



REPORT

State of Content 2022

New survey data reveals
top challenges for marketers
(plus tips to overcome them)

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Overview

Bringing informative and relevant content to audiences is a top priority for marketers. Yet, lifecycles for go-to-market assets tend to lag behind the demands of consumers.

In December 2021, Welcome commissioned a Sirkin Research survey to explore the maturity of content operations in marketing teams as they stepped into a new year. The survey – aptly called ‘State of Content 2022’ – was designed to understand the primary challenges modern marketers face in the context of planning, producing and distributing content, and analyzing its performance.

The findings not only confirm the looks of the evolving marketing landscape that we have witnessed with hundreds of our customers but also throw some fresh and rather keen insights into the mix.



Who was surveyed?

Roles:

CMO/Head of Marketing, Content Marketing,
Content Operations, Brand Marketing,
Digital Marketing, Product Marketing,
Creative Services, Web Ops, Communications

Titles:

Director & above

Industries:

Tech, BFSI, Healthcare, Pharma, Media,
Entertainment, Education, eCommerce
Size: Enterprise & Mid-Market

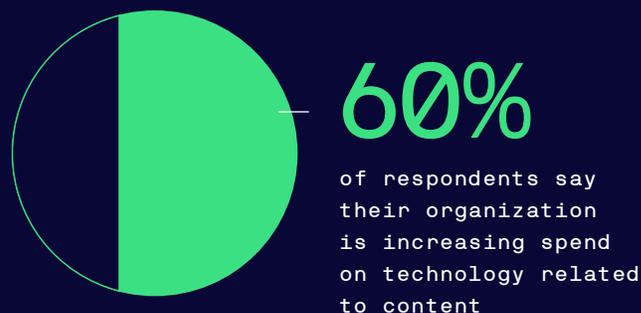
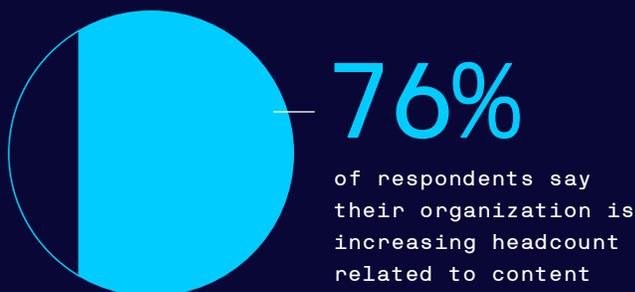
Respondents:

n = 140+

Read on for key insights from the
State of Content 2022 report.



Content investment in 2022



01

Investment in content is on the rise

Organizations are looking to leverage technology to fuel innovation and business transformation in the new year – with budgets to match.

Around **23%** of respondents intend to spend between **\$100K- \$500K** on initiatives and activations around content in 2022, with a select **16%** ready to shell out up to **\$5M** for the same! This does not include hiring new employees.

Over **20 people** are involved in marketing-specific content operations (ideation, planning, creation, publication, distribution, analysis) in **43%** of our respondents' teams or organizations.

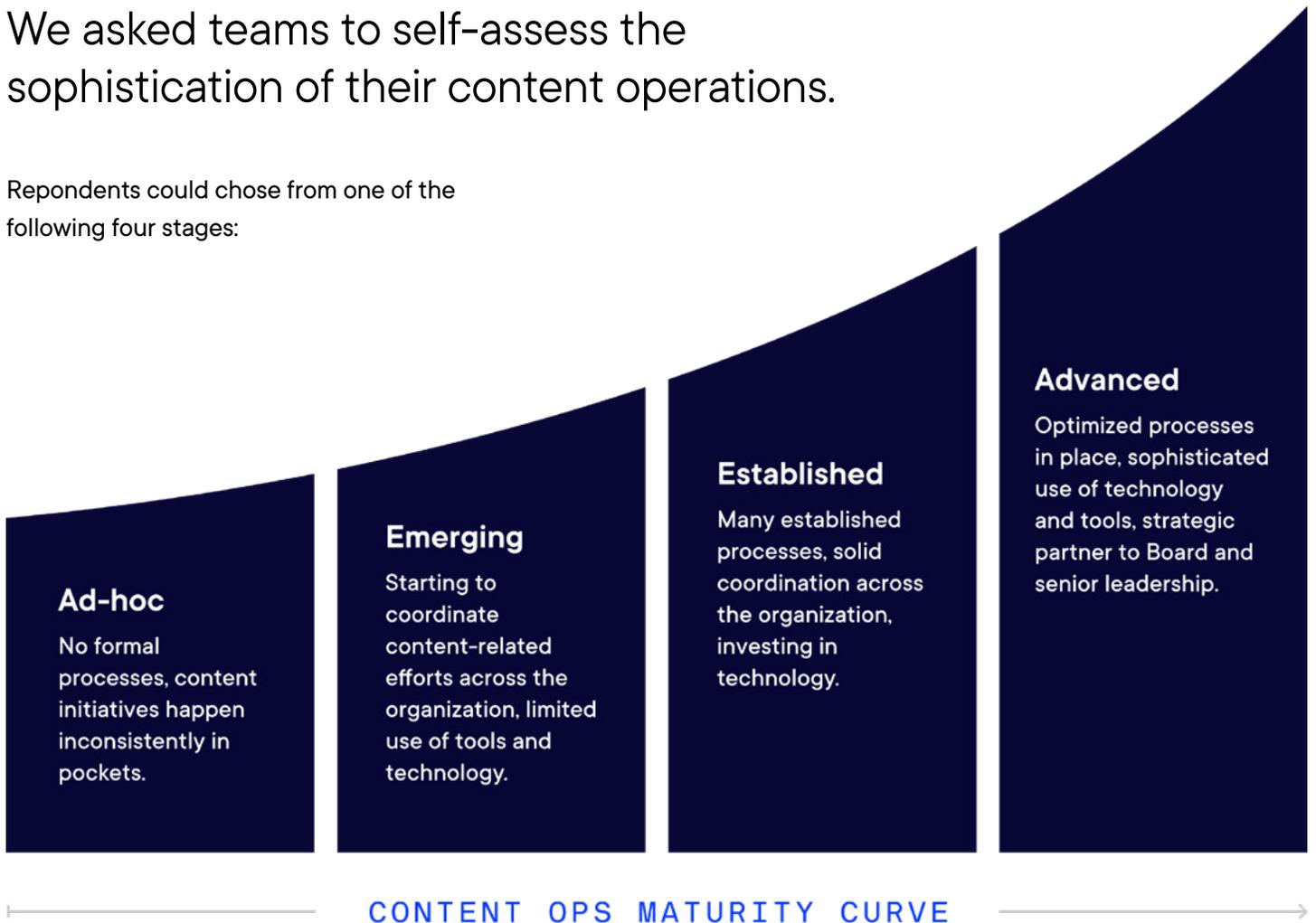
It doesn't come as a surprise then that **76%** of our respondents say their organization is increasing headcount related to content in 2022, while **60%** of respondents say their organization is increasing spending on technology related to content.

02

Content Maturity is a best-kept secret

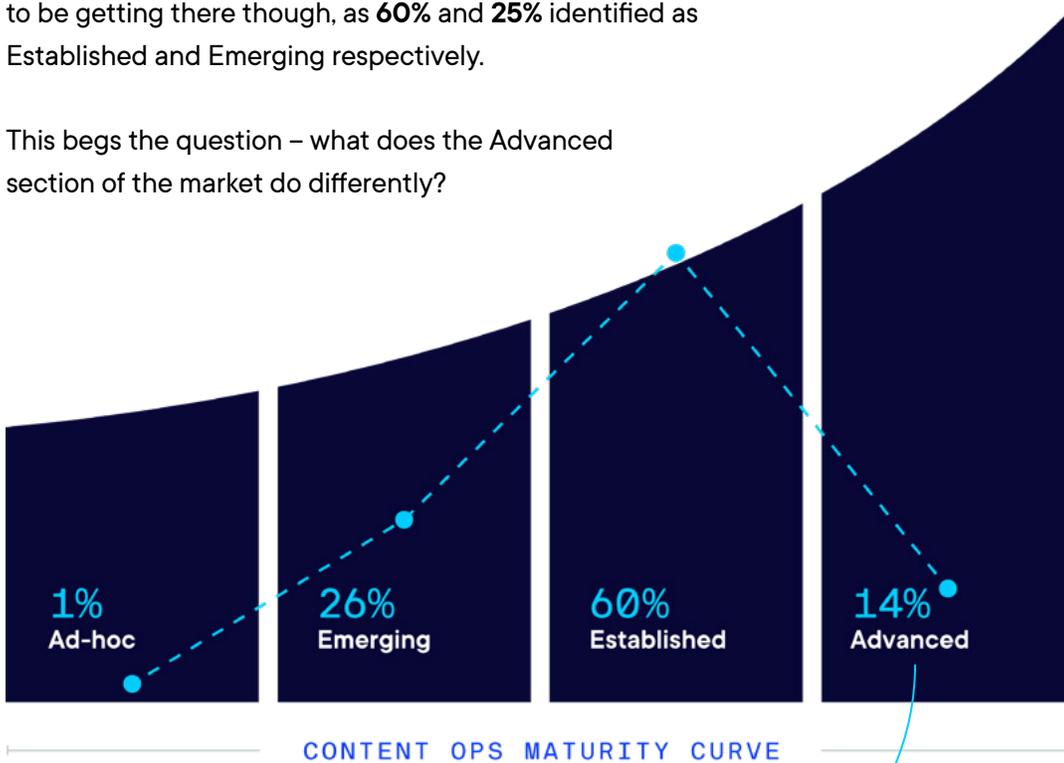
We asked teams to self-assess the sophistication of their content operations.

Respondents could choose from one of the following four stages:



While content is a growing priority, it came as a surprise that only **14%** self-identify as Advanced. The world seems to be getting there though, as **60%** and **25%** identified as Established and Emerging respectively.

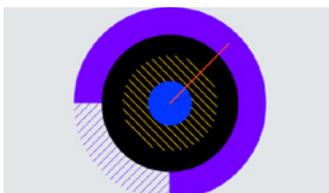
This begs the question – what does the Advanced section of the market do differently?



What sets Advanced content teams apart from the pack?

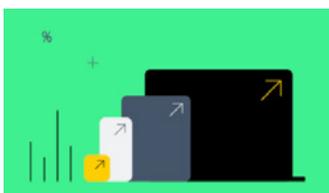
To be Advanced means you are spending less time managing technology and 'work about work' and more time driving robust go-to-market experiences augmented by data. How exactly do you facilitate the transition to this apex stage of the content maturity curve?

Here are three practices that distinguished Advanced teams as the most impactful:



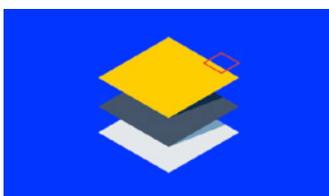
Content Performance or Recommendation Analytics

While a relatively moderate **47%** of our Advanced respondents own an analytics tool, the results also show that having such a tool more than doubles (**2.4 times**) the likelihood of being Advanced. This makes perfect sense because having visibility into how your content is performing and using those insights to continually improve content is a major part of being a well-oiled marketing machine.



Cross-Channel Experience

82% of Advanced teams focus on offering a consistent experience across channels to their users. Teams that make the effort and time to iron out the details of providing a refined and seamless experience have the building blocks in place to sustain this stage of maturity. This could also be seen as a sign that you are already Advanced as opposed to something that you need to do to get there. Either way, prioritizing user experience makes you **2.6 times** more likely to be Advanced.



Documenting Workflows and Processes

Nothing fits the idea of a sophisticated content engine better than standardized workflows. It is a simple and elegant solution that organizations can commit to doing today as it is a sure-shot way of making your efforts repeatable and scalable. The numbers add up too. **71%** of Advanced prioritize documenting their workflows and processes and this practice makes you **2.2 times** more likely to qualify as Advanced.

03

What's ailing modern marketers

The problems that marketers face on a regular give more context to the numbers we see on the content maturity curve. In the State of Content 2022 survey, we asked them about specific pain points in the content lifecycle across a few different categories. Ranked in order of difficulty, here are the stages that steal sleep from modern marketers:

1. Performance Measurement

The survey found that the ability to measure performance has the highest impact on a team's success, yet it's the most challenging and underdeveloped part of content operations. In this category, reporting and tracking remained the parts that around **43%** of marketers struggle with the most, yet about the same percentage said SEO is something they feel relatively comfortable with.

Most challenging:

- Holistic reporting (**44%**)
- Tracking across channels (**43%**)
- Identifying and achieving KPIs (**39%**)

Least challenging:

- Optimizing for Search (**43%**)

Additionally (and unsurprisingly at this point!), only **9%** rated their ability to demonstrate the impact of content as 'excellent', while **40%** deemed it 'very good'.

44%

of marketers still have significant difficulty with holistic reporting on the impact of their content.

9%

Only 9% of marketers rate their ability to demonstrate the impact of content as "Excellent".

2. Content Production

Producing content is the second hardest of all undertakings and we can corroborate – having heard the same from many well-intentioned content marketers. Meeting the demands for a high volume of content was the hardest, while communication and accessing subject matter experts was relatively easier.

Most challenging:

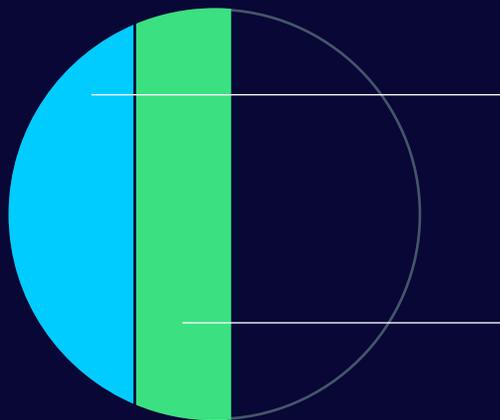
- Fulfilling High Volume of Content (**40%**)

Least challenging:

- Communication (**49%**)
- Accessing SMEs (**47%**)

This category also houses the two most time-intensive and seemingly laborious tasks. Content creation accounted for **35%** of a marketer's work week and collaboration came in at second, eating **20%** of their time.

Time spent on marketing activities



35%

of a marketer's work week
is spent creating content

20%

of a marketer's work week
is spent collaborating
with others

3. Asset Management

How to store, manage and reuse content and creative has got marketers in a pickle. Managing assets is indeed the third hardest thing for marketers to do. Governing assets, which is ensuring they are the most updated and compliant at any given time, is the bit that leaves marketers the most perplexed while sharing them with others is relatively less hard, likely because of many tools that enable teams to do so.

Most challenging:

- Governance (37%)

Least challenging:

- Sharing Assets (55%)



4. Content Planning

To say that planning content to serve the audience's needs is important sounds obvious, yet there are parts that marketers are struggling to figure out. **44%** of marketers agree that while ideating and brainstorming about what to put out next is the least challenging, **32%** of them rank the actual creation of it as the single most challenging when serving a broad audience.

Most challenging:

- Creating Content with Broad Appeal (32%)

Least challenging:

- Ideating Content (44%)

Additionally, research is the top priority among all activities in a content lifecycle and an activity that **76%** of Advanced teams partake in.

04

Our take and looking forward

It is evident from the findings of this survey that global marketing teams often have valuable ideas and messages that get buried under convoluted planning and execution. Marketing needs to be more dynamic, efficient and agile than ever before but to optimize campaigns, marketers will need to collaborate fast, use data, and continuously optimize for outcomes — by bringing content, workflow, insights and experimentation together to achieve their goals.

This year, investments in content performance analytics, cross-channel experiences and standardized workflows are the three key areas that are essential for modern marketers to succeed. This lines up with where leading companies are headed – leaping from being data-driven to being scientific about creating personalized digital experiences. Delivering the right content at the right stage for the customer is going to be a building block of this experience.

Driving positive business outcomes is more important than ever. CMOs, marketing leaders, and their stakeholders are growth-oriented. Establishing KPIs should be the first step but it is being able to link them to ROI that makes the definitive difference. Consequently, solutions that can demonstrate how they help drive growth will separate themselves from the pack and surface to the top of the mar-tech priority list.

The answer is a marketing orchestration platform such as Welcome that helps companies strategically consolidate and integrate their content and marketing operations. It accelerates speed-to-market at scale while maintaining across-the-board visibility & brand governance.



Request a demo to explore how Welcome can help you unlock your team's potential.

At Optimizely and Welcome, we're on a mission to help people unlock their digital potential with solutions that work in perfect harmony.

Welcome transforms how marketers run marketing. It is the leading marketing orchestration platform used by the world's most ambitious brands to strategically align teams, take the friction out of execution, and demonstrate meaningful results. Only Welcome offers a platform purpose-built for the complexities of modern marketing that can scale to support the largest teams in the world. It is a new layer of the marketing technology stack where marketers can work better together, connect other martech tools, and measure performance. Learn more at [WelcomeSoftware.com](https://www.welcome-software.com)

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