



Marketing Survey

The State of

Economic Development Marketing

Presented by **Sequence** - The Marketing
Agency for Economic Development



We are proud to release the first-ever comprehensive report on the state of economic development marketing.

Economic development marketers have operated in the dark for too long, unsure of how their efforts compare to peers.

This report aims to change that.

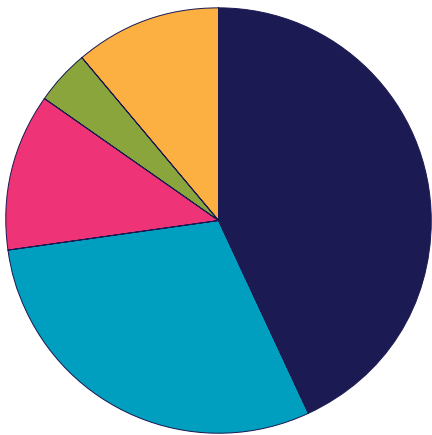
We surveyed professionals across the industry, and the results provide a clear picture of what's working, what's challenging, and where the future of economic development marketing is heading.

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Who Took Part in the Survey?

Understanding the makeup of survey respondents is crucial to contextualizing the insights presented in this report. Here's a snapshot of the professionals who participated:



- Economic Development Officers
- Economic Development Management
- Marketing and Communications
- Municipal Administration
- Other Roles

JOB ROLES

42.76%

Economic Development Officers:
The largest group of respondents, representing 42.76%.

29.66%

Economic Development Management:
Senior-level professionals made up 29.66% of respondents.

11.73%

Marketing and Communications:
8.97% identified as marketing professionals, with an additional 2.76% working in corporate communications.

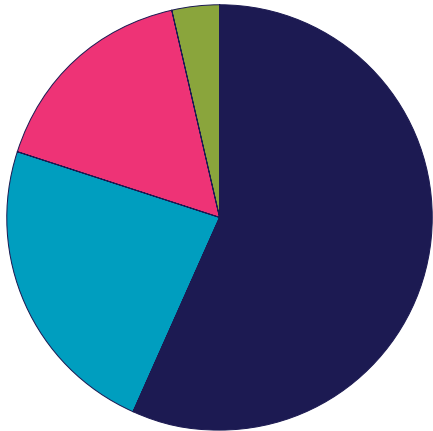
4.14%

Municipal Administration:
4.14% of participants hold roles in municipal administration.

~11%

Other Roles:
Around 11% filled positions outside these categories, including consultants and specialists in tourism.

Who Took Part in the Survey? (Cont'd)



- Towns and Cities
- Rural Areas
- Regions
- Provincial and Federal

TYPES OF MUNICIPALITIES

56.85%

Towns and Cities:
56.85% of respondents are responsible for marketing in town or city municipalities.

23.29%

Rural Areas:
23.29% focus their efforts on rural communities.

16.44%

Regions:
16.44% work in regional economic development.

3.42%

Provincial and Federal:
A minor group serves at the provincial (2.05%) and federal (1.37%) levels.

Key Insight:

Most respondents are on the front lines of local economic development, working to attract businesses, talent, and investment to towns, cities, and rural areas.

Marketing Plans: The Foundation for Success

A formal marketing plan is essential for guiding an organization's strategy. However, many organizations still lack this vital tool:



45.97% of respondents have a formal marketing plan in place.

54.03% do not have a formal marketing plan.

Best Practice:

76% of B2B companies have an established formal marketing plan, underscoring their commitment to strategic marketing initiatives. [SOURCE](#)



To ensure your marketing efforts truly support your business goals, consider creating a formal marketing plan. Without one, it's easy to lose focus and miss opportunities to align your activities with what matters most for your organization's success.

SEQUENCE SUGGESTS

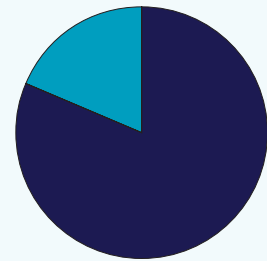
Marketing Management: In-House vs. Outsourced

When it comes to managing marketing activities, the majority of organizations rely on internal resources, while a smaller group outsources their efforts:



81.45% handle marketing activities in-house.

18.55% outsource marketing to consultants, agencies, or other departments.



Key Insight:

Most economic development organizations prefer to keep their marketing efforts internal, although a notable percentage turn to outside expertise for support.



Economic development organizations should consider partnering with marketing firms to enhance their visibility, attract investment, and build trust within their communities. Strategic marketing support can showcase unique opportunities and support services, positioning your team as thought leaders, instilling confidence among investors and stakeholders.

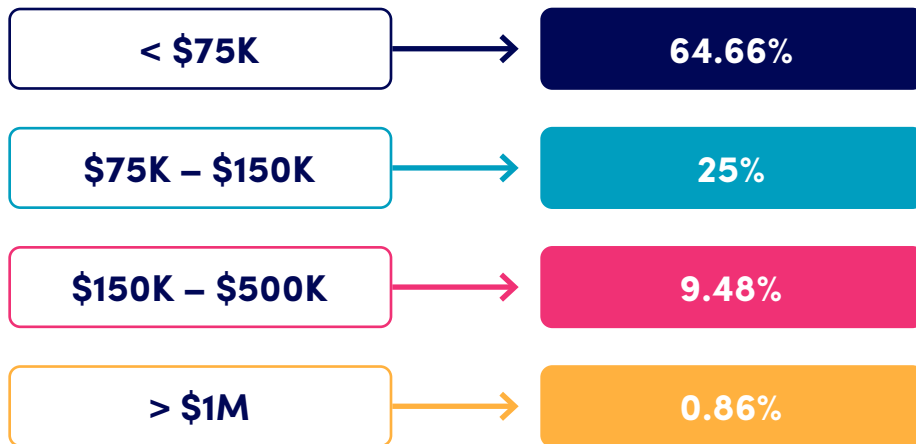
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Marketing Budgets: Funding the Future

Budget constraints are a reality for many economic development organizations. Here's what the survey revealed about marketing budgets:



Breakdown of marketing budgets:



What percentage of your revenue are you investing in marketing? According to Gartner marketing budgets averaged 9.1% of total company revenue in 2023, a slight decrease from 9.5% in 2022.

[SOURCE](#)

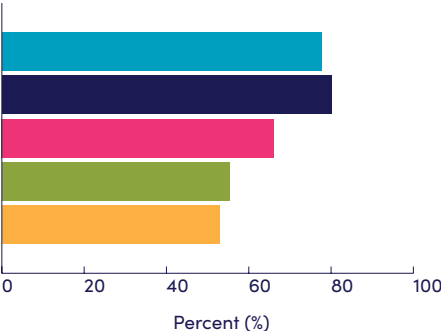
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Key Insight:

Most organizations operate on limited budgets, often under \$75K, which may impact their ability to execute large-scale marketing initiatives.

The Role of Content in Economic Development Marketing

Content is king in economic development marketing, and the survey shows that most professionals rely heavily on various types of content to tell their stories. The top formats are:



77.69%

of respondents used **Video**, making it a popular content format.

80.17%

of respondents offer deep dives into local industries with **Sector Profiles**.

66.12%

use **Infographics** to visually communicate data and insights.

55.37%

rely on **Maps** to showcase available land and opportunities.

52.89%

of marketers use **Case Studies / Success Stories** to illustrate the positive outcomes of investment.

Key Insight:

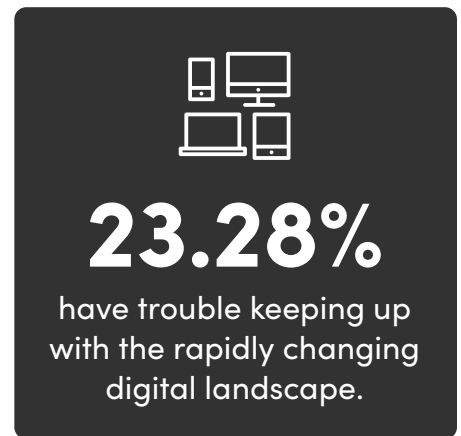
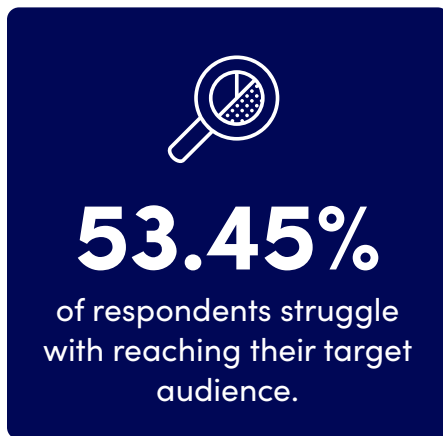
Marketers use various content formats to communicate opportunities in their regions, with video leading the charge.

BEST PRACTICES IN ACTION:

[Choose Cranbrook Brochure](#)

Biggest Marketing Challenges

The survey highlights the significant challenges economic development marketers face. Here are the most common difficulties:



Key Insight:

Organizations face various challenges, from audience targeting and content creation to linking marketing efforts to measurable business outcomes.

The Growing Importance of Video

Video has emerged as a cornerstone of economic development marketing. According to our survey, 79.66% of respondents plan to integrate video into their marketing strategies.

The focus areas for video include:



Living/Working in Your Community:

78.72% use video to showcase the lifestyle in their regions.



Business Success Stories:

59.57% highlight how businesses have thrived in their area.



Investment:

55.32% focus on why businesses should invest in their communities.

Challenges in Video Marketing:



Inadequate budget:

62.16% struggle to fund video projects.



Complexity:

38.98% find the process of creating high-quality videos (from filming to editing) to be challenging.



Lack of time:

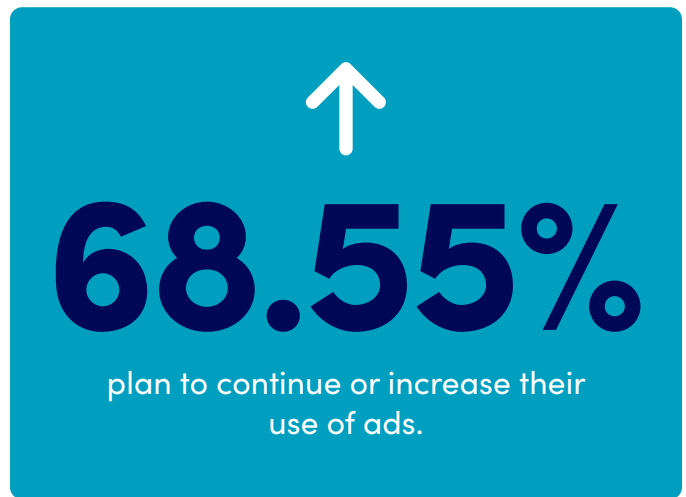
37.29% of marketers don't have enough time for video production.

Key Insight:

Video is an essential tool for economic development marketing, but challenges like budget and production complexity continue to limit its full potential.

Advertising: A Mixed Approach

When it comes to advertising, the survey shows a growing reliance on both digital and traditional platforms:



The most popular platforms include:



Social Media:

79.22% use social platforms for paid ads.



Print:

Surprisingly, 79.22% still invest in print advertising.



Digital/Web Advertising:

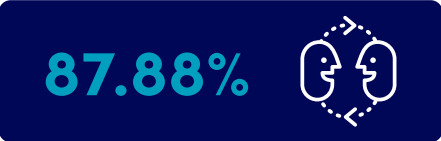
77.92% rely on web-based ads.

Key Insight:

Economic development marketers use a balanced mix of digital and traditional advertising methods, but social media continues to dominate.

Managing Marketing Operations

Marketing in the economic development sector requires operational efficiency, and marketers are turning to a variety of tools to manage their workflows:



Social Media Management:
87.88% use tools to streamline their social media efforts.



Email Marketing:
84.85% of marketers rely on email marketing tools to engage with their audiences.

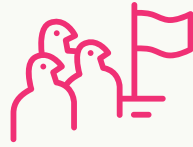


Analytics & Reporting:
81.82% track their performance with analytics tools.



Lead Nurturing:
Only 36.36% of respondents use lead nurturing tools, indicating an opportunity for growth in this area.

Key Insight:	Marketing teams rely heavily on technology to manage their operations but lead nurturing tools are underutilized, which is a gap in the current approach.
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The Future of Economic Development Marketing

The insights gathered in this report reveal that economic development marketing is evolving quickly.

Marketers are adopting new tools and tactics while grappling with challenges that require creative solutions. As the landscape changes, agencies like Sequence are here to help navigate these shifts, providing the expertise to overcome barriers and capitalize on opportunities.

This report captures the realities of economic development marketing today, from the rising importance of video to the challenges of measuring ROI.

We hope these insights inspire action and innovation as you develop your own strategies.

Thank you for reading,

Team Sequence

Closing Thoughts

We believe that sharing knowledge and best practices is key to growing stronger together. This report is just the beginning of a conversation about how economic development marketing can continue to evolve and drive success in communities nationwide.

[Let's Talk](#)

Appendix:

Methodology

To gather the insights presented in this report, we conducted a comprehensive online survey to explore the current state of economic development marketing. We aimed to capture data from professionals across the field, giving us a broad understanding of challenges and best practices.

Survey Distribution

We promoted participation in the survey through multiple channels:

Email Invitations: We sent targeted invitations to a curated list of economic development professionals.

Social Media: We used social media platforms to encourage broader participation, sharing the survey link across various industry groups and networks.

Word of Mouth: We leveraged word of mouth through professional networks and industry connections to ensure that professionals from diverse regions and sectors took part.

Data Collection

The survey was open for several months, allowing ample time for participants to provide thoughtful responses. During this

period, we gathered responses from various economic development professionals, from officers and managers to marketing specialists and municipal administrators.

Data Compilation and Analysis

After the survey closed, we compiled and analyzed the data to identify key trends, insights, and patterns. Our analysis focused on the most pressing issues and opportunities facing economic development marketers, as reflected in the survey responses. The insights shared in this report reflect the collective experiences of professionals in the field and the diversity of challenges they face.

By collecting and examining data from multiple perspectives, we've created this comprehensive report, offering an accurate snapshot of the current state of economic development marketing.

To learn more about the details of our research, please contact chris@cqns.ca