

2021 C-SUITE OUTLOOK



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FOREWARD

AS A CEO, I UNDERSTAND HOW HARD 2020 HAS BEEN FOR EVERYONE. AS LEADERS, WE HAVE BEEN TESTED THROUGH SOCIAL CHANGE, CONTENTIOUS ELECTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES, AND THE GLOBAL CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC.

WE HAVE WITNESSED MORE CHANGE IN MERE WEEKS AS SEEN IN THE LAST DECADE.

- ENTIRE INDUSTRIES HAVE TURNED UPSIDE DOWN
- INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOR HAS RADICALLY SHIFTED
- EMPLOYEES ARE MORE ISOLATED THAN EVER

AFTER A CHALLENGING YEAR, AE MARKETING GROUP ASKED 100 LEADERS TO SHARE THEIR 2021 OUTLOOK ON REVENUE FORECASTS, PRODUCT GROWTH, SALES, AND MARKETING.

AND, AS WE NAVIGATE THROUGH COVID-19, WE ASKED A FEW QUESTIONS SPECIFIC TO REMOTE WORK AND CHANGING BUYER BEHAVIORS.

WE HOPE THESE ANSWERS PROVIDE YOU INSIGHT, COMFORT, AND IDEAS TO EFFECTIVELY LEAD INTO 2021.

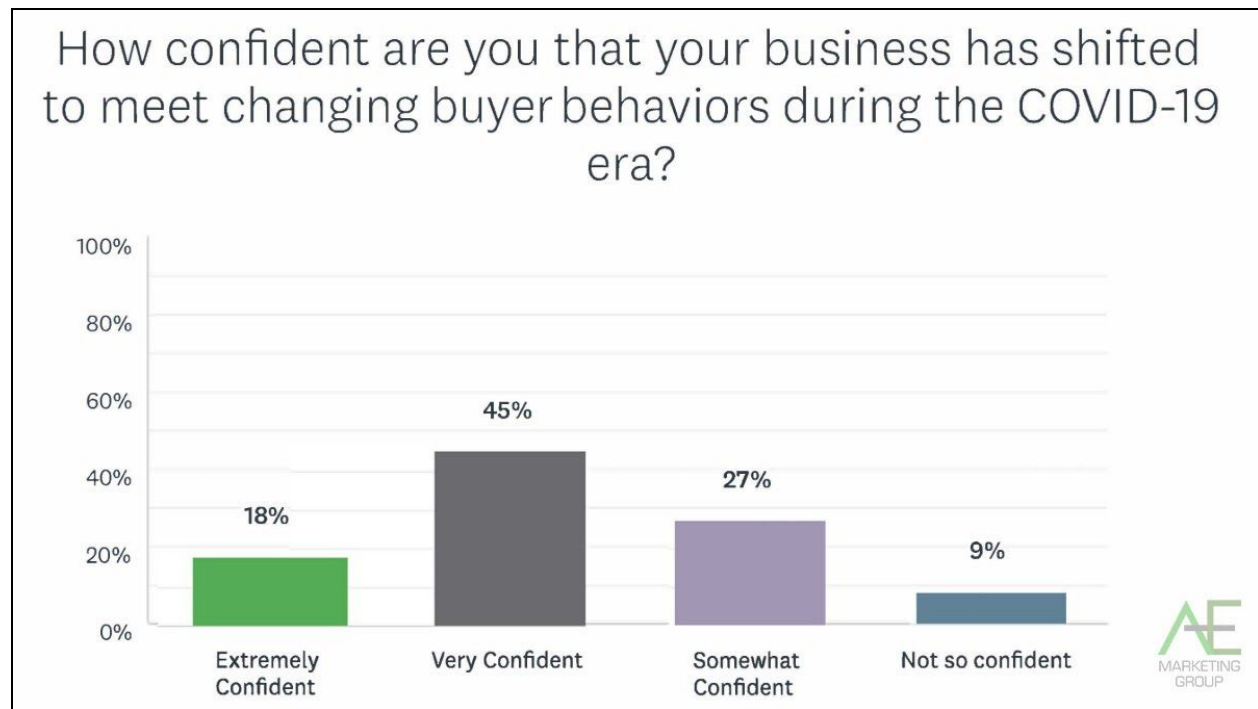


BRIAN WALKER
AE MARKETING GROUP CEO
3X INC5000 FOUNDER
BRAND LAB SERIES™ HOST

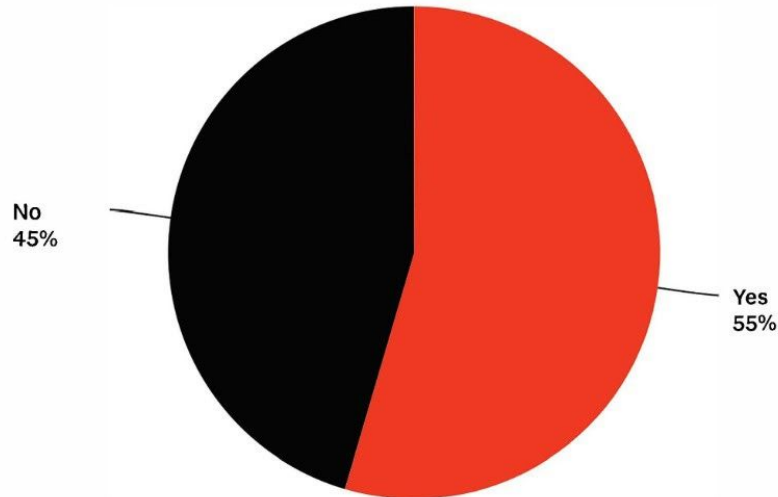
COVID-19 IMPACT

WHILE CORONAVIRUS SEVERELY ALTERED BUYER BEHAVIOR, IT SIMULTANEOUSLY FORCED MANY COMPANIES TO SHIFT OPERATIONS REMOTELY IN 2020.

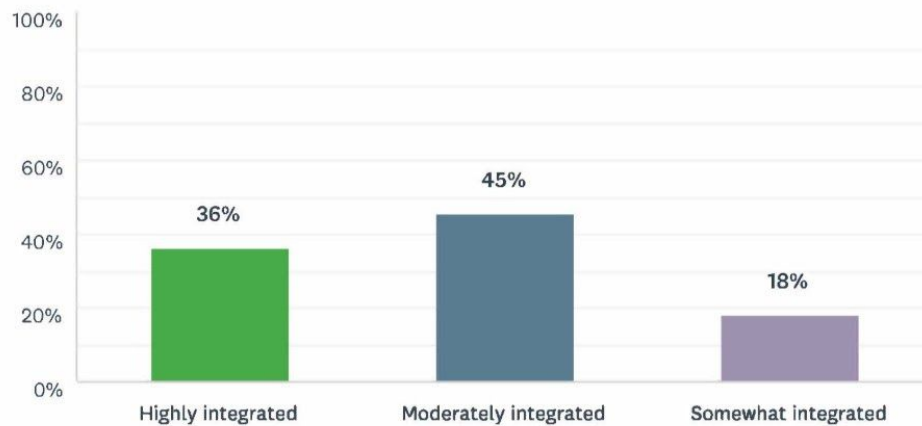
WHAT IMPACT HAS THE C-SUITE SEEN ON SALES PRODUCTIVITY, ALIGNMENT WITH MARKETING, AND WHAT IS THE LIKELIHOOD REMOTE WORK WILL CONTINUE INTO 2021?



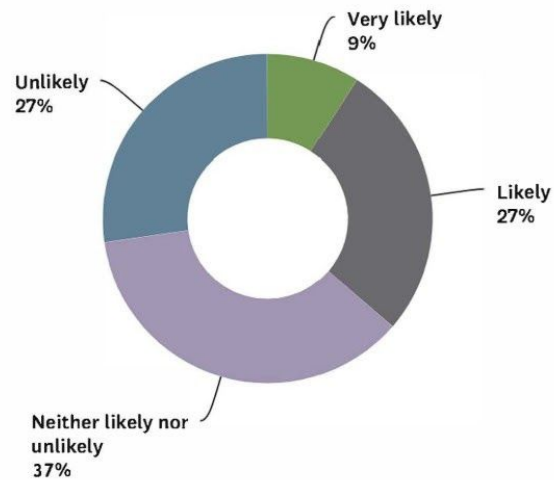
Have you seen a decrease in sales productivity with limited customer/prospect face-to-face interaction?



How integrated are your marketing and sales teams in managing leads and converting opportunities?



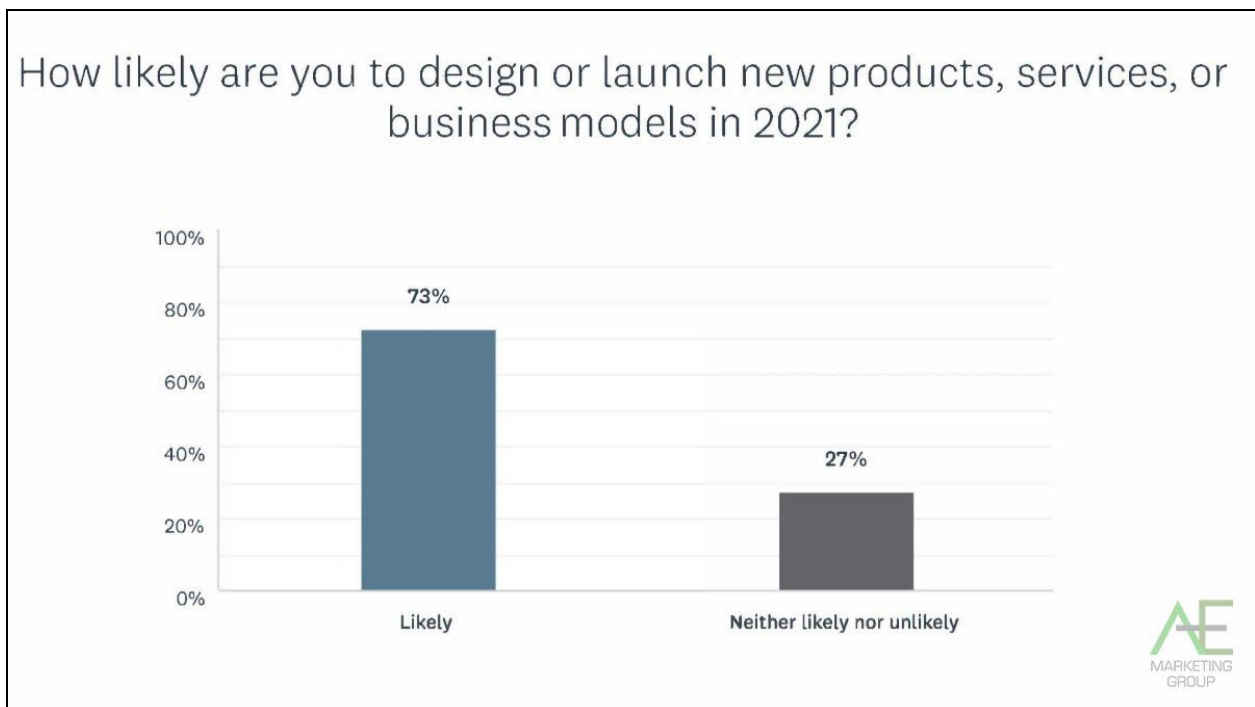
How likely is it that your company's workforce will operate remotely throughout all of 2021?



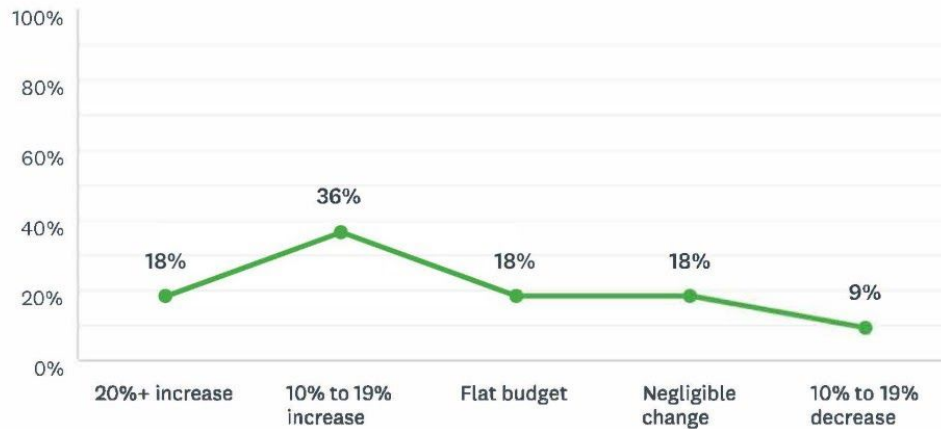
2021 OUTLOOK

TO MEET CHANGING BUYER NEEDS AND BEHAVIORS, MOST COMPANIES PLAN TO LAUNCH NEW PRODUCTS, SERVICES, AND/OR BUSINESS MODELS IN THE YEAR AHEAD.

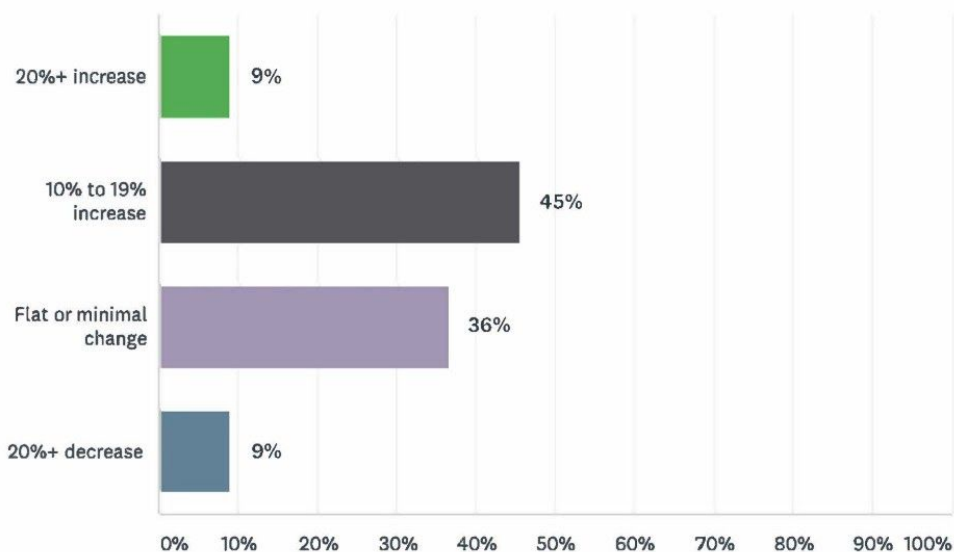
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR MARKETING INVESTMENTS, VENDOR SELECTION, AND REVENUE FORECASTS IN 2021?



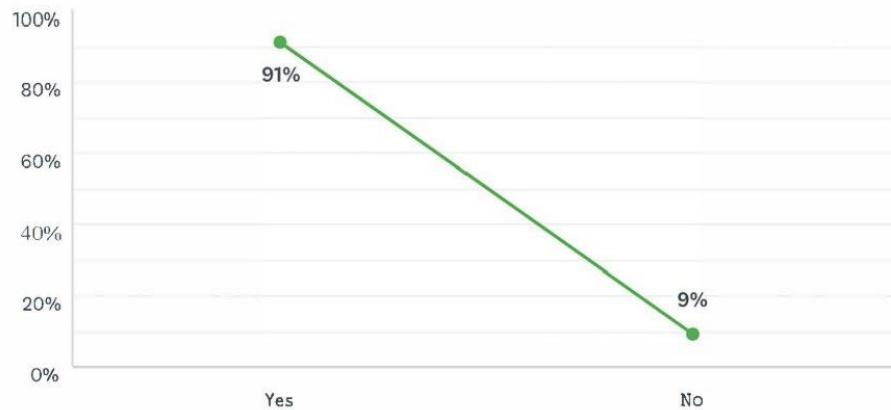
Are you planning to increase or decrease investments in 2021 external marketing efforts?



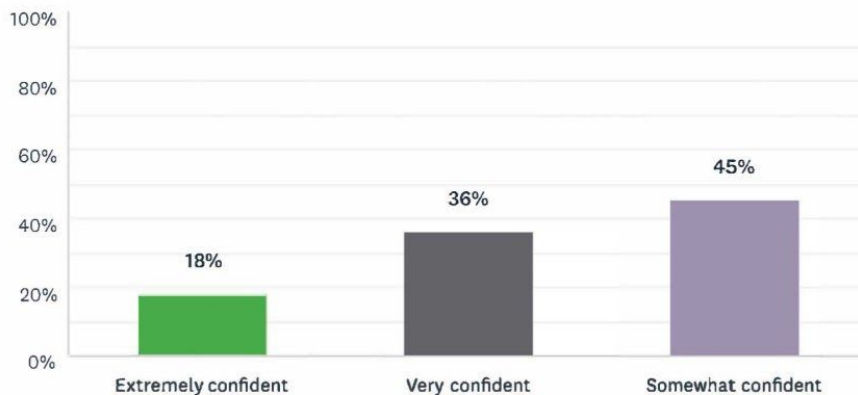
What is your year-over-year revenue forecast for 2021?



Would you buy business consulting services from a new vendor without meeting them in-person?



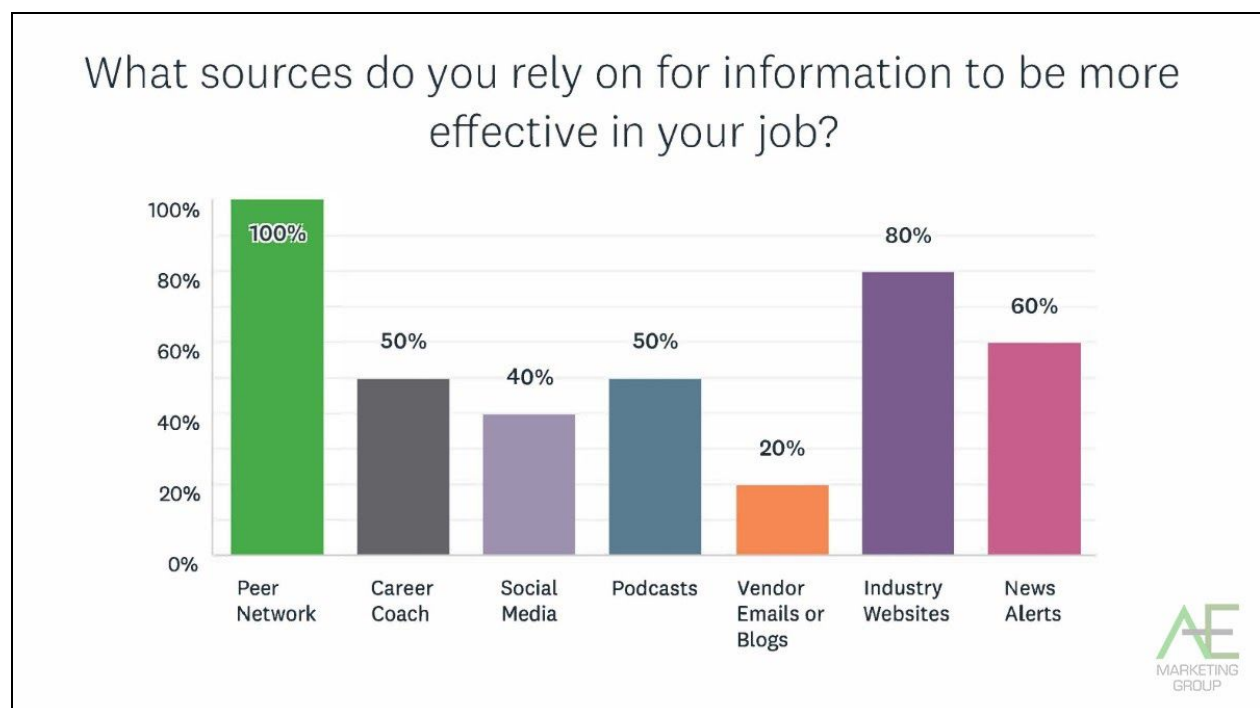
How confident would you be in having a vendor provide business consulting services entirely remotely?



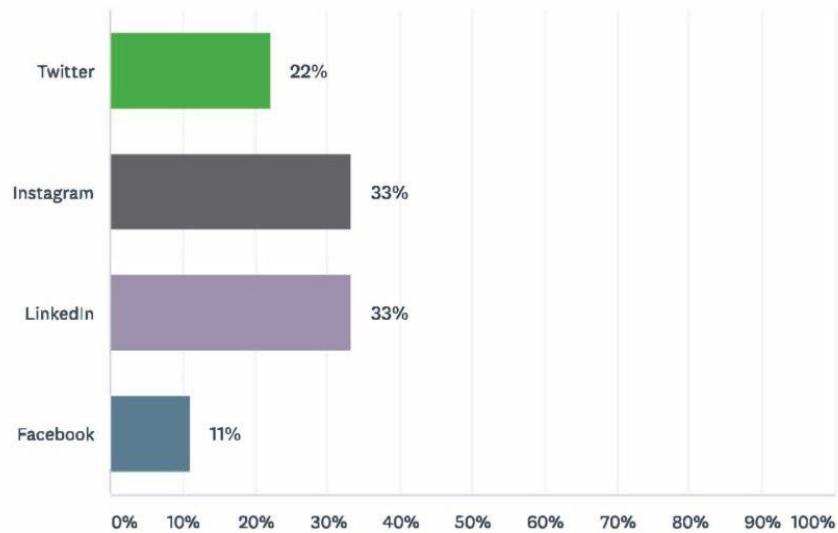
C-SUITE PREFERENCE

C-SUITE EXECUTIVES HAVE PRECIOUS TIME, YET SEEK OUT INFORMATION TO HELP THEM BE MORE EFFECTIVE AT THEIR JOBS.

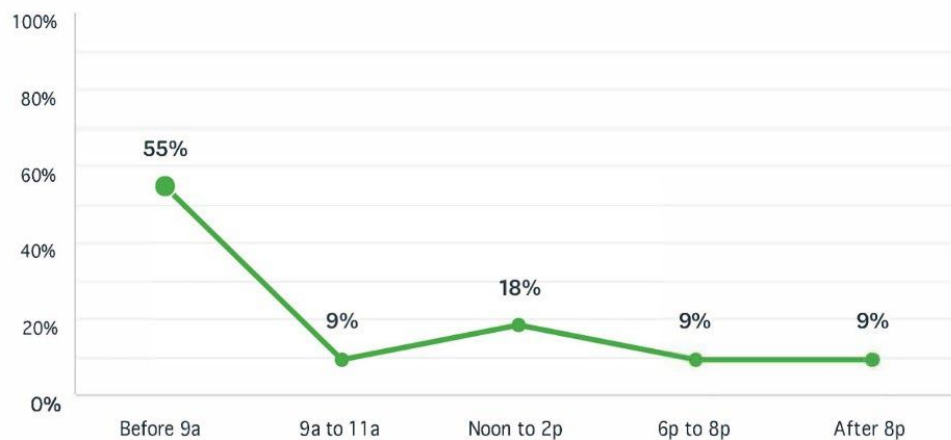
WHERE DO C-LEVEL EXECUTIVES FIND THIS INFORMATION, HOW OFTEN DO THEY CHECK SOCIAL MEDIA, AND WHEN DO THEY WANT TO RECEIVE AN EMAIL?



What is your most preferred social media platform for keeping up with brands and other businesses?



What time of day do you most often check social media?



What is your preferred frequency of receiving vendor email newsletters?



TAKEAWAYS

CORONAVIRUS HAS BEEN A MASSIVE CHANGE ACCELERANT IN 2020.

WITH INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOR CONTINUING TO SHIFT AND EVOLVE, EXECUTIVES HAVE A UNIQUE, BUT CHALLENGING OPPORTUNITY AHEAD.

LEADERS WHO CAN RAPIDLY TRANSFORM HIS/HER ORGANIZATION TO MEET CHANGING BUYERS' NEEDS WILL BE WELL-POSITIONED IN THIS NEW (AND OFTEN VIRTUAL) REALITY.

NOW MORE THAN EVER, LOOKING AT YOUR BRAND THROUGH AN ENTERPRISE LENS (PRE-PURCHASE, PURCHASE, POST-PURCHASE) IS CRITICAL TO UNDERSTANDING HOW TO HELP BUYERS/CONSUMERS.

THIS WILL LEAD TO INCREASED VALUE AND LOYALTY AFTER COVID-19.

WE HOPE YOU ENJOYED THE 2021 C-SUITE OUTLOOK – THANK YOU

FURTHER READING

[COVID KILLED YOUR BUYER PERSONA AND CUSTOMER JOURNEY MAP](#)

[WHY MARKETING IS A DIRTY WORD IN THE C-SUITE](#)

[FUNDRAISING IMMUNITY: NONPROFITS MUST PIVOT DURING COVID19](#)

[MEDIA WINNERS AND LOSERS DURING THE CORONAVIRUS](#)

[CHALLENGER BRANDS FACE NEW CHALLENGES AMIDST CORONAVIRUS](#)

METHODOLOGY

THE 2021 C-SUITE OUTLOOK

RESPONDENTS TO THIS SURVEY ARE C-LEVEL EXECUTIVES (CEOS, CMOS, CXOS, COOS, CSOS) WITH WHOM WE HAVE CONNECTED OVER THE YEARS, INCLUDING CUSTOMERS, BRAND LAB SERIES™ PODCAST GUESTS, AND MORE.

THE DATA SET IS HEAVILY POPULATED WITH B2B EXECUTIVES WORKING IN THE UNITED STATES.

RESPONSES WERE GATHERED IN SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER 2020.

THIS IS A SURVEY OF INDIVIDUALS, NOT COMPANIES. NO INDIVIDUAL WAS INCENTIVIZED FOR HIS/HER PARTICIPATION.

DATA WAS CAPTURED USING A 15-QUESTION SURVEY CREATED WITH SURVEY MONKEY.

ABOUT AE MARKETING GROUP

AE MARKETING GROUP ADVISES BUSINESSES AROUND THE WORLD ON STRATEGY, DESIGN, BRAND, AND CO-CREATION.

WE HELP EXECUTIVES ENSURE THEIR COMPANY'S BRAND IS ALIGNED ACROSS ENTERPRISE TOUCHPOINTS (PRE-PURCHASE, PURCHASE, POST-PURCHASE), WHICH LEADS TO IMPROVED REVENUE AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY.

AE MARKETING GROUP IS A 3X INC.5000 WINNER, HAS BEEN FEATURED BY FORBES, GOLDMAN SACHS, ADAGE, AND MORE.

IN 2018, THE ACADEMY OF INTERACTIVE AND VISUAL ARTS NAMED AE MARKETING GROUP'S BRAND LAB SERIES™ PODCAST, THE TOP BUSINESS, AND TECHNOLOGY PODCAST OF THE YEAR.

LEARN MORE AT [AEMARKETINGGROUP.COM](https://aemarketinggroup.com)