

# State of Attribution

## Annual Marketer Survey

May 2023



# Foreword

Over the past seven years, our annual study has consistently sought to shed light on the pivotal area of measurement and attribution, adjusting our lens to capture the dynamic shifts in the marketing landscape, marked by the proliferation of new media, the ever-complex economic environment and more recently by the advent of AI.

In our 2023 study, we uncover several noteworthy trends that deserve special attention. A continuation of the shift away from reach-based planning, practiced by only 12% of marketers today, underscored the mounting complexity of attribution needs and the escalating demand for advanced measurement tools. This shift is not stifled by the testing environment of 2023 but, intriguingly, seems to be fueled by it.

However, there's an urgent need to bridge a discernible trust gap. A significant 64% of companies grapple with acceptance issues outside the marketing sphere, making it clear that fostering cross-departmental trust and promoting wider acceptance of marketing measurement should be a priority.

Furthermore, we note areas that could benefit from improvement, including actionability, incrementality, and the scale of spend they can measure. The most widespread dissatisfaction lies in the realm of integration and reconciliation of results, affecting 65% of marketers. Our study also uncovers incrementality as a significant blind spot, with marketers tending to overestimate the confidence from non-incremental tools like rules-based attribution.

We also turn our gaze towards the continuing adoption and evolution of Multi-Touch Attribution (MTA). Although its adoption has been steady but slow, with 50% of marketers relying on it in 2023, we observe a promising rise in MTA maturity. This figure has seen a notable jump from 17% to 27% in two years, suggesting a growing understanding and utilization of MTA methodologies across the industry.

This maturation of MTA is reflected in an increased return on investment (ROI), growing from 7% to 11% over two years and signals a positive trend where businesses are extracting more substantial value from their MTA investments.

Moreover, as MTA cements its position, there's a greater alignment between expectation and reality regarding its role and contribution. The industry-wide consensus, among MTA users and non-users alike, is that MTA is responsible for analyzing approximately 40% of media, indicating a harmonized understanding of MTA's role.

In conclusion, while the marketing ecosystem continues to evolve, the onus lies on us to remain proactive. This calls for ongoing investments in marketing measurement and attribution, addressing dissatisfaction areas, and fostering trust across all organizational levels. Although the journey has its challenges, the potential for growth and the promise of a future where marketing is more measured, attributable, and effective make it all worthwhile. These findings light our way forward, and together, we'll shape the future of marketing.

# III | MMA's Annual State of Attribution Study

## TIMING



### Fieldwork began

Q4, December 13, 2022



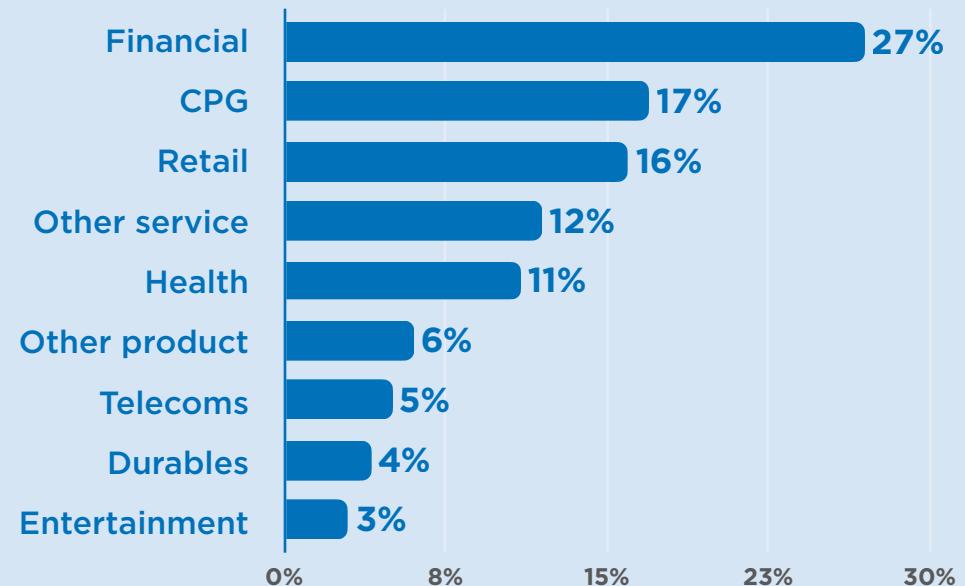
### Fieldwork completed

Q2, April 26, 2023

## SAMPLE

**All involved in some capacity with the various methods of assessing productive for marketing initiatives:**

1. MMA Global Marketing Members, Board Members, and MATT Members
2. 3rd party verified sample of marketers at companies with \$1 Billion+ companies

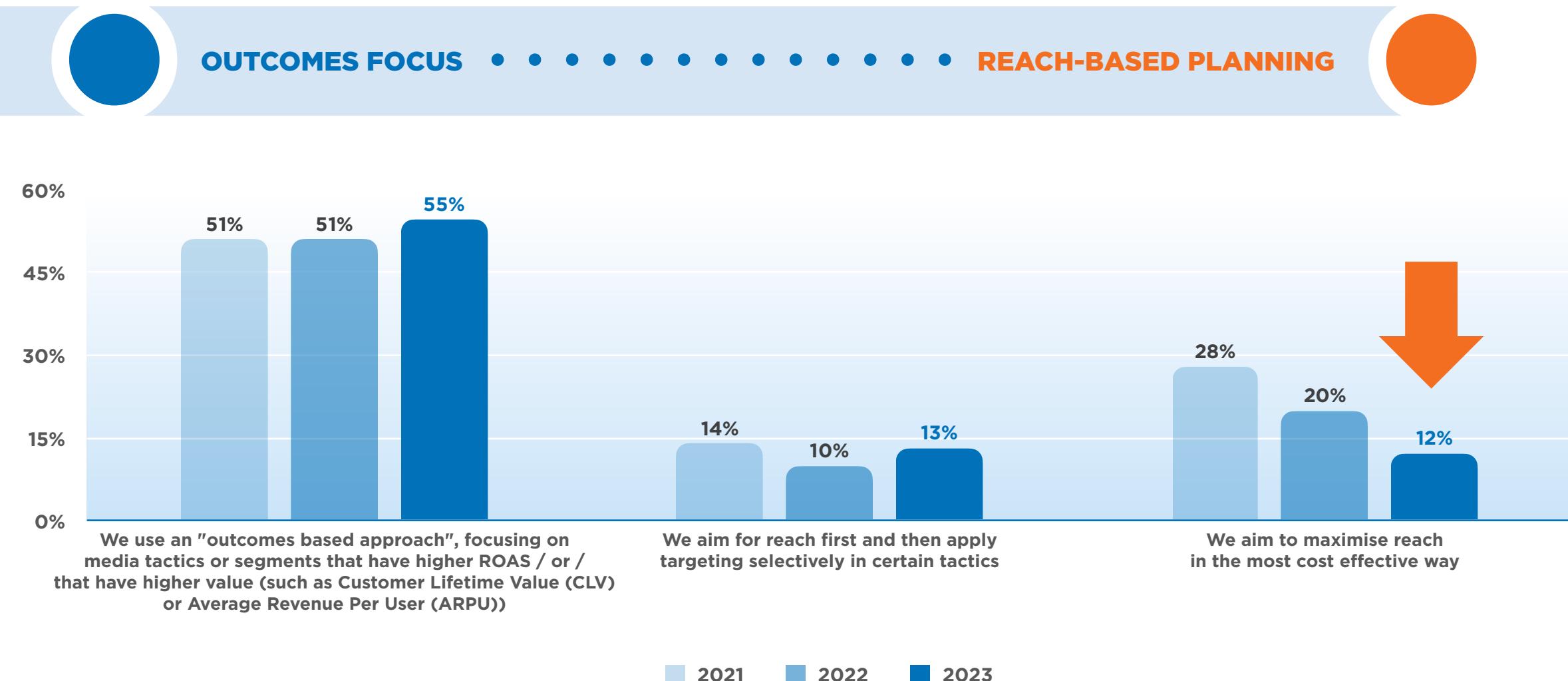




1

**What is the big picture  
for Measurement and  
Attribution in 2023?**

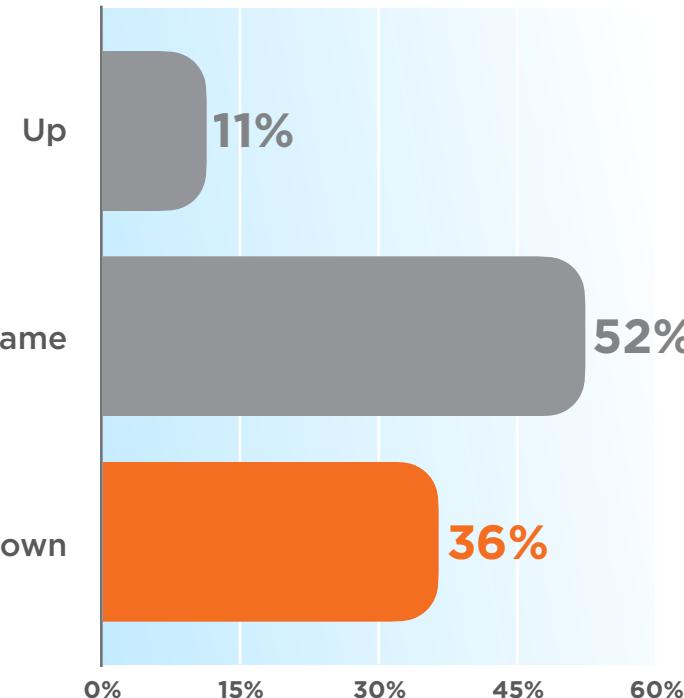
# As marketers shift away from reach-based-planning, their attribution needs become more demanding.



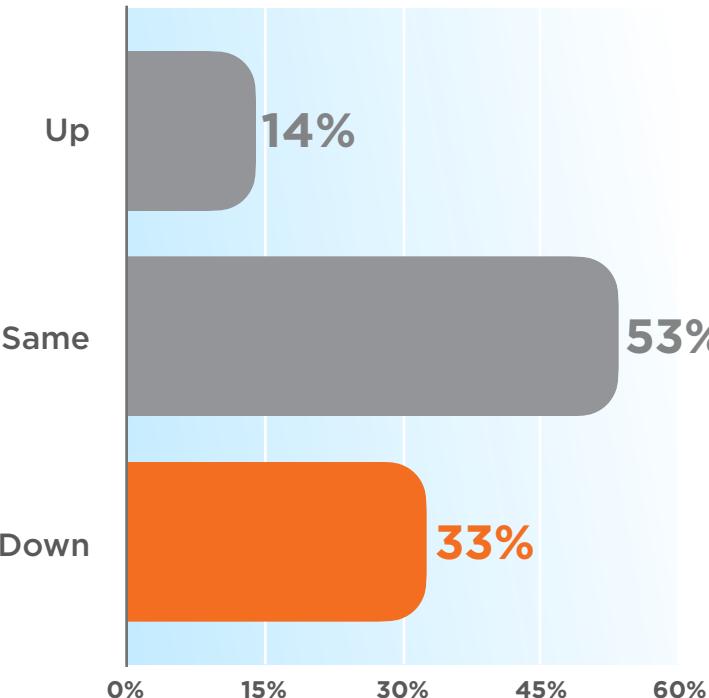
# As a result, Marketers are planning to invest more in measurement, despite (or because of) the difficult environment.

2023 expectations about...

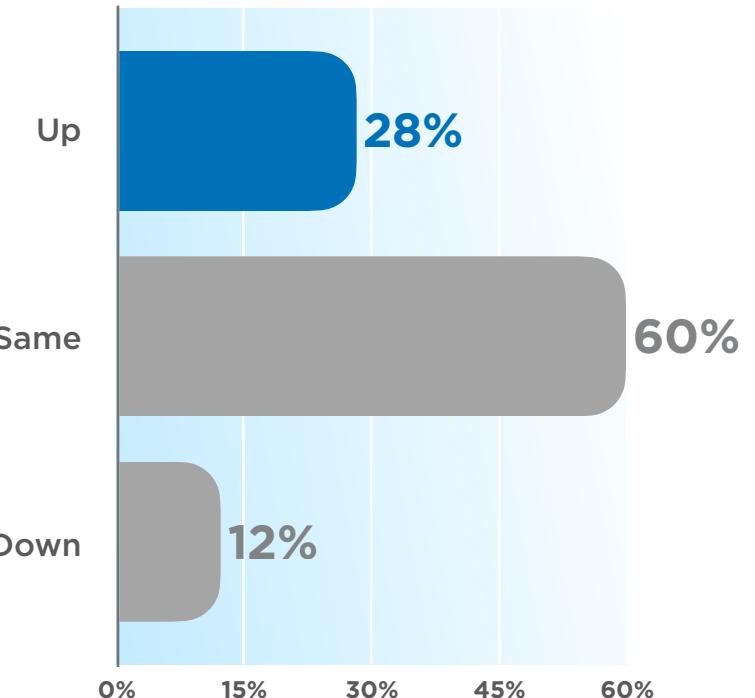
## Economy



## Media Investment



## Investment in Measurement



Q. Do you expect the economy for 2023 to...

Q. Do you expect your media budget for 2023 to...

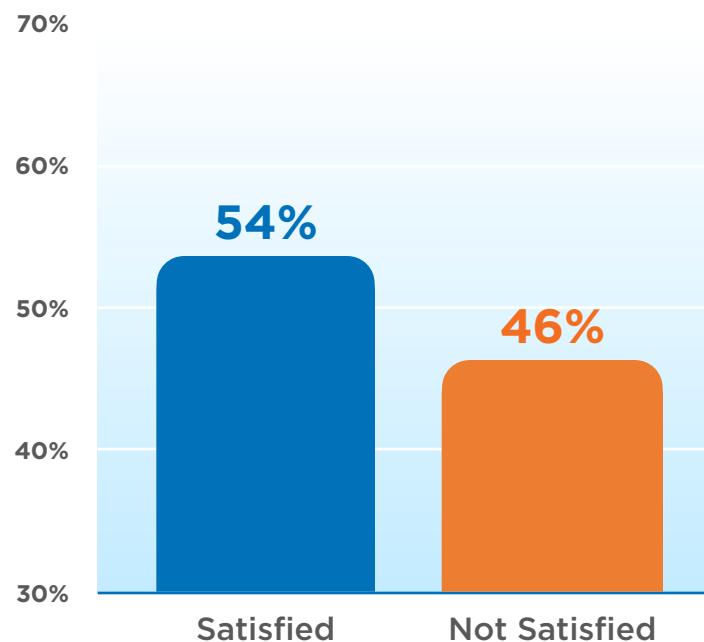
Q. Do you expect your investment in measurement and attribution for 2023 to...

(2023 Sample size: N=107)

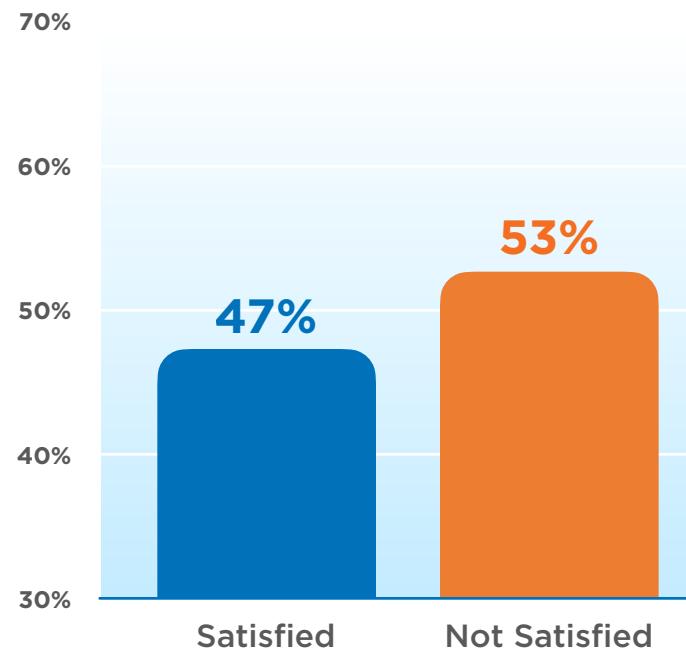
# III Yet, marketers need to continue investing in measurement and attribution, and build trust outside marketing.

## Marketer Satisfaction from Measurement and Attribution: Satisfied = Top 2 Box

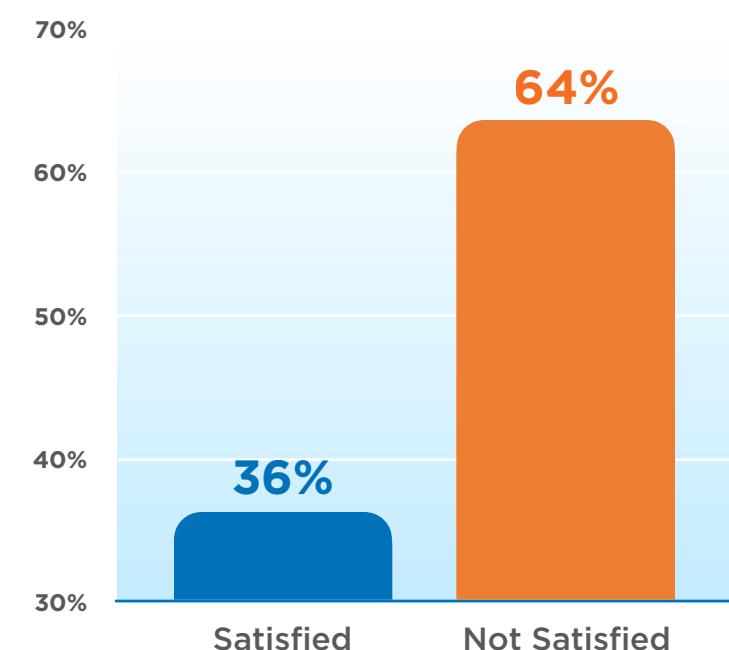
### Overall Value to Organization



### Acceptance in Marketing



### Acceptance Outside Marketing



# There are still many areas for improvement: (2023) Dissatisfaction with measurement tools: Bottom 3 Box

## Actionability:

Applying findings to optimize spend allocation

## Incrementality:

Ability to quantify the true causal effect of a marketing activity

## Scale:

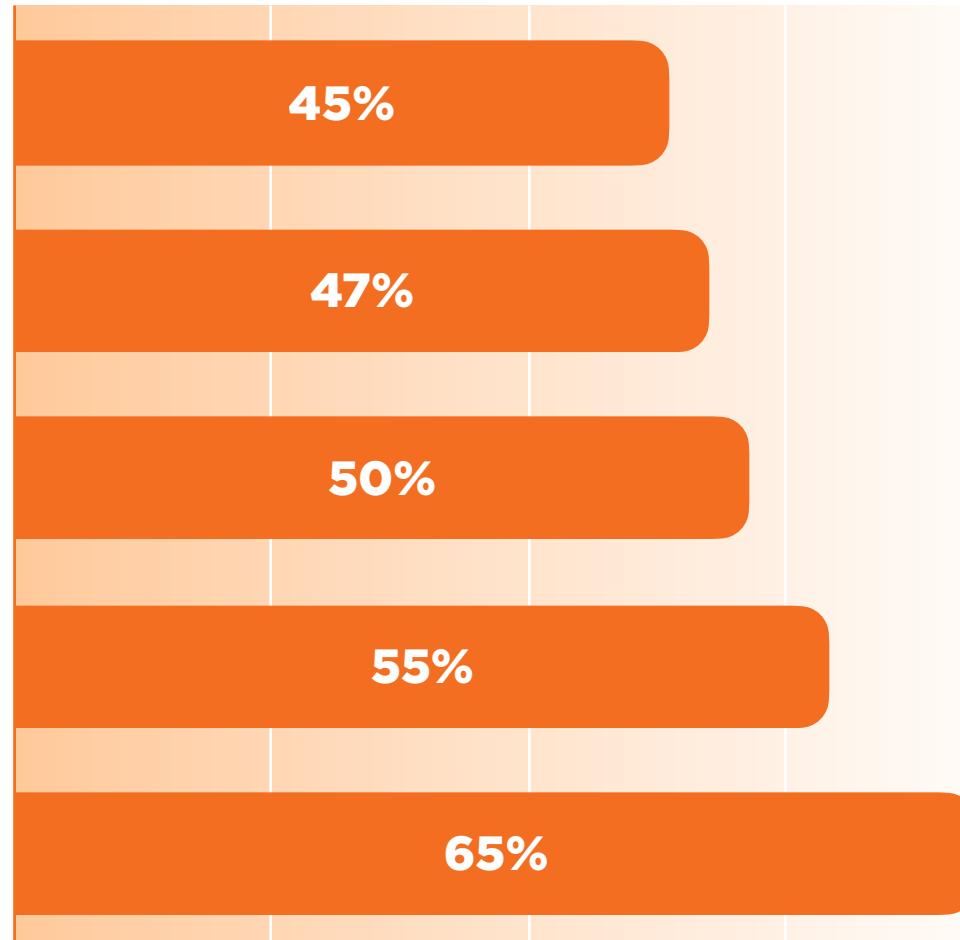
Measuring the effectiveness of a large part of spend

## Durability:

Trust that our attribution will not become obsolete

## Integration:

Ability to reconcile results from different tools





# With cookie depreciation delaying, durability concerns eased this year (2023 vs. 2022) Dissatisfaction with measurement tools: Bottom 3 Box

## Actionability:

Applying findings to optimize spend allocation

## Scale:

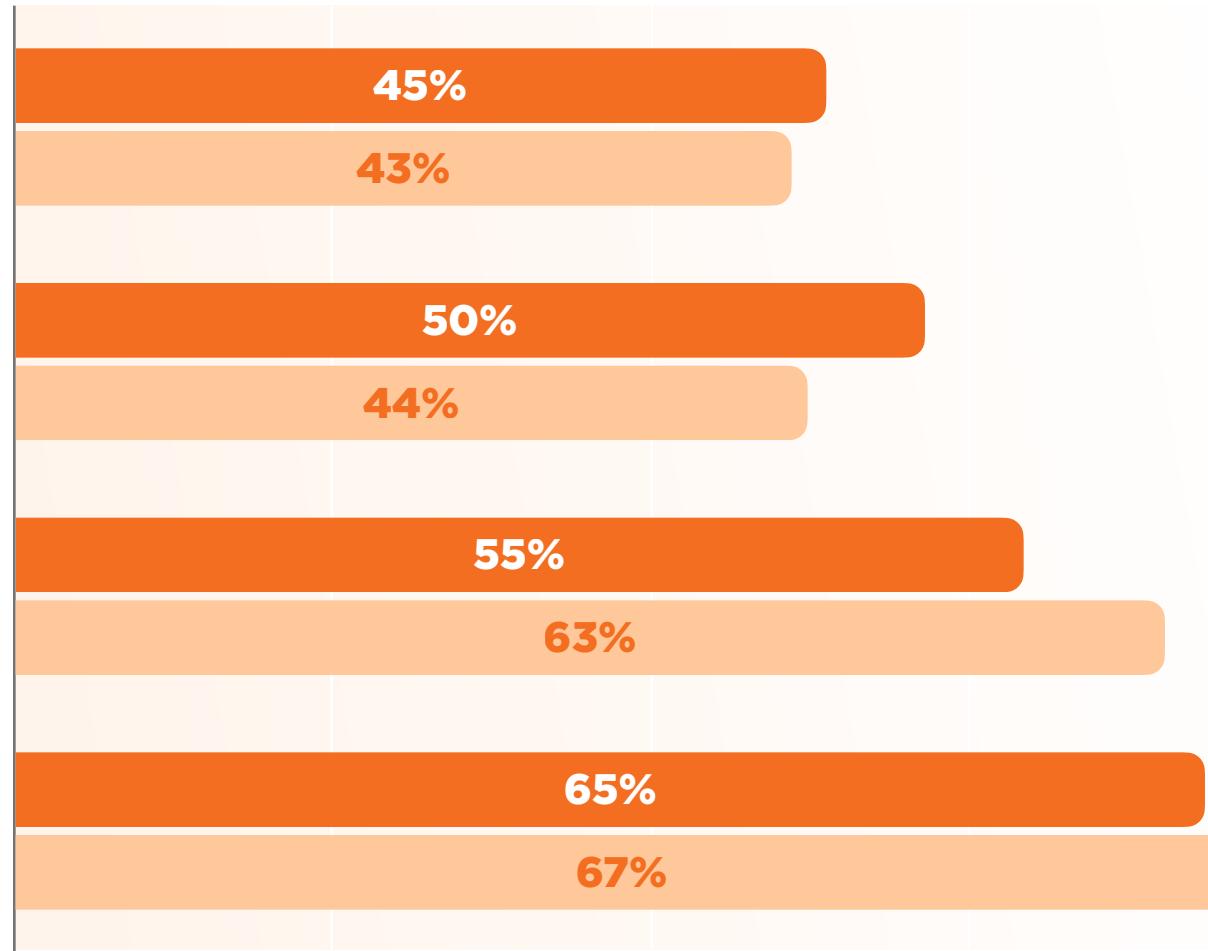
Measuring the effectiveness of a large part of spend

## Durability:

Trust that our attribution will not become obsolete

## Integration:

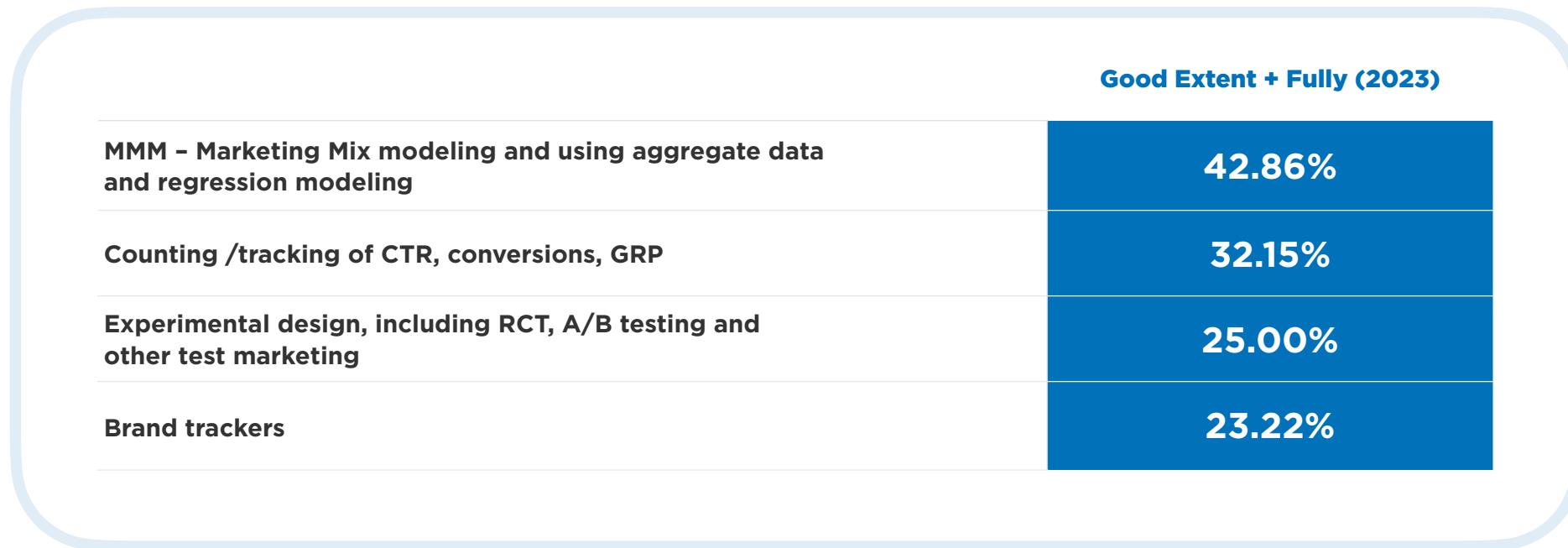
Ability to reconcile results from different tools





**There is still a long way to go in terms of reconciling results from different tools, especially when it comes to measuring brand**

### **Ability to reconcile MTA with other tools**





# As a result, many marketers still struggle to align KPIs and determine which channels perform best

## Top 3 Problem Statements in Marketing Productivity and Attribution



# Incrementality

is a big blind spot for many marketers:

What is your level of confidence that your measurement shows *the true (incremental/causal) impact of each media tactic, excluding what would have happened anyway?*

# A big blind spot for many marketers: Incrementality

MORE INCREMENTAL



You can think of incrementality as a ladder of options that get closer to measuring true business value as you climb



## Randomized Experiments

Trials to measure the precise difference between being exposed and not being exposed to an ad campaign.



## Quasi-Experiments & Incrementality Models

Techniques that estimate (but don't measure precisely) the incremental effect of being exposed to an ad campaign.



## Non-Incremental Models

Systems that don't make an explicit estimate for an ad campaign's effect above a baseline of behavior (i.e., what a person would have done anyways without seeing an ad campaign).



LEAST INCREMENTAL

## Incrementality confidence

Scientific assessment\*

v.s.

Marketer Perception

100%

100%

20-75%

80-90%

0-10%

70-80%

\* "Scientific assessment" is based on a peer group analysis of different measurement methods. For more information please review <https://www.mmaglobal.com/documents/ladder-incrementality>. Marketer perception score is an index calculated based on marketer responses on the survey about the level of confidence they have for the incrementality of each method. RCTs were set as a 100 and the other methods were indexed in relation to RCTs.

# Conclusions about the state of measurement

## Shifting Planning Strategies:

A notable shift is observed as marketers move away from reach-based planning. Only 12% of marketers now focus on reach-based planning, with most.

## Investment in Measurement:

Despite the challenging environment that unfolded in 2023, marketers are actively planning to invest more in measurement. This commitment showcases the recognition of the pivotal role that measurement plays in driving effective marketing strategies.

## Increasing Demands in Attribution:

As marketers adopt alternative planning strategies, their attribution needs become more demanding. This shift necessitates a deeper understanding of the effectiveness and impact of marketing efforts.

## Building Trust Beyond Marketing:

To fully leverage the benefits of measurement and attribution, marketers need to build trust outside of the marketing realm. Surprisingly, our survey reveals that 64% of companies express dissatisfaction with the level of acceptance of marketing measurement by counterparts such as the CFO. Fostering trust and collaboration with stakeholders outside of marketing becomes imperative for successful implementation and utilization of measurement practices.

# Conclusions about improvement areas

1

**Actionability:** Approximately 45% of marketers express dissatisfaction with the actionability of their measurement insights. This highlights the need for robust frameworks and processes that enable marketers to translate measurement findings into effective actions and strategies.

2

**Incrementality:** 47% of marketers indicate dissatisfaction with their understanding of incrementality. This reveals a significant blind spot in the industry, as many overestimate the level of confidence obtained from non-incremental tools like expert opinions and rules-based attribution. There is a pressing need to enhance measurement practices to accurately assess the true causal impact of marketing activities.

3

**Scale of Spend Measurement:** Half of the marketers (50%) report dissatisfaction with their ability to measure a larger part of their media effectively. Establishing accurate and comprehensive measurement mechanisms to track and analyze marketing investments becomes crucial for informed decision-making.

4

**Durability Amidst Cookie Deprecation:** In the face of cookie deprecation and evolving privacy regulations, 55% of marketers express dissatisfaction with the durability of their measurement approaches. Striving for future-proof measurement methodologies that adapt to changing landscapes becomes paramount for long-term success.

5

**Integration and Result Reconciliation:** An overwhelming 65% of marketers voice dissatisfaction with the integration and ability to reconcile measurement results across various channels, touchpoints and measurement tools. Seamless integration and reconciliation of data sources are vital for obtaining a holistic view of marketing performance and accurate attribution.

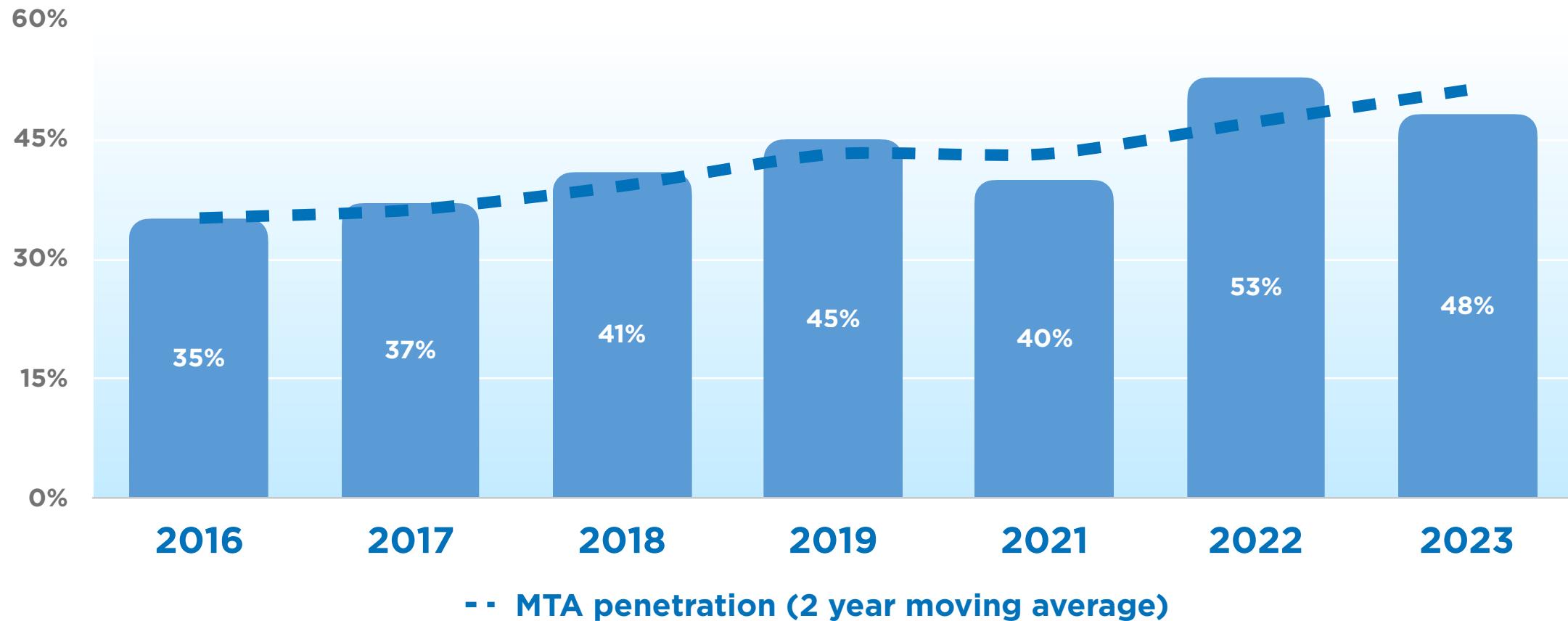
2

**What is the  
State of MTA  
in 2023?**



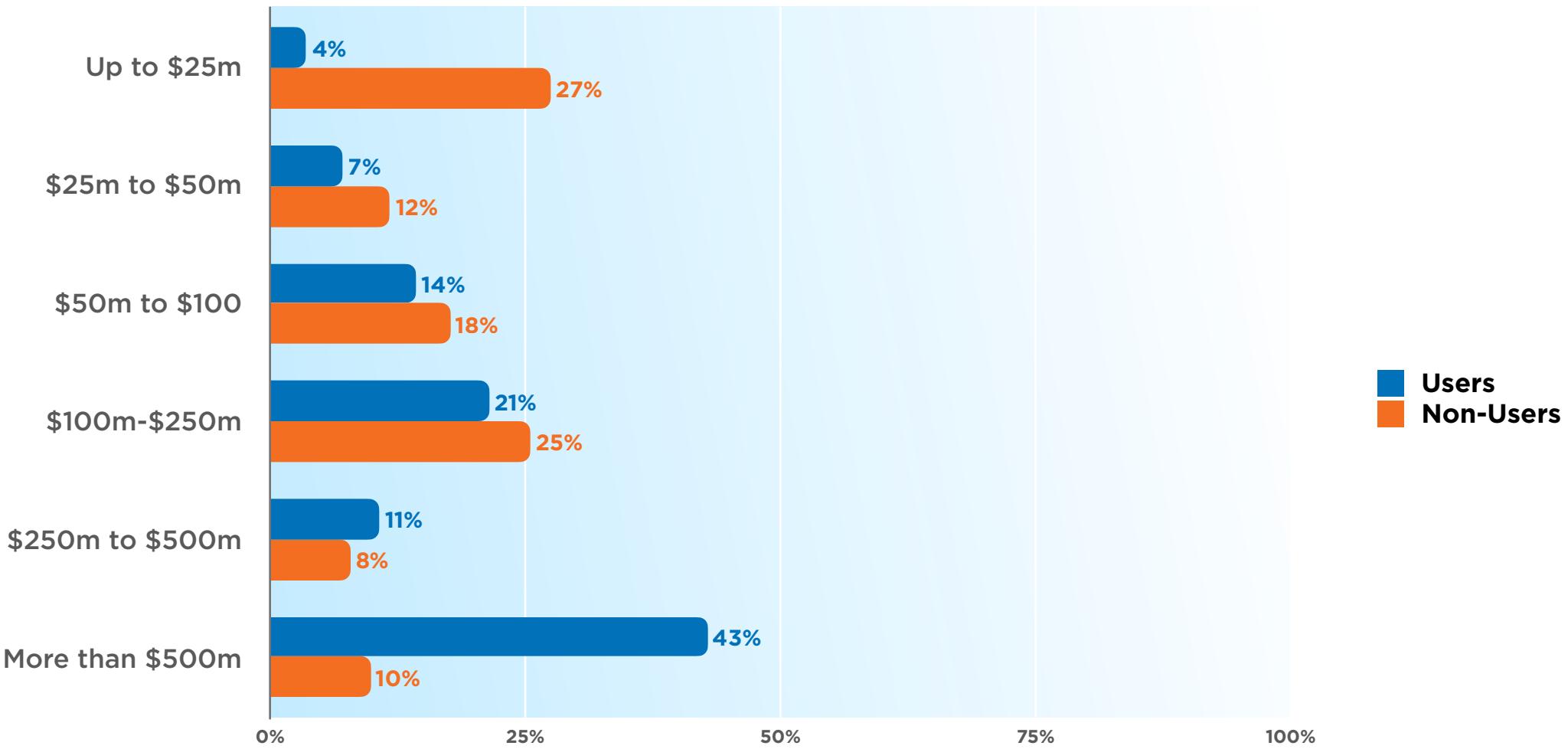
# MTA adoption has been increasing steadily, but slowly.

Percentage of companies currently using MTA or planning to do so in the future



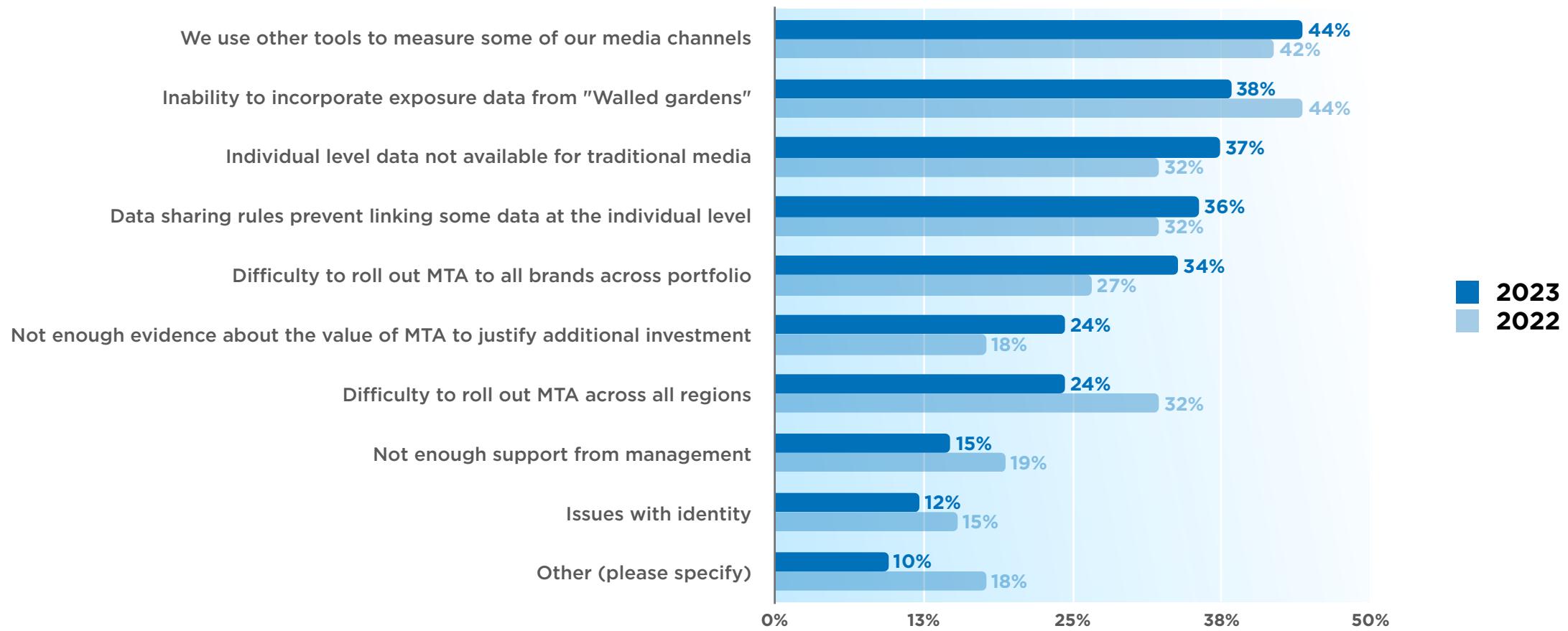


## MTA users are larger companies with bigger Media investment



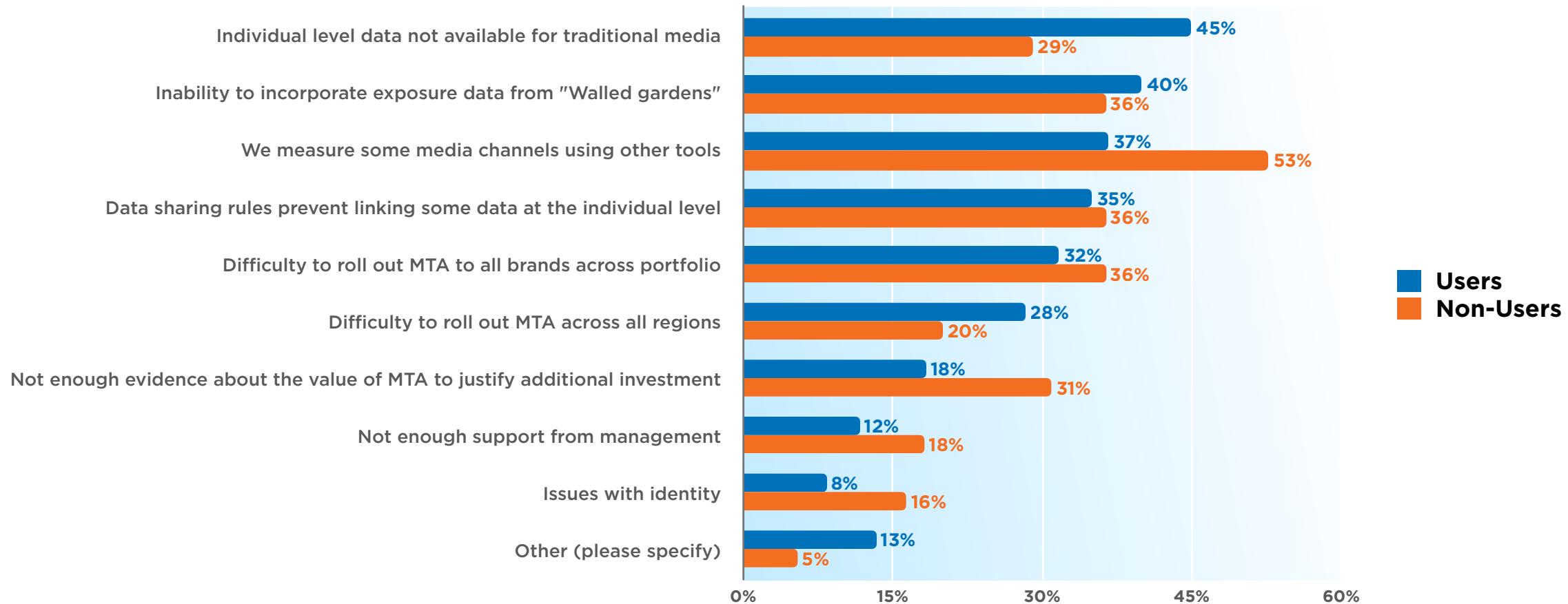
# III | Marketers continue using other tools along MTA, because of challenges with walled gardens and linking data.

Main reasons/barriers that prevent marketers use their MTA solution more broadly (%)

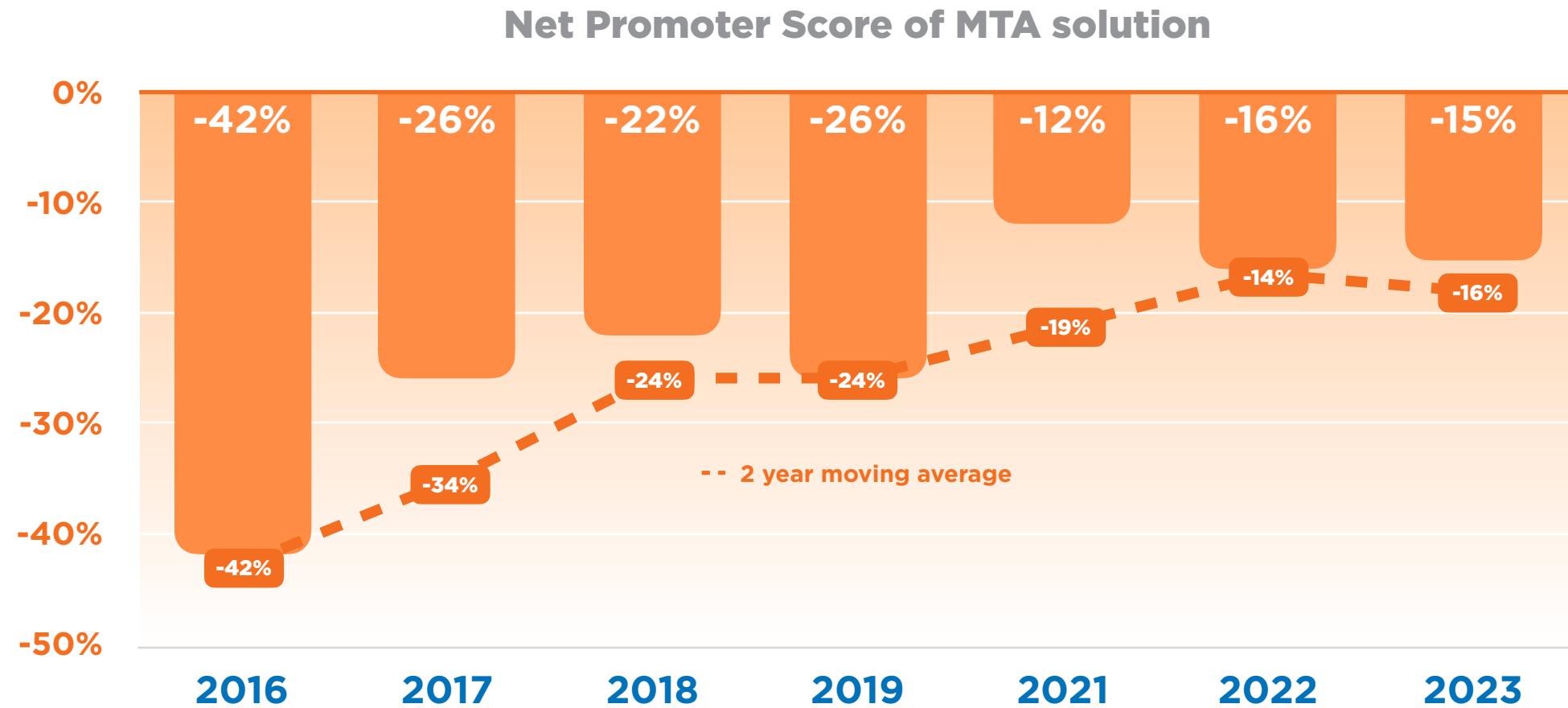


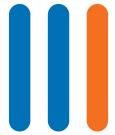
III | Access to individual level data, especially from walled gardens, continues to be the main challenge. This is a deal breaker for non-users who haven't built a business case for MTA so they continue relying on other tools

#### Main reasons/barriers that prevent marketers use their MTA solution more broadly (%)



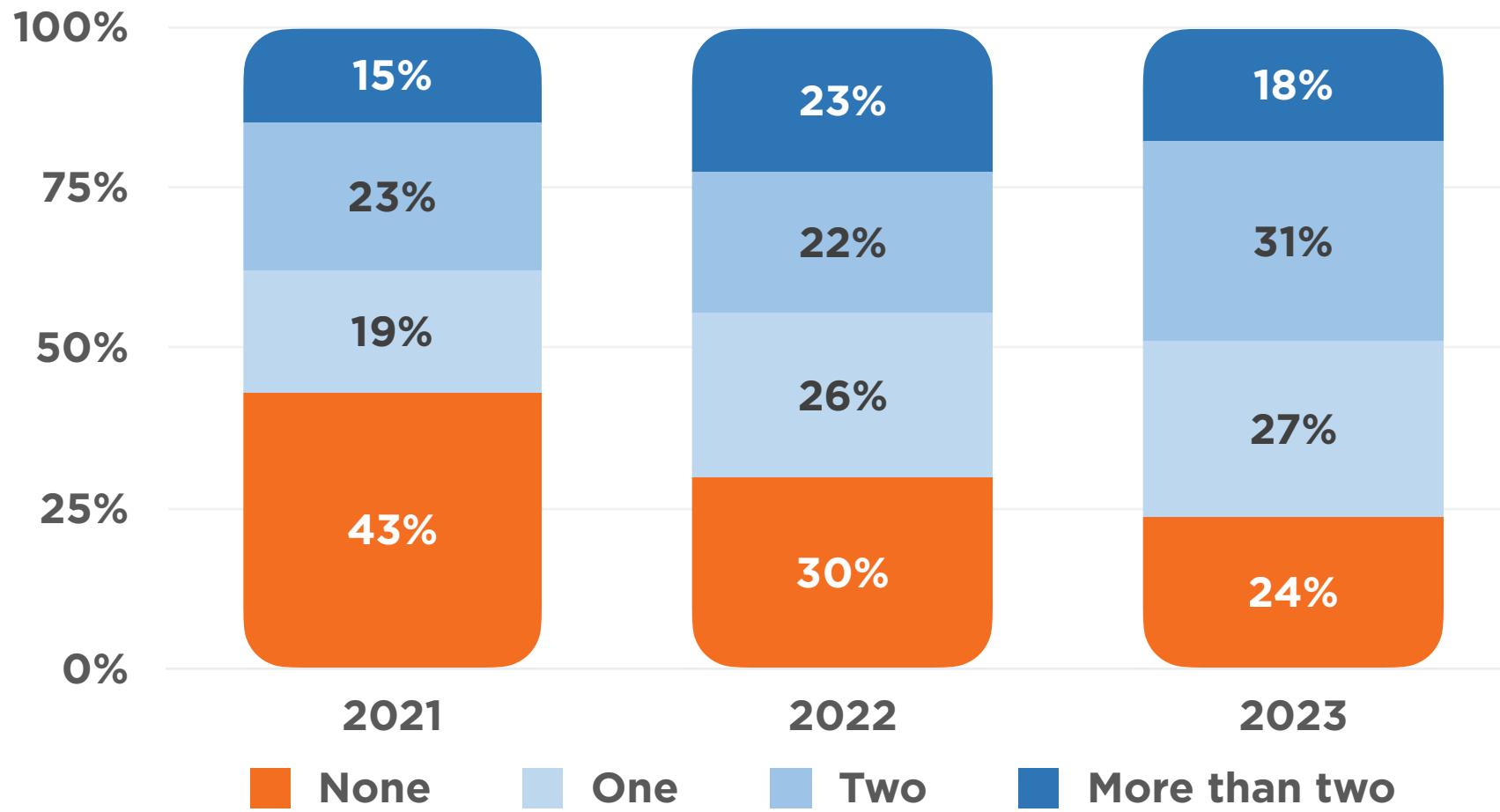
# Given the ongoing challenges, the NPS of MTA providers remains negative and fairly unchanged in recent years.





## Yet, Practitioner experience with MTA continues to increase

How many MTA vendors have you *personally* worked with in the past? (in your current organization or in a previous role)



# III | MTA maturity continues to increase, as more marketers reach deployment

## Stages of MTA Adoption

2021 2022 2023



**STAGE 1:**  
Initiate Process

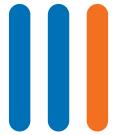
**STAGE 2:**  
Establish Data Readiness

**STAGE 3:**  
Setup First MTA Project

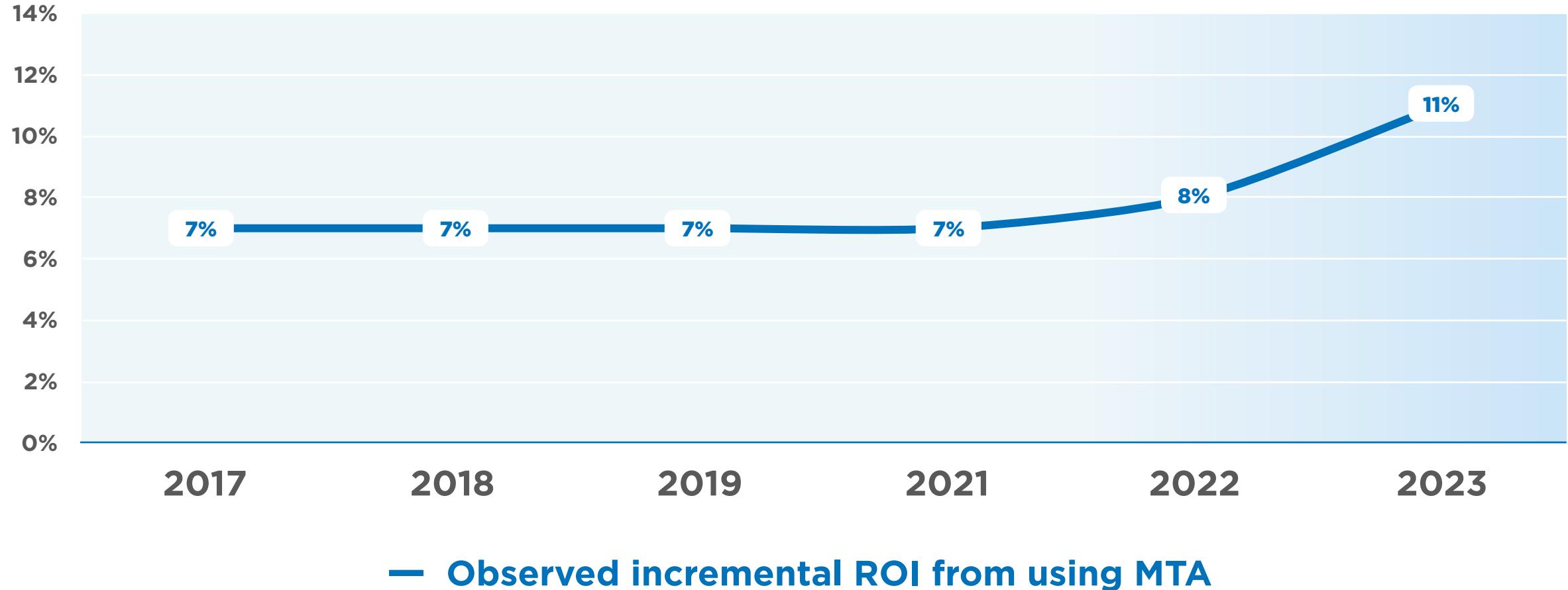
**STAGE 4:**  
Implement First MTA Project

**STAGE 5:**  
Deployment

Q: The following are five stages in which a company can be in when implementing a Multi-Touch-Attribution (MTA) method. Which of these stages best describes where your company is at? (2023 Sample size: N=108)



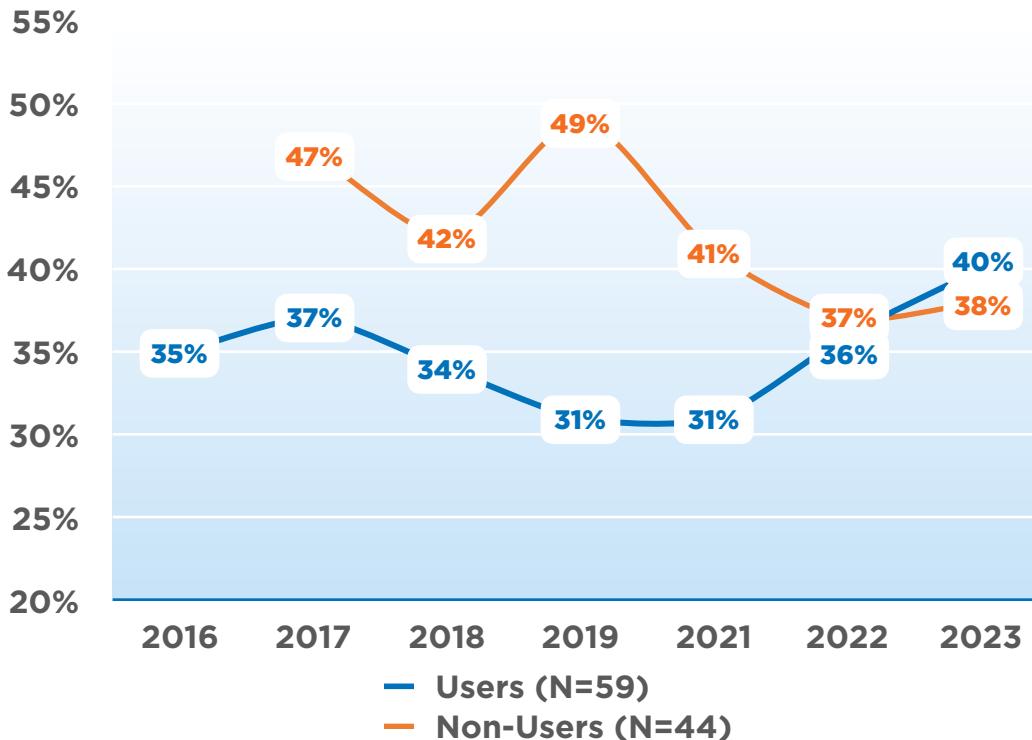
## With higher MTA maturity, ROI from MTA edges higher.



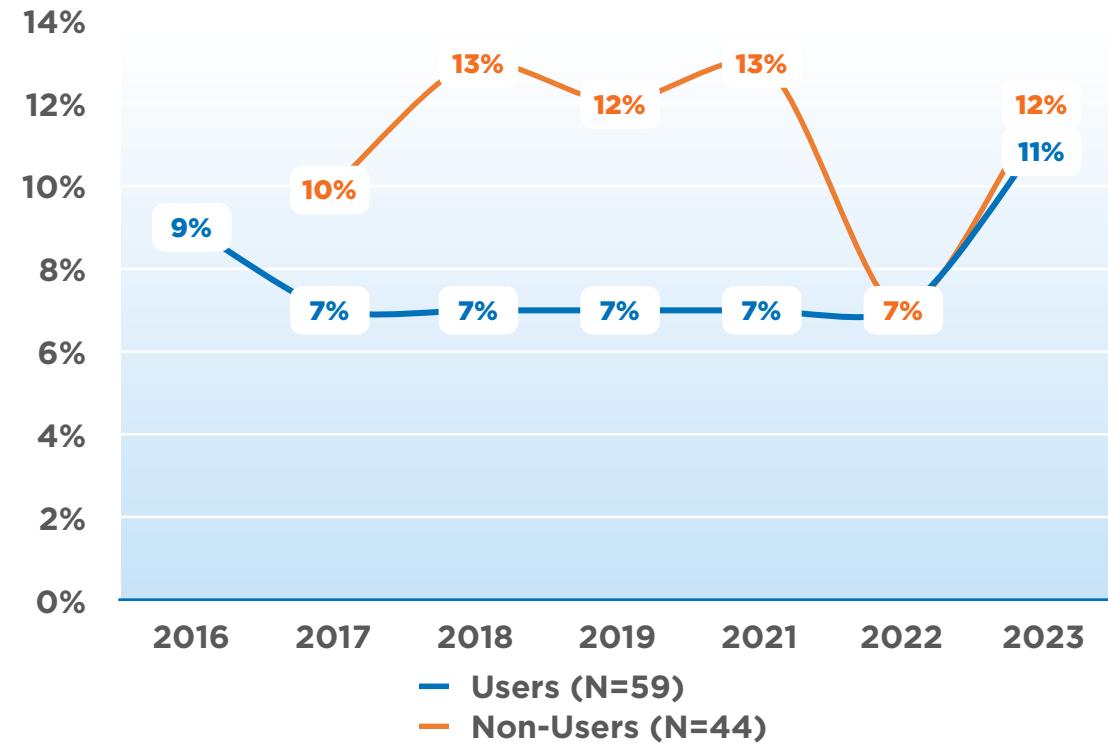
Q: **Users:** Q8. For that portion of the budget where you used MTA, what was the impact on the campaign ROI the last time you used MTA? (2023 Sample Size, N=59)

# As MTA becomes more established, expectations and reality come closer together in terms of its role and contribution.

## Share of media analyzed by MTA (%)



## Expected ROI increase due to MTA usage



- Users:** What share of your total marketing budget (including advertising) did you assess roughly speaking in 2022, using a Multi Touch Attribution solution? (Please consider whether you use MTA for all or just some of your marketing activities and channels). N=59)
- Non-Users:** On average, what percent of your total marketing spending would you want to be able to evaluate using MTA after a year of onboarding an MTA solution? (N=44\*) \*Small sample size

- Users:** Q8. For that portion of the budget where you used MTA, what was the impact on the campaign ROI the last time you used MTA? (N=59)
- Non-Users:** For the part of the budget where you will use MTA, what do you expect will be the impact on the marketing ROI as a result of using MTA? (N=44\*) \*Small sample size

# III | MTA is increasingly seen as a crucial part of unified measurement, among both users and non-users

2023

15%

18%

2022

14%

22%

MTA is unrealistic given the realities of the advertising ecosystem

MTA is promising but too complicated

**MTA is crucial as part of an ensemble of measurement solutions** that include MMM and experimental design

23%

15%

MTA is the future of attribution

# Conclusions about MTA adoption

1

**The adoption** of Multi-Touch Attribution (MTA) has been steadily increasing, albeit at a slow pace. In 2023, approximately 50% of marketers use MTA as part of their measurement and attribution strategy. Larger companies with significant media investments are more likely to embrace MTA. Despite this adoption, marketers continue to utilize other measurement tools alongside it. This is primarily due to challenges associated with walled gardens and data linkage, which pose obstacles to obtaining comprehensive and integrated insights.

2

Overall, **the maturity** of MTA practices is on the rise, with more companies undertaking the journey of setting up and deploying MTA. Compared to two years ago, MTA maturity has increased from 17% to 27%, reflecting a growing understanding and implementation of MTA methodologies. As MTA maturity increases, the return on investment (ROI) derived from MTA also improves, rising to 11% compared to 7% two years ago.

3

With the growing establishment of MTA, **the expectations and reality** regarding its role and contribution have become more closely aligned. Both users and non-users of MTA agree that approximately 40% of media can be analyzed using MTA, highlighting a convergence in understanding the share of media analyzed by MTA.

4

In the end, MTA is increasingly **recognized** as a crucial component of unified measurement, as indicated by 51% of respondents (both users and non-users). This highlights the growing importance of MTA in providing comprehensive and integrated insights for effective marketing strategies. A significant portion of respondents (26%) perceive MTA as the future of attribution, underscoring the belief that MTA will play a central role in shaping the future of marketing measurement and attribution practices.

# About MMA Global

MMA Global is a non-profit industry association dedicated to dramatically improving Marketing's ability to deliver on a company's growth agenda. With 800+ member companies and offices in 15 countries around the world, the MMA is organized and run by Marketers and the only trade body to include all aspects of the marketing ecosystem (adtech/martech, platforms, media, agencies), which is crucial in addressing the industry's most pressing challenges.

MMA invests in scientific research leveraging research consortiums and in-market experiments to discover new approaches to improve the return on investments in marketing. These initiative are executed through three Think Tanks each with a mission to drive step-function improvement in marketing-led growth and profitability.



## Marketing Attribution Think Tank (MATT):

Empower marketers with a true impact of Marketing through advancing scientific approaches to measurement that will ultimately increase the value of their company.



## Marketing Organizational Strategy Think Tank (MOSTT):

Empower marketers to build & execute winning data & customer strategies that will ultimately increase the value of their company.



## Marketing Data and Customer Experience Think Tank (DATT):

Empower marketing executives to understand and implement evidence-based Organizational Structures that will ultimately increase the value of their company.

## MMA Member Organizations Include:





[www.mmaglobal.com](http://www.mmaglobal.com)

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