

# The Cost of Inefficiency

How Operational Creep Kills  
Strategic Thinking in Email Marketing



MessageGears™

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# Introduction

Email marketing isn't the industry it's supposed to be today. Too many marketers who got into the field for the love of creatively finding new ways to engage with subscribers through their inbox are getting bogged down in operational tasks. The bigger the company's database, the further marketers tend to get from doing what they're best at. And, far from getting better, the more B2C marketing teams lean on the cloud from build to send, the more exacerbated this problem becomes.

It's a challenge we hear about every day from people who are passionate about email as a tool, but are struggling with the direction of the industry. With this survey, we went directly to these marketers to find out where their frustrations lie, and figure out how to forge a better way forward.

1 IN 5

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people are unhappy with the tools provided to them by their ESP.





# Team

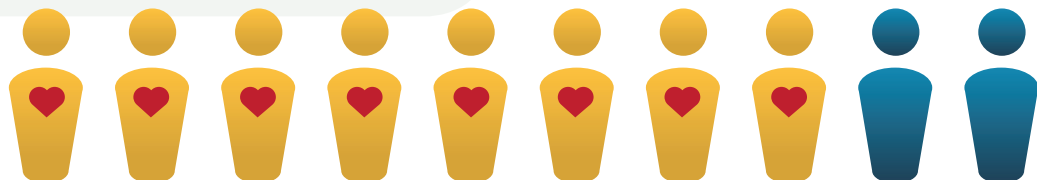
“

...teams that put **more money into email** tended to get **more efficiency** out of their team members.

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Every marketing team strives to be as efficient as possible with their work. Nobody wants to spend a dollar without accounting for it, and ROI is at the front of the mind of every good marketer. But, while efficiency is paramount to making the most of any marketing budget, teams are failing to meet their own productivity standards on the operational side. At least some of that comes back to spending money wisely. Money doesn't account for all of it, though. Many of the growing efficiency challenges in the email industry cut across all sorts of demographics, company sizes, and job titles. What's ultimately clear is that teams are struggling to find the best way to get their work done, and it's having a significant impact on their success.

More than 1 out of 4 marketers we surveyed rated their team as Average or worse on operational efficiency, and the same percentage were either Neutral or Unsatisfied with their team's overall execution of email marketing strategy. Those numbers may not be astronomically high, but that's a significant number of enterprise marketing teams whose team members judge their own efficiency performance



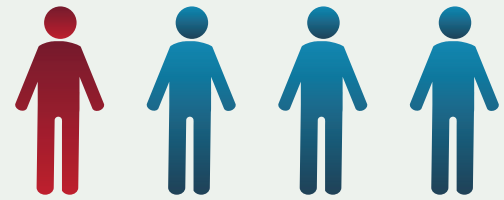
83%

of people who love their ESP also love their job.



harshly. And it's not unreasonable to think that number may even be conservative, as people have a tendency to be generous when grading themselves. The numbers might not be at an efficiency crisis level, but it's plausibly headed that way.

What are the culprits of team inefficiency? We found that nearly 75% of mostly Operational marketers were on teams that put less than half their marketing budget toward email. In short, teams that put more money into email tended to get more efficiency out of their team members. In addition, one of the most consistent findings was that ESP satisfaction tracked very well with efficiency. Among those who said they were Very Satisfied with their ESP, 77% gave their team a 5 — the highest possible rating — in operational efficiency. And every one of them gave their team at least a 4. Meanwhile, only 17% of those who feel Neutral or worse about their ESP gave their team a 5 in efficiency.



MORE THAN

1 OUT OF 4

people aren't happy with their team's efficiency and execution

75%

of people whose roles are at least half operational are on teams with low email marketing budgets



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64%

use external agencies to create and deploy email campaigns

26%

use an on-premises ESP

68%

send over 50M marketing and transactional emails each month



of email marketers do not have a Marketing degree

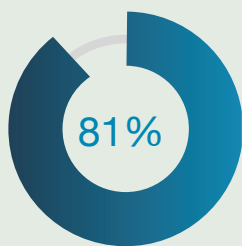
# Individual

While team efficiency isn't at the level most email marketing pros would like to see, the operational challenges seem to manifest even more starkly when you dig down to the individual level at enterprise organizations. Our survey found that creative and strategic tasks were easily the most popular, with marketers indicating the favorite parts of their job were writing enticing content, devising ways to engage with customers, and designing customer-centric emails, while testing, reviewing analytics, and segmenting data earned low marks.

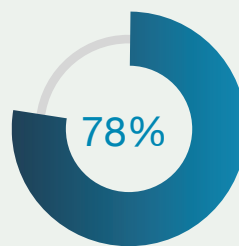
Unfortunately, though, almost half of marketers reported spending at least half their work time performing operational tasks instead of the creative and strategic ones that take the best advantage of their skill sets. And the result of that seems to be a low level of both job and overall career satisfaction. Among those who described their job as Completely Strategic, 76% said they were Very Satisfied with their job, and 95% said they were at least Satisfied. On the flip side of that, 68% of those who said they felt Neutral or worse toward their job described their role as half or more Operational. Going further, we see that 81% of those who said their job was Completely Strategic would eagerly go into email marketing again if they could turn the clock back, but only 51% of those whose job is Half Strategic or less would still go into email marketing.

## 1 IN 3

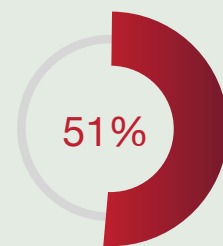
people aren't sure they'd go into email marketing again if they started their career over



of those whose job is **Completely Strategic** would go into email again



of those whose job is **Mostly Strategic** would go into email again



of those whose job is **Half Strategic or less** would go into email again

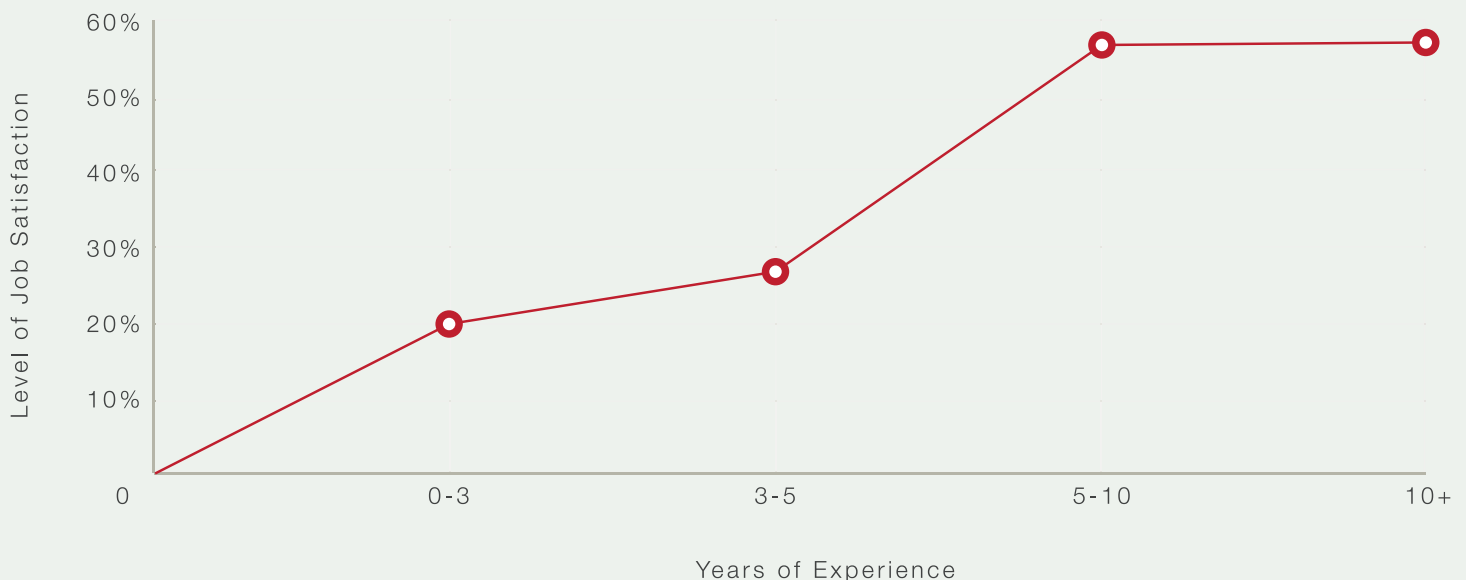
Clearly, getting enterprise marketers into the types of roles that allow them some creative and strategic freedom has a significant impact on morale and their feelings of enjoyment in the work they're doing. And, while we didn't find that a marketer's amount of industry experience was a reliable predictor of how strategic or operational their role was, we did find a correlation between experience and job satisfaction. Among those with 5 or more years of email marketing experience, 58% said they were Very Satisfied with their job, while just 27% of those with 3-5 years of experience were Very Satisfied, along with 20% of those at 0-3 years. It could be that marketers who

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“...getting **enterprise marketers** into the types of roles that allow them some **creative and strategic freedom** has a significant impact on morale.”

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stay in the industry for awhile are able to gradually find a suitable balance between the strategic and operational parts of their job, or perhaps there's an inevitability to the idea that the people who don't enjoy email marketing tend to get out of it quickly. Either way, though, seasoned email marketers seem mostly happy to be where they are in their careers.





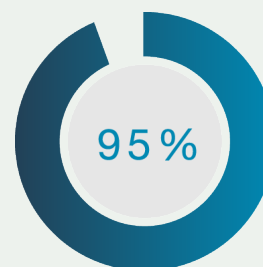
# Analysis

To whatever extent enterprise marketing teams are increasingly bogged down by too many inefficient operational tasks, we don't believe this is a reality leaders have to just meekly accept as the new normal. It's true that the email industry — led by legacy marketing cloud ESPs that aren't capable of keeping pace with the needs of large organizations — has been heading in this direction for some time, and there's little sign of slowing down. There are steps we believe you can take, though, in order to get your team headed back in the right direction.

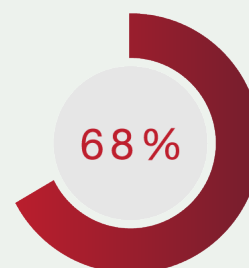
First, consider your tech stack and how it serves your needs. This should involve a holistic look at everything you use to execute your email marketing strategy, from your CRM to analytics and — perhaps especially — your ESP. Our survey revealed how important ESP satisfaction is when it comes to efficiency; that's going to be one of the most important decisions your team makes. If your ESP isn't enabling you to improve efficiency, consider how alternatives might be able to do so.

You should also make sure to fight for the amount of budget you need to make sure email marketing delivers on its promise of engagement and high ROI. In the survey, you can see the impact budget decisions can have on both efficiency and job satisfaction. Email still has the potential to be the most cost-effective and interactive marketing channel available to your team. Don't shortchange it.

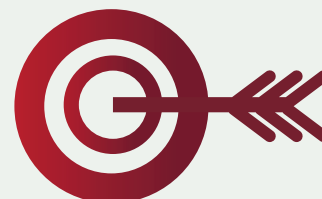
And finally, stop settling for less than your aspirations as a team. Don't let difficult experiences with ESPs and other services convince you the efficiency challenges your team faces can't be overcome. It may take some legwork and research, but the right solution for your problems likely exists in the marketplace. With a thoughtful, personalized email marketing roadmap, you can lead your team into a future with more efficient and effective time management, and a more fulfilled group of marketers.



of those who are **Completely Strategic** are Satisfied with their jobs



of those who feel Neutral or worse toward their job are **half or more Operational**



74%

say having an easier way to target people would **improve their email process**

# Wrap Up

Staying efficient has to be near the top of your priority list as a marketing team, and it's never been tougher than it is today. Customer expectations for email continue to rise, and the legacy marketing cloud ESPs that most enterprise teams rely on to deliver messages are exacerbating the problems due to myriad issues stemming from their inability to handle the massive datasets large teams are pulling from. Marketing leaders for large organizations need to recognize the challenges presented by relying so heavily on the marketing cloud to build emails, and seek out technologies that enhance their ability to deliver sophisticated, personalized messaging campaigns while not burying their teams in operational tasks.

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“...that passion can greatly benefit your organization if you're **willing to provide your team with the time and tools they need** to unleash their creativity on the world.”

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It's no coincidence that marketers who get more opportunities to flex their creative and strategic muscle enjoy their jobs more than those who don't. Email marketing is a challenging job but, at its pinnacle, it's also fun. The hashtag #emailgeeks is a thing for a reason — people really enjoy this work — and that passion can greatly benefit your organization if you're willing to provide your team with the time and tools they need to unleash their creativity on the world. Never settle. Strive for nothing less than the best your team can produce. Anything that's standing in the way needs to be expendable.



## **We are disrupting the enterprise email software industry.**

MessageGears is the only email marketing platform exclusively built for today's enterprise. We empower the world's most demanding marketers to deliver more relevant emails, faster and more flexibly than legacy cloud ESPs. Our unique Hybrid technology connects directly with a company's database, enabling marketers to maximize the value of their customer data in real time – no syncing required. Join sophisticated marketers at Orbitz, Ebates, and Expedia who rely on MessageGears to deliver more personalized email campaigns that grow their business.

For more information, please visit [www.messagegears.com](http://www.messagegears.com).

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