



CASE STUDY

The Survey of Marketers & Content Marketing Strategy

Summary

S2 Research developed a content marketing strategy focused on conducting and publishing original, thought-provoking market research.

Develop survey

Create tech stack



DOWNLOAD THE REPORT

Produced market research insights report designed to educate and inform the marketing audience.

Pitch media outlets

Send through digital

Content marketing resulted in new lead opportunities and several media pickups in prominent marketing outlets.

START HERE




The work conducted by S2 Research was honored with a Pinnacle Award from the Public Relations Society of America's Las Vegas Valley Chapter.



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Background

Founded in 2019 in Henderson, Nev., S2 Research is the brand name for market research and strategy consultant Matt Seltzer.

Seltzer works as market research partner for small to mid-sized advertising, public relations, digital and other marketing firms that do not have access to an in-house research team.



Since its beginning, lead generation, by means of reaching and building relationships with a national audience of marketing decision makers, has been a priority for S2 Research. However, as the brand has grown, it's become aware of a challenge: the majority of agencies that do not currently employ an in-house research team also often struggle to see the value of the market research service line at all. As a result, lead generation has proven challenging.



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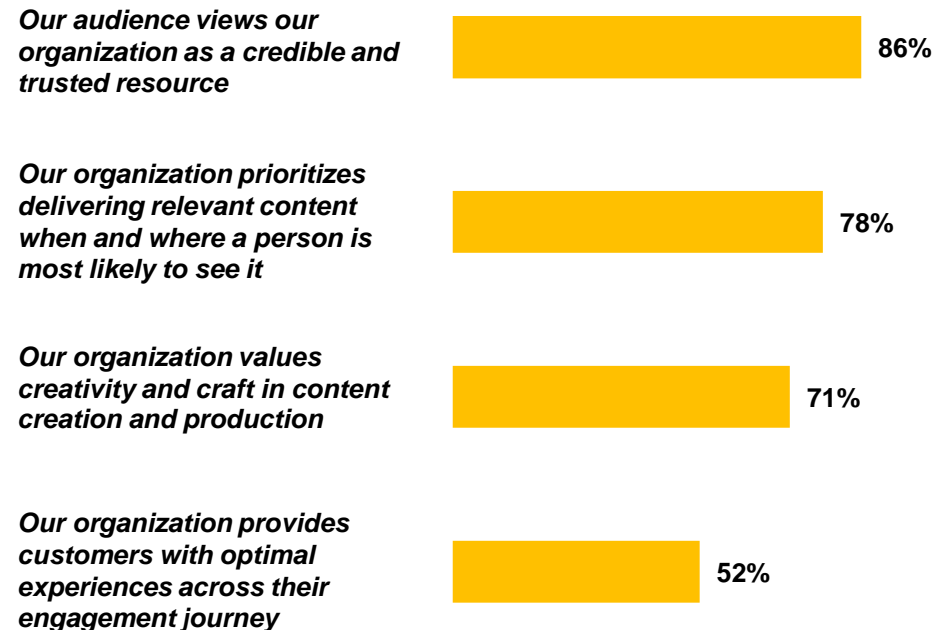
Research

S2 Research set out to solve its lead generation hurdle by analyzing a variety of secondary research sources throughout the marketing ecosphere, focusing on finding tactics that could reach a wider, national audience. Research resources used in this process included information from sources like the American Marketing Association, Hubspot and Content Marketing Institute.

The research findings identified the rising trend of content marketing as means of effective B2B lead generation. Under this strategy, original long-form thought-leadership content, such as white paper articles and primary research studies, is created and published under the brand name. The content is marketed through public relations and digital marketing tactics, and the final product is kept behind a 'gate' on the publisher's website, requiring readers to submit contact information for access. Thus, the process increases both brand affinity while directly, quantifiably impacting lead generation as well.

Based on this information, a thought-leadership-focused content marketing strategy was deemed the optimum plan for S2 Research to achieve new business leads.

B2B Marketing Opinions About Content Marketing in Their Organization*



*Source: *B2B Content Marketing 2020 – Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends* ([Click for Link](#))



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Planning

Based on the strategy identified in the research phase, S2 Research set out to publish a thought-leadership-focused market research survey report of its own primary audience, the nationwide marketing industry (including both agency and in-house marketers).

Based on this direction, the following parameters were set:

Project Goal: Increase total database of leads by at least 50%.

Objectives:

- Increase month-over-month website traffic by at least 50%.
- Secure at least two articles in targeted media outlets that include a hyperlink to the white paper for download.
- Achieve at least a 25% open rate in email marketing to existing contacts.

Timeline: Planning for the project began on Mar. 1, 2020. One week was set aside to develop the necessary implementation assets, one month was intended for data collection, and one week was set aside for development of the final report. The white paper was targeted for publication in the second half of April, with marketing intended for four weeks following publication. The final project, including evaluation, would be completed on May 31, 2020



Planning

Based on the timeline, a hybrid quantitative/qualitative market research survey was first developed in the SurveyMonkey platform. The questions addressed a variety of marketing challenges, such as the roles, effectiveness and profitability of various marketing tactics. The study also quantified the perceived value of research within the target audience, in order to identify avenues of discussion for future marketing.



Next, data collection needed to be addressed. This process generally accounts for the majority of a market research budget and always exceeds the \$400 project budget. To counter this, S2 Research explored alternative data collection means, eventually settling on Dux Soup, an email marketing platform designed to work with B2B social networking platform LinkedIn. Utilizing LinkedIn's Sales Navigator tool in conjunction, S2 Research could solicit survey responses from the target audience for a total cost of less than \$200, leaving a substantial portion of the budget aside for paid marketing tactics.

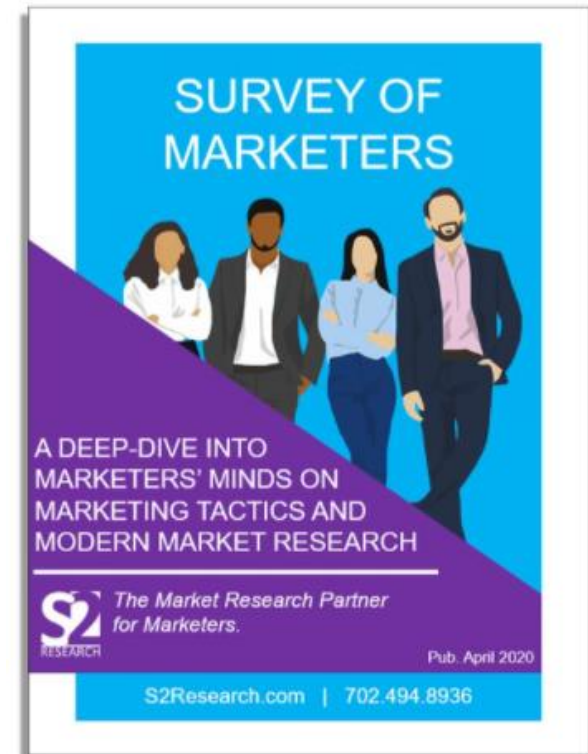
Finally, a data analysis tool was developed in the Tableau data visualization software, in order to analyze the survey responses quickly at the completion of the collection process.

Implementation

The survey went live on LinkedIn on Mar. 9, and within schedule, collection was completed one month later on Apr. 10. After reviewing the responses for completion and accuracy, it was determined that a total of 278 usable surveys were collected spanning a nationwide U.S. marketing audience, yielding an accuracy of $\pm 6\%$ (meaning if the survey were to be performed again, the responses would be within 6% age points – a relatively strong level of accuracy).

The responses were analyzed using the Tableau data visualization tool, and the findings were published in a 24-page market research white-paper report format titled “S2 Research Survey of Marketers.” The report included written analysis, infographics, charts, and top-level findings such as the value marketers placed on market research compared against copywriting, digital marketing and public relations.

The report was published on Apr. 20, with a downloadable PDF available on the S2 Research website behind a lead-generation download form. A press release announcing the top-level findings was written and shared with data and marketing reporters, and a targeted social media marketing campaign, using organic postings on LinkedIn and a combination of organic and paid (using the remainder of the project budget) on Facebook and Instagram was also implemented through mid-May. The report was also distributed through MailChimp to S2 Research’s database of leads and current clients in order to reconnect and also increase distribution.



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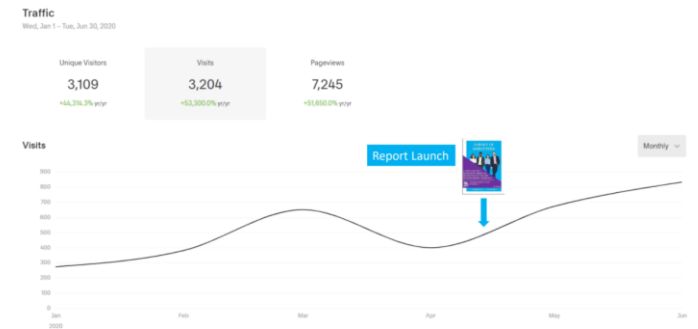
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Evaluation

In the weeks following the Survey of Marketers report's publication, the total number of leads in the S2 Research database increased by more than 75%, surpassing the original 50% goal and crowning April 2020 as the month with the highest month-over-month growth in new leads in the company's history thus far.

Based on the project's objectives, the following achievements were met:

- S2 Research saw an increase in website traffic of more than 100%, doubling the original objective.
- Marketing news website Marketing Charts publishing an article on the research report's findings, and Nevada Business Magazine published the press release to help tap into S2 Research's local market audience, achieving the objective of two media pickups with backlinks.
- The email marketing campaign was opened by nearly 1 in 2 contacts, outperforming industry-standard email marketing open rates, and a follow-up email to non-openers captured an additional 16%. A third email sharing the Marketing Charts article was also distributed in May to the now larger audience database, and successfully achieved a 1 in 2 open rate as well.



Results and Next Steps

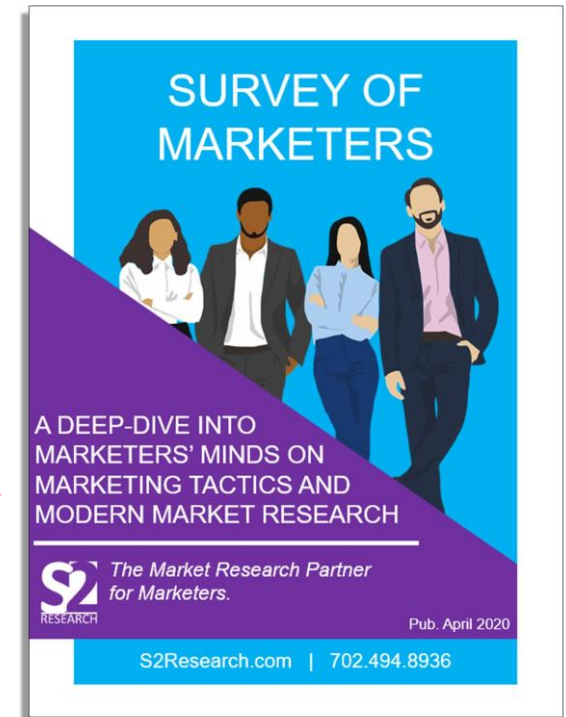
Overall, the project was a huge success, achieving or exceeding the goal and all objectives. The strategy was so successful that Seltzer has continued to pursue and publish three more original market research reports since, each focused on different aspects of the marketing industry. He's also experimented with new data collection methods beyond Dux Soup in an effort to maximize response rate, as well as new marketing methods to increase interest in S2 Research's thought leadership pieces.

In November 2020, the work conducted on the Survey of Marketers by Seltzer and S2 Research was recognized with a Pinnacle Award by the Public Relations Society of America's Las Vegas Valley Chapter.



Moving forward, S2 Research plans to continue to publish original market research white papers and reports as a means of marketing the brand, and is also pivoting to offer similar content marketing pieces as a new service offering for the brand's clients.

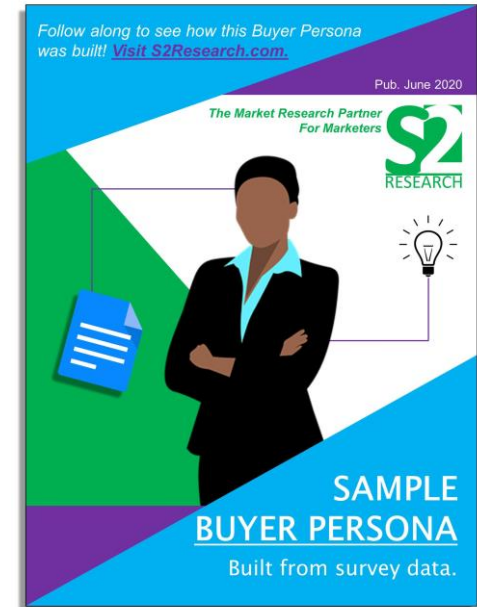
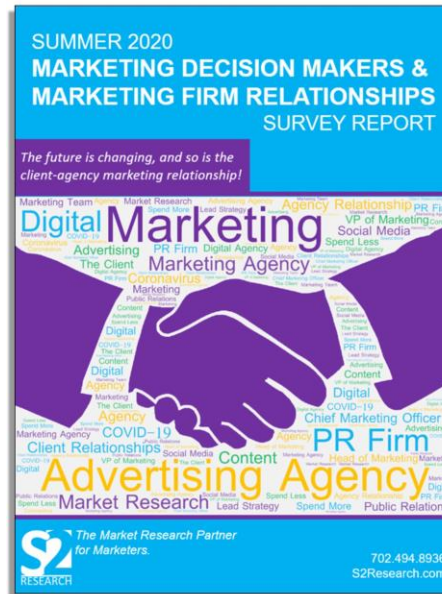
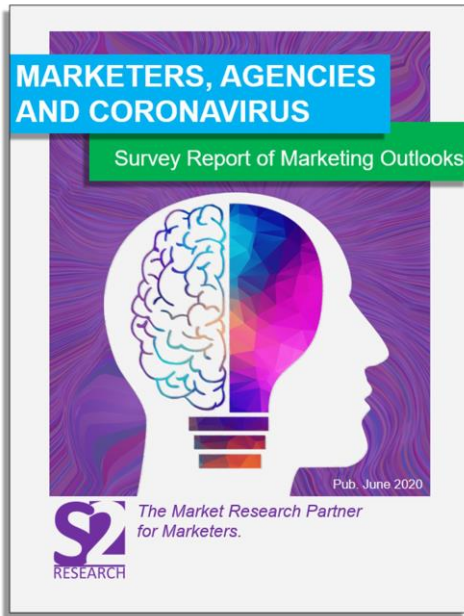
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