

THE STATE OF MARTECH IMPLEMENTATION

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Introduction

Martech enables organizations to personalize customer experiences, streamline operations, and improve marketing effectiveness. However, Martech success is not guaranteed—nearly one-third (31%) of this study’s participants reported their most recent Martech implementation either failed outright or delivered neutral results.

Based on insights from over 200 industry leaders, this report highlights the critical differences between organizations that have successfully implemented martech platforms, including marketing automation and CRM, and those that struggle to realize value post-implementation. By analyzing the delta between successful and failed/neutral implementations, this report uncovers the key factors that drive fast ROI, the most common pitfalls, and the strategic actions organizations can take to maximize Martech’s potential.

Key Findings

Key Finding

1 Martech Implementation Failures Drive Up Costs and Kill Productivity

68% of failed implementations experience campaign delays.

53% report increased operational costs and a decline in productivity.

When Martech projects fail, the costs extend far beyond financial investments. Failed implementations often require months of remediation, wasting valuable time and resources.



Key Finding

2 Organizational Alignment is the Key to Implementation Success

The most commonly cited Martech implementation challenges that lead to failure include change management (**57%**) and cross-functional misalignment (**49%**).

Without strong project management and clear communication, teams struggle with adoption, leading to delays in value realization and fragmented execution.

Successful Martech implementations aren't just about changing technology; they're about shifting hearts, minds and habits toward a stated business-objective.



Key Finding

3

C-Suite and VP Engagement is a Key Success Factor in Martech Implementations

Successful implementations were more likely to have senior leadership (C-Suite, VP) involved in vendor selection (**34%**) and held teams accountable for ROI (**47%**). On the other hand, failed implementations often suffered from a lack of executive oversight, with **only 25%** involving leadership in the vendor selection process.

Senior executives help align Martech investments with broader business objectives, hold cross-functional teams accountable and remove blockers. In contrast, when leadership is disengaged, projects may lack the necessary governance to drive adoption and achieve measurable outcomes.



Key Finding

4 Expertise and Training Define the Best Martech Implementation Partners

When choosing partners, winning teams prioritize strategic expertise (**55%**) and deep product knowledge (**57%**). Meanwhile, unsuccessful implementations often rely on internal referrals (**50%**) and overlook training services (**only 7%**), which contributes to low adoption rates and underutilized technology.

Selecting the right consulting partner is a decisive factor in Martech implementation success. A strong focus on partner training services and industry expertise ensures a smoother transition and long-term success.



Key Finding

5 Post-Implementation Support Separates Success from Failure

The need for post-implementation monitoring (**72%**) and comprehensive training (**66%**) are the top lessons from failed Martech rollouts. In contrast, successful teams prioritize internal training (**63%**) and access to highly skilled consultants (**55%**) to reinforce implementation efforts and ensure sustained platform usage.

Many organizations struggle after the initial launch, lacking the necessary support systems to drive adoption and optimize processes.



Key Finding

6 Speed to ROI is the Ultimate Predictor of Martech Success

58% of successful implementations achieve ROI within 6 months, while only **33%** of failed or neutral cases reach this milestone. Worse yet, **28%** of failed implementations never generate measurable returns.

Successful Martech implementations see tangible ROI much faster than failed projects. This underscores the importance of rapid adoption, integration, and training in ensuring a project delivers value within a short window. Companies that delay adoption risk losing momentum, increasing project fatigue, and ultimately failing to justify their investment.



Key Finding

7 Where You Invest Determines Your Martech Success

Winning teams focus their investments on training and enablement (**60%**) and new tools (**51%**), ensuring a strong foundation for adoption. In contrast, failed projects often require reactive spending on training (**65%**) and external consulting (**47%**), pointing to a lack of expertise and foresight during initial planning.

The way organizations allocate resources during implementation plays a crucial role in success. This finding suggests that organizations should prioritize upskilling their teams before implementation rather than relying on costly remediation efforts afterward.



Key Finding

8

External Consulting Expertise Increases Martech Success Rates

57% of successful implementations leveraged external consultants, compared to **44%** of failed projects that attempted to execute without external expertise. Furthermore, organizations that were highly confident (**81%**) in their ability to select consulting partners achieved better results.

Companies that engage third-party consulting partners are significantly more likely to succeed in Martech implementation. This data emphasizes the importance of vendor selection, due diligence, and expert guidance in reducing risk and maximizing Martech performance.



Insight



While nearly **one-third** of study participants admitted their last major Martech rollout failed or delivered neutral results, the true failure rate is likely much higher.

One thing we've learned at GNW from working with organizations on Martech strategy is that implementation failures are more common than the data suggests. While nearly one-third of study participants admitted their last major Martech rollout failed or delivered neutral results, the true failure rate is likely much higher. Marketers, often under pressure to justify technology investments, may hesitate to label implementations as failures—especially when budgets have already been spent and stakeholders expect positive outcomes. Instead, underperforming Martech projects are quietly repositioned as “learning experiences” or placed into indefinite optimization cycles, delaying the acknowledgment of deeper systemic issues.

This reluctance to confront failure stems from multiple factors. Many organizations lack clear success metrics, making it difficult to determine whether a Martech initiative truly delivered value. Others face cross-functional misalignment, where different teams have conflicting definitions of success, leading to a watered-down assessment of performance. Additionally, fear of

reputational risk within the company can prevent marketers from being transparent about challenges, particularly when leadership involvement has been minimal. Martech failures remain hidden beneath the surface without a structured evaluation framework, draining resources without delivering the expected returns.

The data makes one thing extremely clear: the companies that see the fastest ROI and long-term Martech success take a fundamentally different approach. They define measurable KPIs upfront, invest in change management and training to drive adoption and engage strategic consulting partners who provide expert guidance beyond just tool implementation. Most importantly, they cultivate a culture where leadership is actively involved—not just in approving budgets but in overseeing execution, monitoring impact, and holding teams accountable for outcomes. Martech success isn't just about having the right technology; it's about ensuring the right people, processes, and strategies are in place to make that technology work.



Raja Walia
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GNW Consulting

The Martech Success Divide

Martech implementation outcomes diverge dramatically between organizations that pursue a deliberate, strategic approach and those that adopt a reactive, uncoordinated path. The survey data clearly illustrates that the success divide is driven by differences in internal alignment, leadership involvement, and investment in training and resources.

Success or Struggle: The Clear ROI Divide

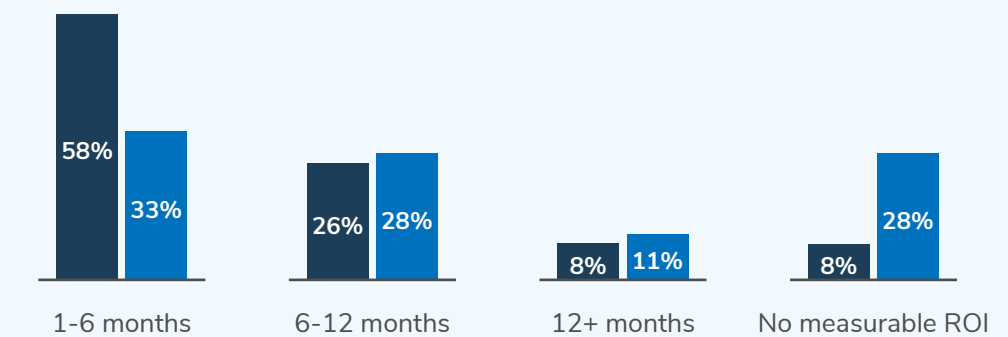
Organizations that set clear, measurable objectives and engage senior leadership throughout the process consistently report impressive results - **58% achieve ROI within six months**. In contrast, only 33% of organizations with a less strategic approach reach this milestone, and 28% of underperforming initiatives never generate measurable returns.

Figure 1 captures these divergent ROI timelines and underscores the substantial benefits of a well-planned and executed martech strategy.

Figure 1

Successful implementation
Failed or neutral implementation

When did the team start seeing ROI from the martech implementation?



Early ROI is not an accident but the direct result of a deliberate strategy. Organizations that define key performance indicators upfront and ensure continuous executive oversight accelerate the adoption process, thereby securing faster returns and establishing a competitive advantage.

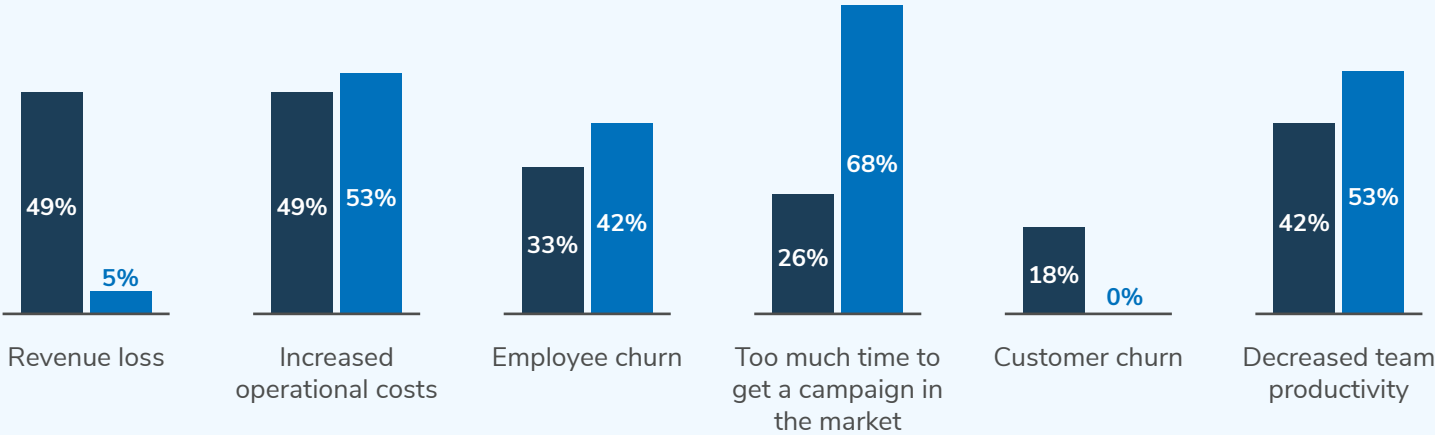
Martech Failure is Expensive and Avoidable

The cost of failure extends far beyond immediate financial loss. **Underperforming initiatives experience campaign delays in 68% of cases and increased operational costs in 53%**, and a similar percentage report a decline in productivity. These inefficiencies lead to prolonged remediation efforts and a significant resource drain.

Figure 2 juxtaposes the high hidden costs of failed implementations with the streamlined operations observed in high-performing organizations, highlighting the financial and operational toll of underperformance.

Figure 2

What were the primary consequences of the Martech failure you experienced in the past? Select all that apply.



\$ Study participants whose most recent martech implementation was a success were 10X more likely to report revenue loss from a past failed implementation. While the fear of repeating that loss may drive better outcomes, this correlation doesn't prove causation, and other factors (budgets, buy-in, implementation partners, etc.) could also play a role.

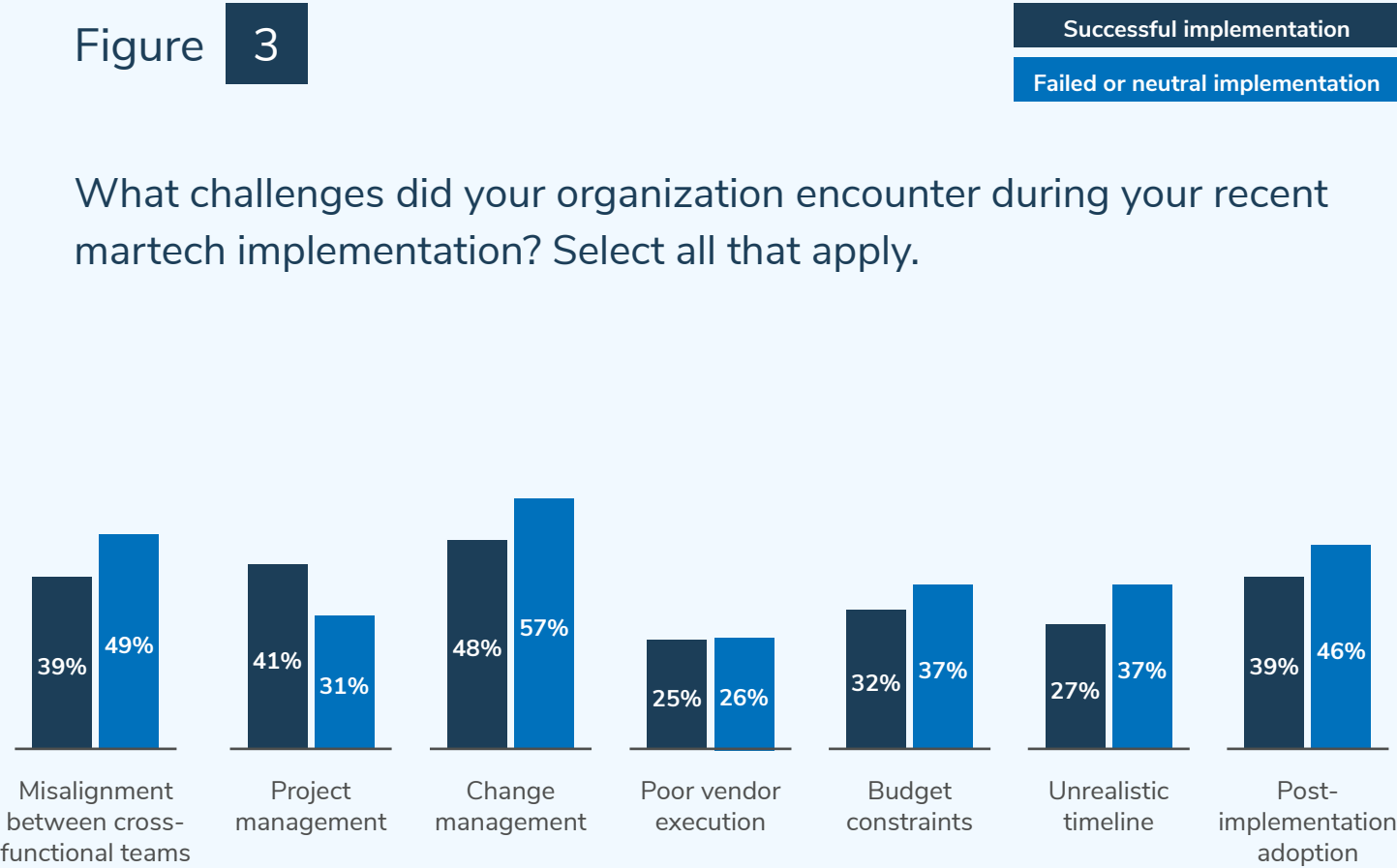
Successful Martech Requires Alignment and Change


Effective martech implementation is not solely about deploying technology—it also hinges on the organization’s ability to manage change and maintain cross-functional alignment. Organizations that report fewer issues with change management (48% versus 57%) and cross-functional misalignment (39% versus 49%) tend to realize faster and more sustainable adoption.

Figure 3 illustrates the difference in internal alignment between successful and underperforming organizations, emphasizing the importance of clear communication and continuous training.

Figure 3

What challenges did your organization encounter during your recent martech implementation? Select all that apply.



 A structured change management process and a commitment to ongoing cross-departmental collaboration are essential. When organizations invest in these areas, they reduce implementation delays and create a resilient framework that supports long-term success.

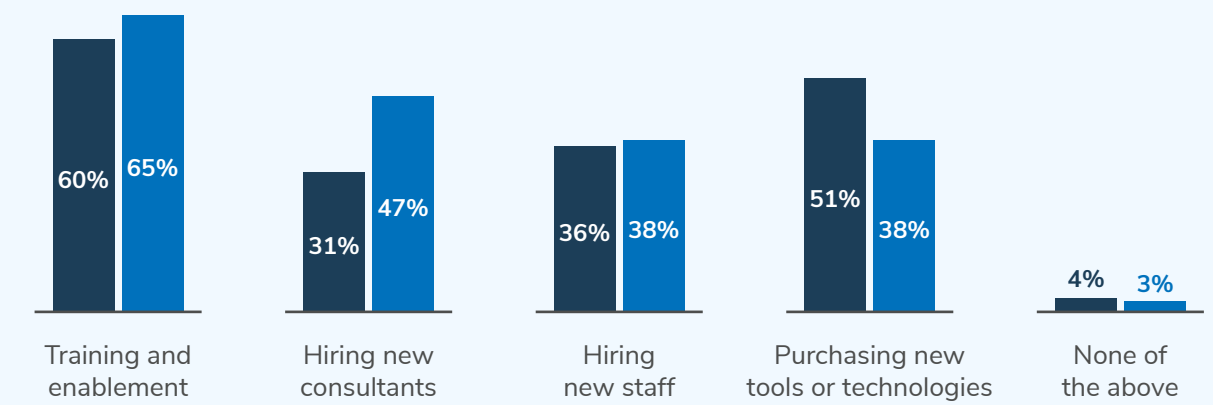
Training, Budget, and Resource Allocation Drive Long-Term Success

The foundation for sustained martech performance is built on **consistent investment in technology and talent**. High-performing organizations invest proactively in training and enablement (60%) and allocate resources for new tools (51%). In contrast, those who struggle tend to increase spending on training (65%) reactively and external consulting (47%) after issues arise.

Figure 4 demonstrates that organizations with strategic resource allocation exhibit higher adoption rates and more robust long-term performance.

Figure 4

Where did your last major martech implementation require additional investment? Select all the apply.



Consistent, forward-thinking investment in training and budget allocation is vital for overcoming internal challenges.

When organizations commit to developing their human capital alongside technology investments, they create a strong foundation for sustained growth and enhanced performance.

The Road to Martech ROI

Strategic Consulting Partnerships Accelerate ROI

External consulting partners provide the specialized expertise needed to navigate complex martech integrations. **Organizations that engage high-value consulting firms experience a 60% success rate in achieving ROI within six months**, compared to only 32% among those that do not leverage such expertise. These partners offer strategic insights and technical proficiency that assist organizations in avoiding common pitfalls and accelerating internal adoption.

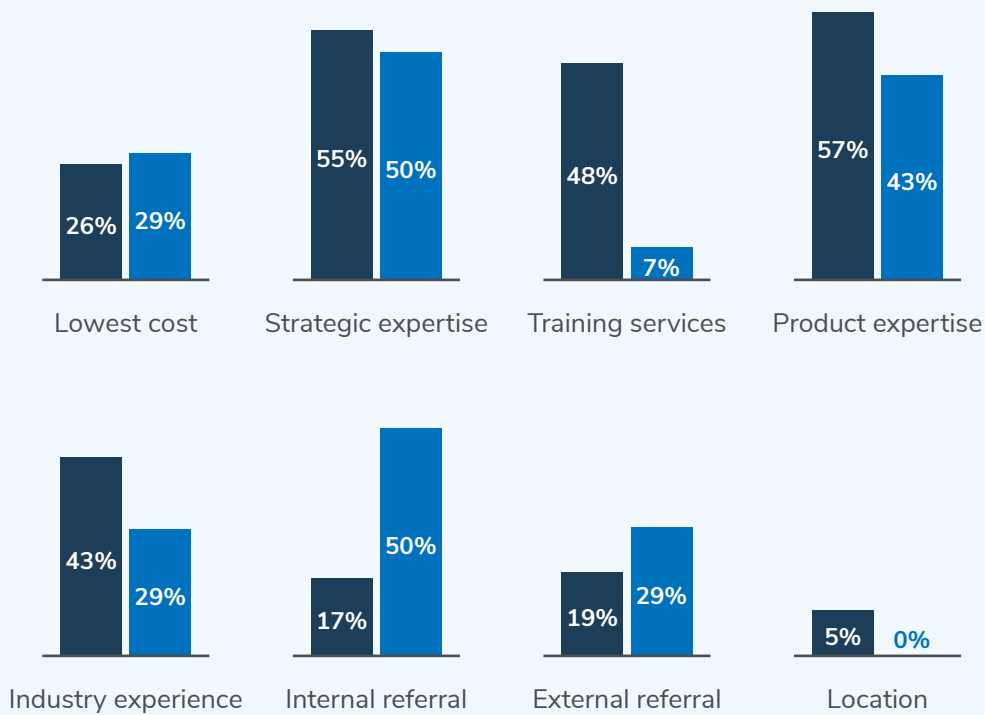
Figure 5 highlights the differential impact of external support. It shows that organizations with strong consulting partnerships benefit from enhanced expertise (55% strategic expertise and 57% deep product knowledge) that drives smoother and faster implementations.

Figure 5

Successful implementation

Failed or neutral implementation

Looking back, which of the following criteria was the consulting partner selected for this implementation based on? Select all the apply.



Leveraging external expertise reduces implementation risks and accelerates ROI. The data clearly shows that organizations that combine robust internal leadership with high-value external partnerships are positioned to achieve rapid and sustainable returns.

The ROI Impact of Strategic Partnerships

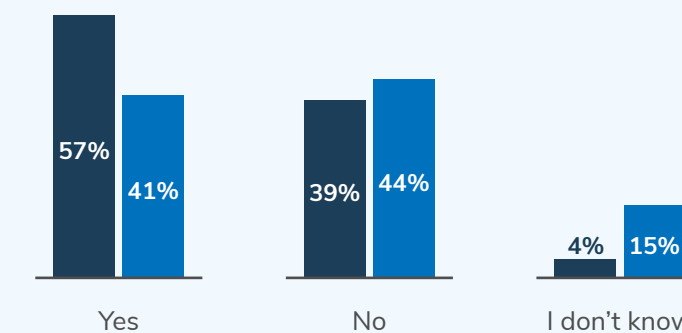
When proactive leadership and strategic external partnerships converge, a powerful synergy drives rapid ROI and minimizes long-term remediation costs.

Organizations that integrate external consulting see smoother technology integration, more effective training, and significantly reduced remediation timelines. 57% of successful implementations utilizing external consultants versus 44% among underperforming initiatives. **Figure 6** captures the compounded benefits of this integrated approach.

Figure 6

Successful implementation
Failed or neutral implementation

Did you leverage a third party consulting partner to help you with your most recent martech implementation?



The integrated strategy of active leadership combined with expert external support is a key determinant of rapid ROI. This approach minimizes delays and operational disruptions, enabling organizations to capitalize on their martech investments more quickly and effectively.

Post-Implementation Monitoring Drives Martech Success

One of the most cited reasons for Martech failure is the **lack of post-implementation monitoring**, with 72% of failed implementations reporting it as a critical gap. Companies that succeeded, however, had greater leadership involvement in ongoing governance and post-implementation training (63%).

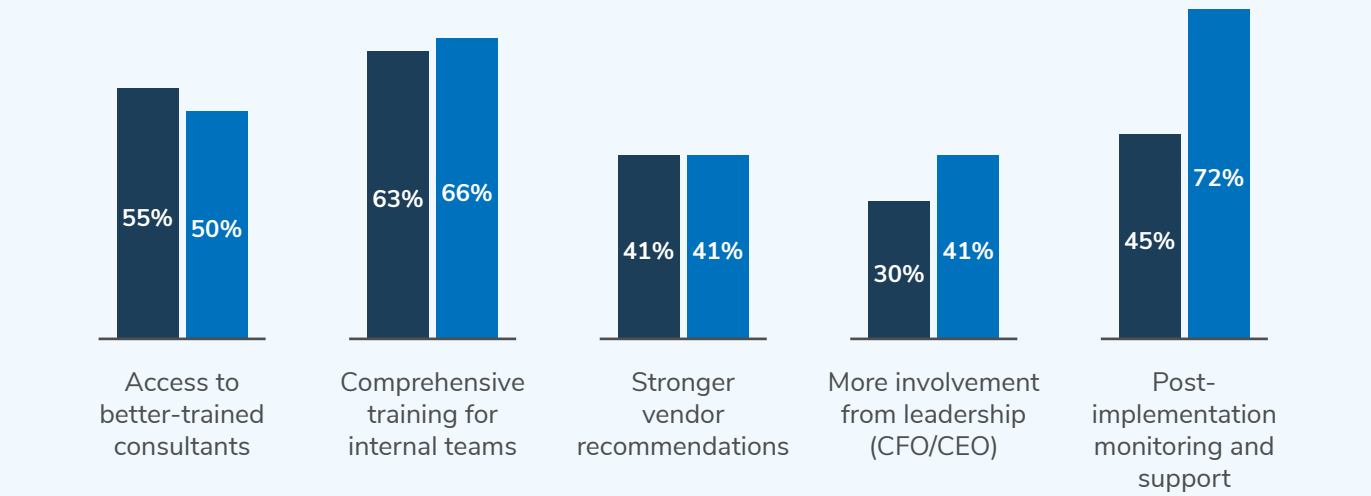
Figure 7 highlights the critical role of post-implementation monitoring in Martech success, showing that 72% of failed implementations lacked ongoing oversight.


Figure 7

Successful implementation

Failed or neutral implementation

What additional resources or support would help your organization avoid failed implementations in the future? Select all that apply.



 Senior leadership can help ensure Martech success by asking about and funding post-implementation items in scopes of work.

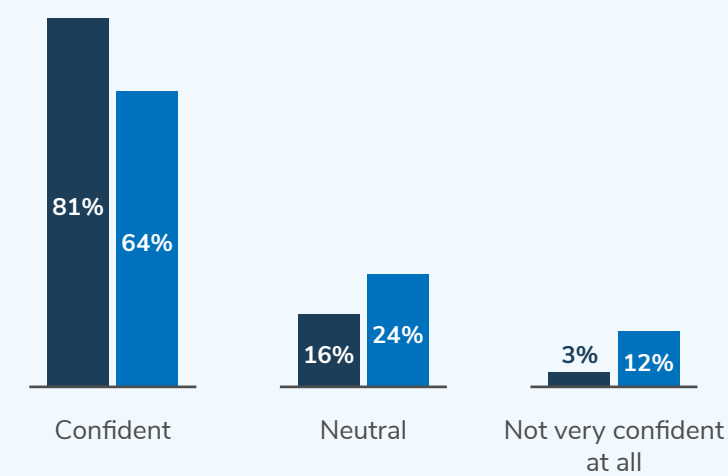
Confident Partner Selection Boosts Martech Success

Another important factor is how confident organizations feel about their ability to evaluate consulting partners. 81% of successful implementations reported confidence in their selection criteria, compared to only 64% among failed projects. This confidence is often linked to a structured evaluation process and direct involvement from experienced leadership in vendor selection.

Figure 8

Successful implementation
Failed or neutral implementation

How confident are you in your organization's ability to evaluate consulting partners?



This suggests that when C-suite and VP leaders take an active role in vetting and selecting consulting partners, they are more likely to choose firms that align with strategic goals, have industry-specific expertise, and provide the necessary post-implementation support. In contrast, when vendor selection is delegated without proper due diligence, organizations risk choosing partners based on cost rather than proven capabilities.

Conclusion

The difference between successful and underperforming Martech implementations is profound. Organizations that establish clear, measurable success metrics and invest in robust change management, continuous training, and proactive leadership consistently achieve rapid ROI and sustainable long-term growth.

In contrast, those who under-invest in these critical areas face prolonged remediation, escalating operational costs, and diminished productivity. Ultimately, Martech success is defined not solely by the technology deployed but by a comprehensive strategy that aligns investments with strategic business objectives, fosters cross-functional collaboration, and leverages internal capabilities and external expertise to drive continuous improvement.

Action Plan for Martech Success

Based on our findings and detailed analysis, the following strategic roadmap is recommended for achieving martech success:



By following these steps, organizations can mitigate the risks associated with Martech implementation while unlocking its full potential to drive sustainable growth in an increasingly competitive landscape.

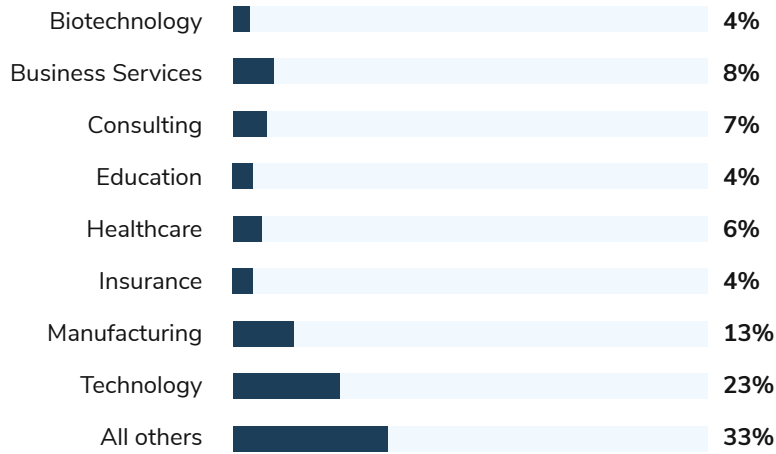
Methodology

This 2025 State of Martech Implementation survey was administered online from January 22, 2025 until February 4, 2025. During this period, 204 responses were collected, and 174 were qualified and complete enough for inclusion in the analysis. Only valid or correlated findings are shared in this report.

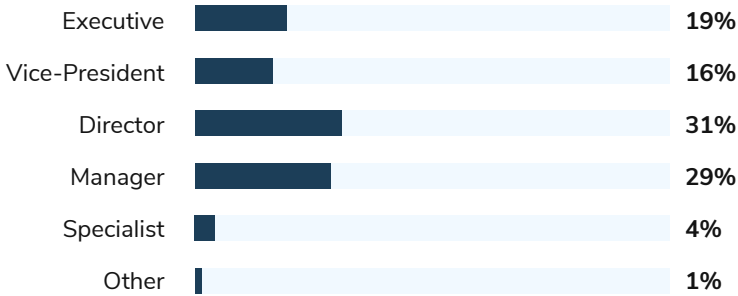
The representativeness of this study’s results depends on the similarity of the sample to environments in which this survey data is used for comparison or guidance. Some figures are based on low sample sizes and should be used only for informational purposes.

Summarized here is the basic categorization data collected about respondents to enable filtering and analysis of the data:

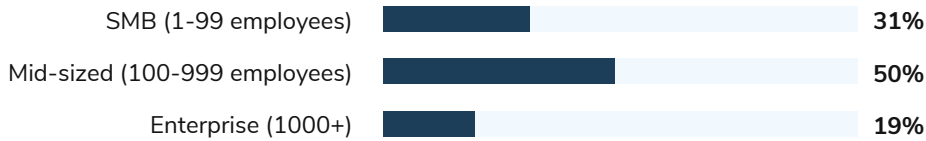
Which best describes the industry you work in?



Which best describes your level of seniority at your organization?



What is the size of your organization?





A Marketing Operations Agency

About

Marketing Operations (MOps) is the backbone of a company's marketing efforts, ensuring efficiency, alignment, and scalability. It encompasses the processes, technology, and data that drive marketing activities, from planning and execution to analysis and optimization.

By streamlining workflows, integrating systems, and harnessing data insights, we empower teams to maximize their impact and drive business growth. Learn more about GNW Consulting.

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About

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