics measurement is critical to that and it's an ever-evolving beast. If any fledgling CMOs or heads of marketing haven't yet invested in an analytics programme, then they've got to start doing that now."

Are you already using any of the following approaches to measuring campaign outcomes?



SOURCE: MARKETING WEEK, 'THE LANGUAGE OF EFFECTIVENESS 2025'

² <https://www.marketingweek.com/golden-trinity-measure-marketing-effectiveness>

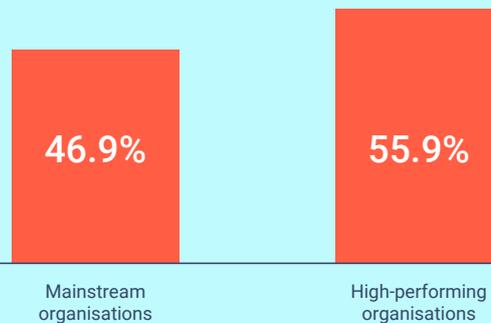
Conclusion: Crafting compelling effectiveness stories

When it comes to striking the right balance between short-term sales uplift and longer-term brand growth, it's clear that capabilities and levels of preparedness vary significantly between organisations.

While some are already adept at aligning effectiveness strategies to the demands from senior leadership and making use of a suite of modern analytics tools to do so, others remain stuck on defining what effectiveness looks like and what metrics to use to demonstrate marketing's influence on business performance.

As a result, only half (50.2%) of marketers strongly or slightly agree that their business is aligned on both short- and long-term KPIs. High-performing brands have a nine-point lead over mainstream brands on this metric, however.

My business is aligned around clear KPIs for measuring short- and long-term success (strongly or slightly agree)



SOURCE: MARKETING WEEK, 'THE LANGUAGE OF EFFECTIVENESS 2025'

Leadership priorities

Moreover, many marketers are missing key opportunities to craft compelling effectiveness stories for their businesses. Less than half collaborate regularly with their finance department around marketing investments and returns. With only 27.7% reporting that their media budgets are fixed over set periods, there should be significant opportunities to secure more growth-driving investment if marketers can make a stronger effectiveness case.

Indeed, 51.0% of marketers say they have seen their budgets rise as a result of focusing on effectiveness measurement, while only 10.6% have seen them fall (thanks to more efficiency of spend).

To cut through with business leaders, there are key touchstones marketers must focus on. Survey respondents name five metrics that get particular traction with CEOs and CFOs: ROI is the top priority, followed by business outcomes, new customer acquisition, conversion rates and brand awareness. This is not to say marketing effectiveness analysis should be limited to these, but that there is room for marketers to build a business case that includes them.

What's clear is that marketers need to make the best possible use of the measurement tools at their disposal, while building a culture of marketing effectiveness. Though executive teams are understandably focused on sales, that doesn't mean they won't see the long-term value of investment in brand marketing. But to ensure organisations focus on both aspects, marketers need to develop a commercially aware and data-driven narrative about marketing effectiveness that aligns with their business's priorities. ■



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