

# B-to-B marketers look to most effective tactics in 2009

Webinars will show highest ROI

# Executive summary

In the throes of an economic recession, any and all corporate spending is under intense scrutiny — particularly investments in marketing. Amid the din of fierce competition and anemic budgets, therefore, the ongoing challenge for marketers is to figure out how to strategically invest limited funds on the most effective tactics that deliver a seriously tangible return on investment (ROI). That's a tall order, but business literally depends on it.

MarketingProfs recently released “B-to-B Marketing in 2009: Trends in Strategies and Spending,” an in-depth study that pinpoints exactly where marketers are spending their limited budgets and which tactics marketers believe to be the most effective at generating high-quality leads and delivering the greatest ROI.

According to the 2009 study results, marketers rate Webinars as one of the top three tactics for effectiveness; however, budget allocation and usage are disproportionately low for marketers to take full advantage of this effective tactic. Let's take a closer look at the study's findings and implications.

“ In terms of their budget expectations for the coming year, marketers at the end of 2007 were more likely to anticipate increased spending; this expectation has been replaced at the end of 2008 by an outlook rooted in the realities of an economic crisis.<sup>1</sup> ”

## Budget reductions a way of life

Figure 1 reveals that respondents feel the pinch of the recession and are anticipating budget adjustments in the coming year. Interestingly, as marketers headed into 2008, 49 percent actually anticipated a budget increase, while only 6 percent expected a budget decrease. In the span of a year, expectations changed dramatically. As 2009 approached, just 25 percent of respondents looked forward to a budget increase, while a whopping 34 percent braced for a budget cut.

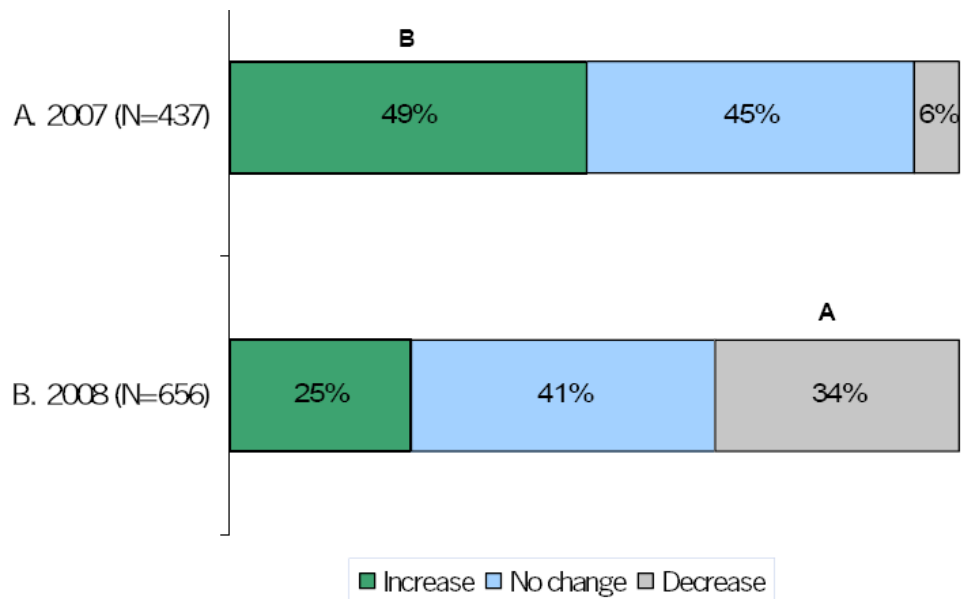


Figure 1: A comparison of 2008 and 2009 budget expectations.

<sup>1</sup> “B-to-B Marketing in 2009: Trends in Strategies and Spending.” MarketingProfs Research Insights, MarketingProfs, LLC, © 2009. The figures on pages 1, 2, 3 and 4 are reprinted with permission of MarketingProfs Research Insights, MarketingProfs, LLC © 2009. All rights reserved.

# Allocating spend for high impact

This study reveals an intriguing gap between tactics rated as most effective by marketers and actual budget allocation.

As you can see in Figure 2, budget allocations at the end of 2008 emphasized such tactics as tradeshow, conferences, TV ads and direct mail. What this means is that marketers continue to allocate significant portions of the marketing budget to tactics that they, themselves, have rated inferior to the effectiveness of online tactics. This begs the question: Why, in this current economic climate, aren't marketers aligning their budgets with the most effective tactics?

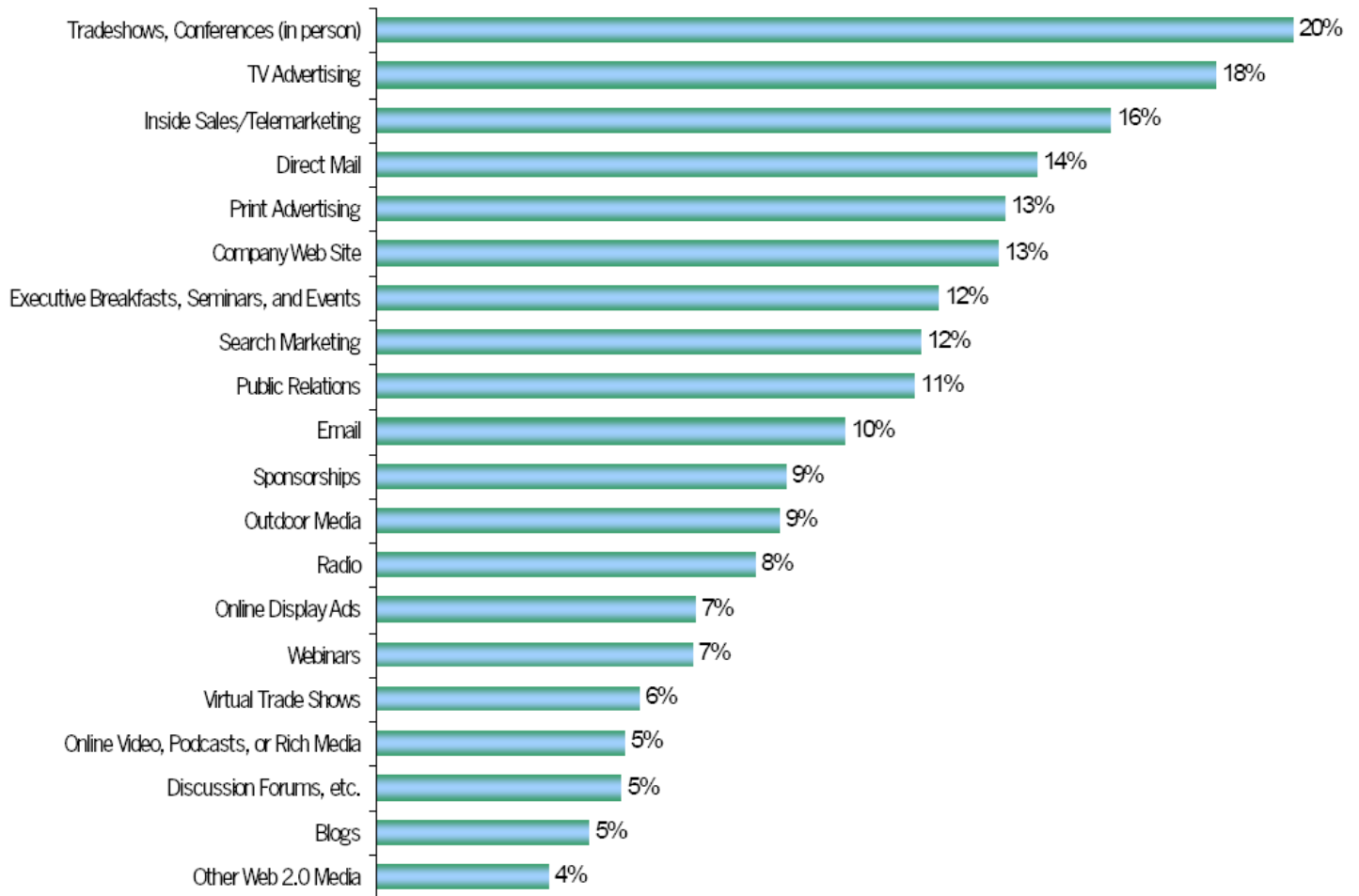


Figure 2: Budget allocations at the end of 2008.

Now, more than ever before, significantly reduced budgets and greater investment scrutiny require marketers to fully optimize the ROI of every single marketing initiative. When survey participants were asked how they are responding to current economic conditions, 63 percent reported their intentions to “shift program budget dollars among alternatives.” Aligning marketing spending with tactic effectiveness is clearly a priority in 2009.

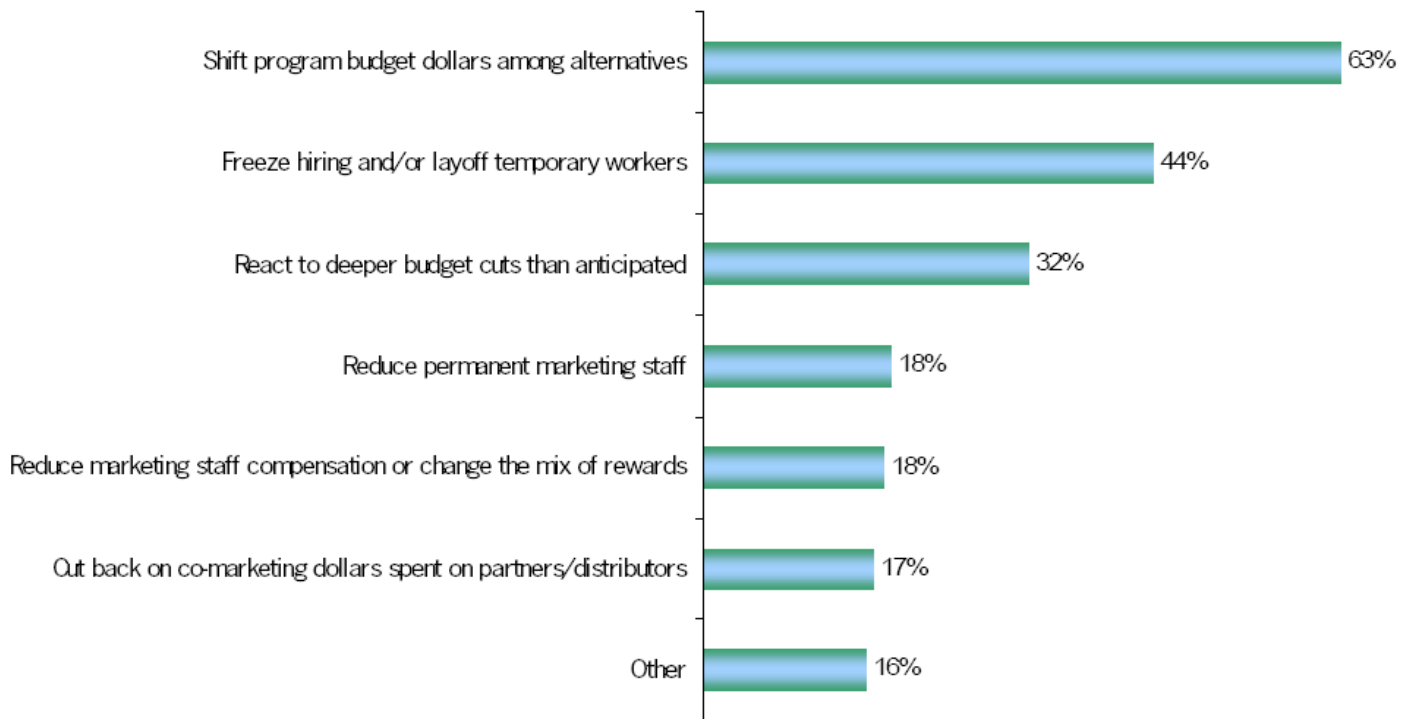


Figure 3: Responses to current economic conditions.

## Webinars rate high for effectiveness & importance

Survey respondents rank Webinars third in tactic effectiveness, following executive breakfasts/seminars and inside sales. But there is noteworthy inconsistency between Webinar use and effectiveness: While marketers believe Webinars to be a powerful tactic, even placing them in the top 3 tactics for effectiveness, they aren't increasing their budget allocation toward the use of Webinars, despite their high ranking.

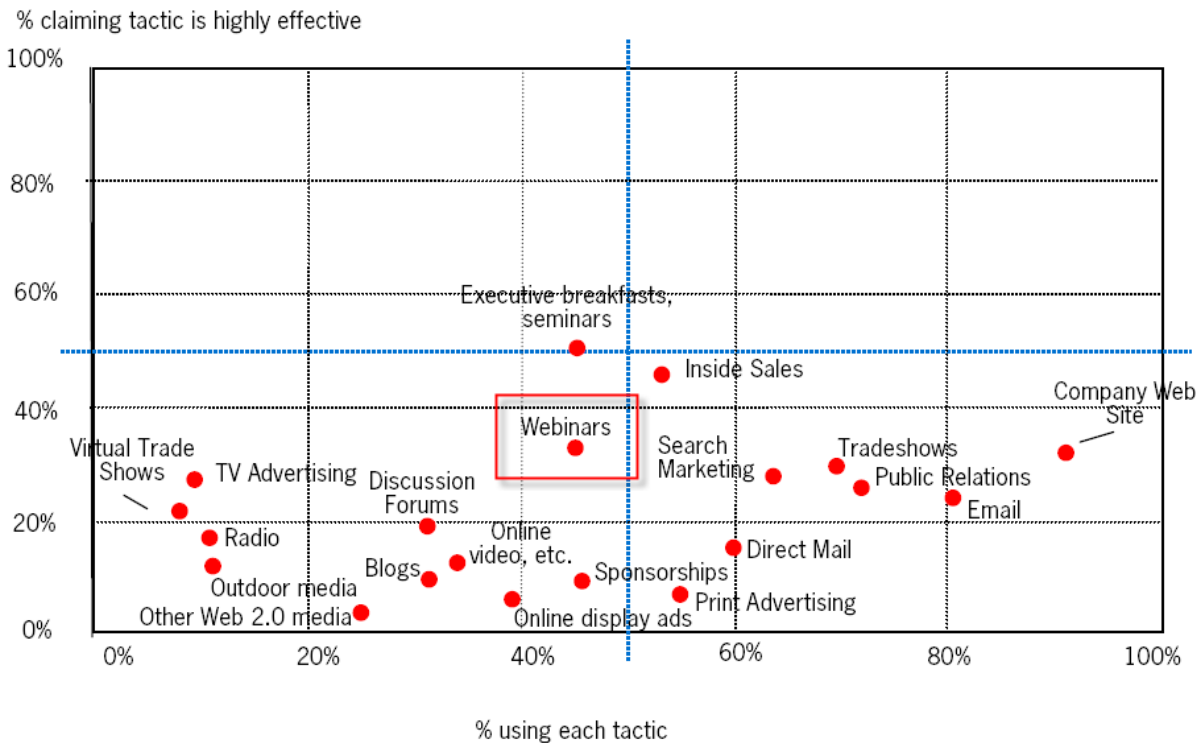


Figure 4: Marketing tactic effectiveness.

When asked to rate the tactics marketers expect to be important in 2009, company Web site, email/electronic newsletters and Webinars topped the list. Email/electronic newsletters and company Web site, however, are both tactics approaching levels of saturation in terms of usage, and as a result, attention is shifting towards interactive media, such as Webinars.

In 2009, marketers plan to increase their spending on the following tactics: company Web site; search marketing; online video/podcasts/rich media; and Webinars/Webcasts. Given the effectiveness of Webinars and low saturation in terms of usage for this tactic, marketers should expect the most significant ROI in this area.

TACTICS USED	MARKETING BUDGET CHANGES		
	Decrease	No Change	Increase
Company Web site	11%	42%	47%
Search marketing	15%	38%	47%
Online video, podcasts, or rich media	16%	43%	42%
Webinars, webcasts	14%	45%	41%
Email	11%	50%	39%
Discussion forums, social networks, or communities	11%	53%	36%
Blogs	7%	58%	34%
Executive breakfasts, seminars and events	25%	43%	32%
Other Web 2.0 media	14%	55%	31%
Inside sales/telemarketing	15%	54%	31%
Public relations	17%	53%	30%
Online display ads: banner, pop-ups	31%	42%	28%
Virtual trade shows	40%	35%	25%
Direct mail	34%	43%	23%
Radio	48%	32%	21%
Tradeshows, c.onferences (in person)	43%	40%	17%
Outdoor media	54%	31%	15%
Print advertising	55%	30%	15%
Sponsorships	40%	46%	14%
TV advertising	51%	36%	13%

Figure 5: Expected tactic importance in 2009.

## Conclusion

Given current economic conditions, marketers must simply make every dollar count by investing in proven effective tactics in 2009. As the MarketingProfs study illustrates, marketers consider Webinars to be a very effective tactic for lead generation — in fact, marketing professionals place Webinars in the top 3 tactics for effectiveness. Yet, budget allocation toward and actual use of Webinars are disproportionately low.

Here's the bottom line: Effective marketing tactics must be aligned with marketing budgets and actual use. With fewer dollars to spend and greater expectations from management in proving ROI, marketers must be strategic by increasing spending for effective tactics such as Webinars.

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