



DIGITAL AGENCY

2026 Higher Ed Marketing Outlook:

How **120+** Marketing Leaders Are Advancing **Digital Strategy** for Visibility and Enrollment Growth

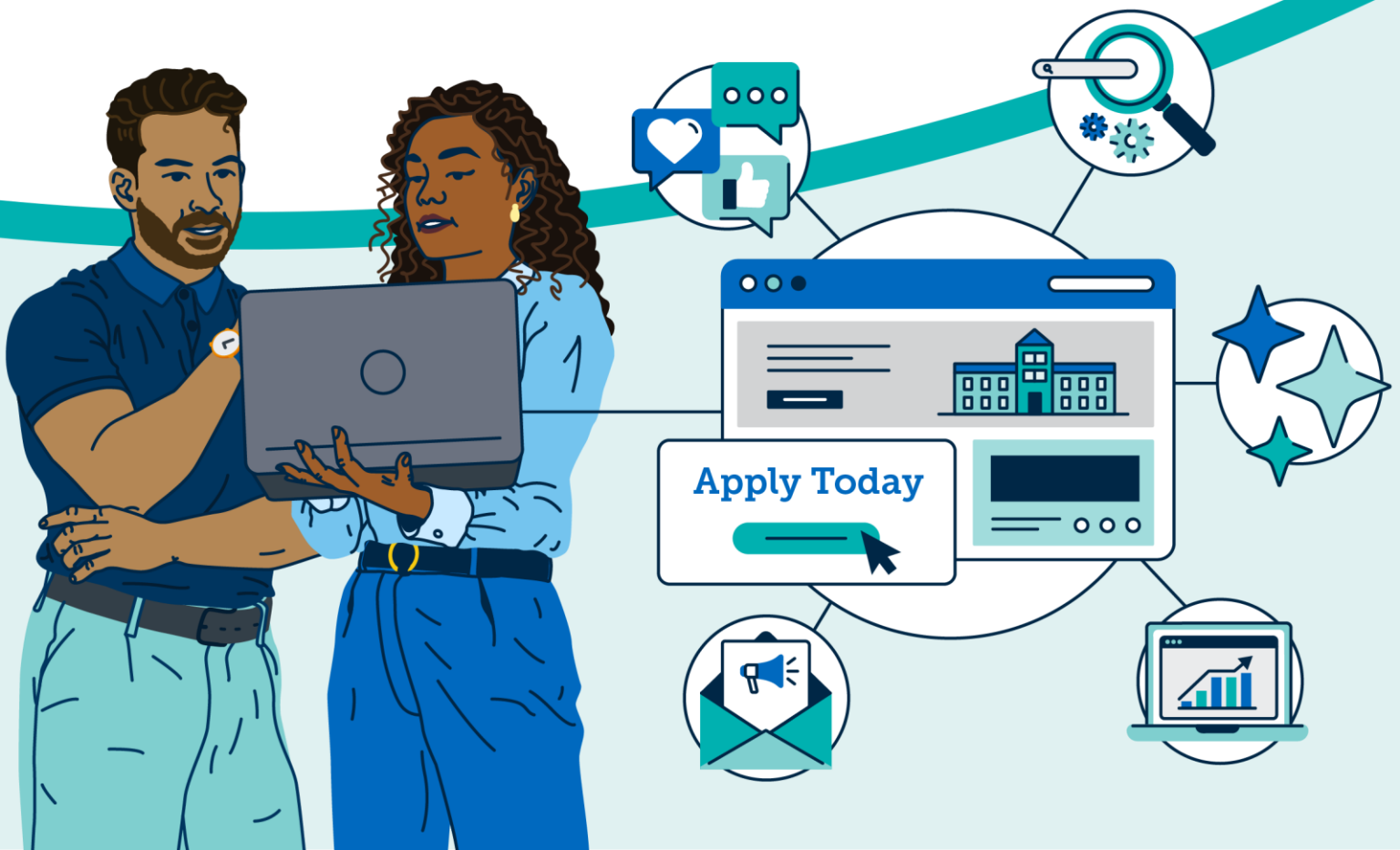


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Executive Overview



Flat Budgets, Opportunity Gaps, and Smarter Visibility Strategies

Higher education marketing leaders continue to operate in a reality of flat budgets, shrinking teams, and increasing expectations to demonstrate measurable impact on enrollment. While 61% of enrollment marketing dollars support digital efforts, spending growth has stalled, prompting marketing leaders to reduce reliance on paid media. Savvy leaders are instead leveraging the marketing assets they own, especially the .edu, brand, and organic search, to drive visibility and enrollment.

Marketing leaders consistently name enrollment as their top strategic priority. However, many deprioritize [optimizing the .edu experience](#)—the most powerful and measurable link between marketing spend and enrollment results, driving inquiry generation and conversion across every stage of the funnel. This disconnect reflects an opportunity gap in institutional marketing strategy.

At the same time, AI is reshaping how students search for and engage with institutions, raising the stakes for digital visibility and performance. The combination of rising expectations and constrained resources is pushing marketing leaders to rethink how they sustain reach and brand strength in an increasingly competitive landscape.



How This Report Helps Marketing Leaders Compete

EAB surveyed 121 higher ed marketing executives and learned how they're adapting digital and brand strategies to meet enrollment goals. The report highlights key findings across strategic priorities, budget trends and areas of planned investment, channel strategies, and the next wave of AI usage. These insights are paired with recommendations to help leaders strengthen digital performance and enrollment outcomes through smarter visibility strategies.

► *Where possible, statistically significant differences by institutional characteristics and respondent type are noted to help draw conclusions from your most direct peer set.*

About the Survey

121

Leaders responsible for institutional and enrollment marketing

Profile of Institutions in Sample:*

- **Titles:** CMO, VP of Marketing, AVP of Marketing, Executive Director
- **Institution type:** Large public and private, regional private, regional public, selective
- **Institution structure:** Public, private
- **Size:** small, midsized, and large institutions

31

Questions asked

Survey Questions Included:

- What are the top priorities for your enrollment marketing strategy this year?
- Over the next 12–18 months, how will the amount you are spending in key digital enrollment marketing functions change?
- What AI-driven tools or capabilities are you most interested in exploring in the next year?

*For more details about survey respondents, refer to page 21 of this report.

Sources: EAB 2025 survey of marketing leaders; EAB research and analysis.



Strategic Priorities and Barriers to Success

Leaders Focus on Enrollment Growth but Are Constrained by Resources

INSIGHT

1

The Overlooked Priority: Digital Experience

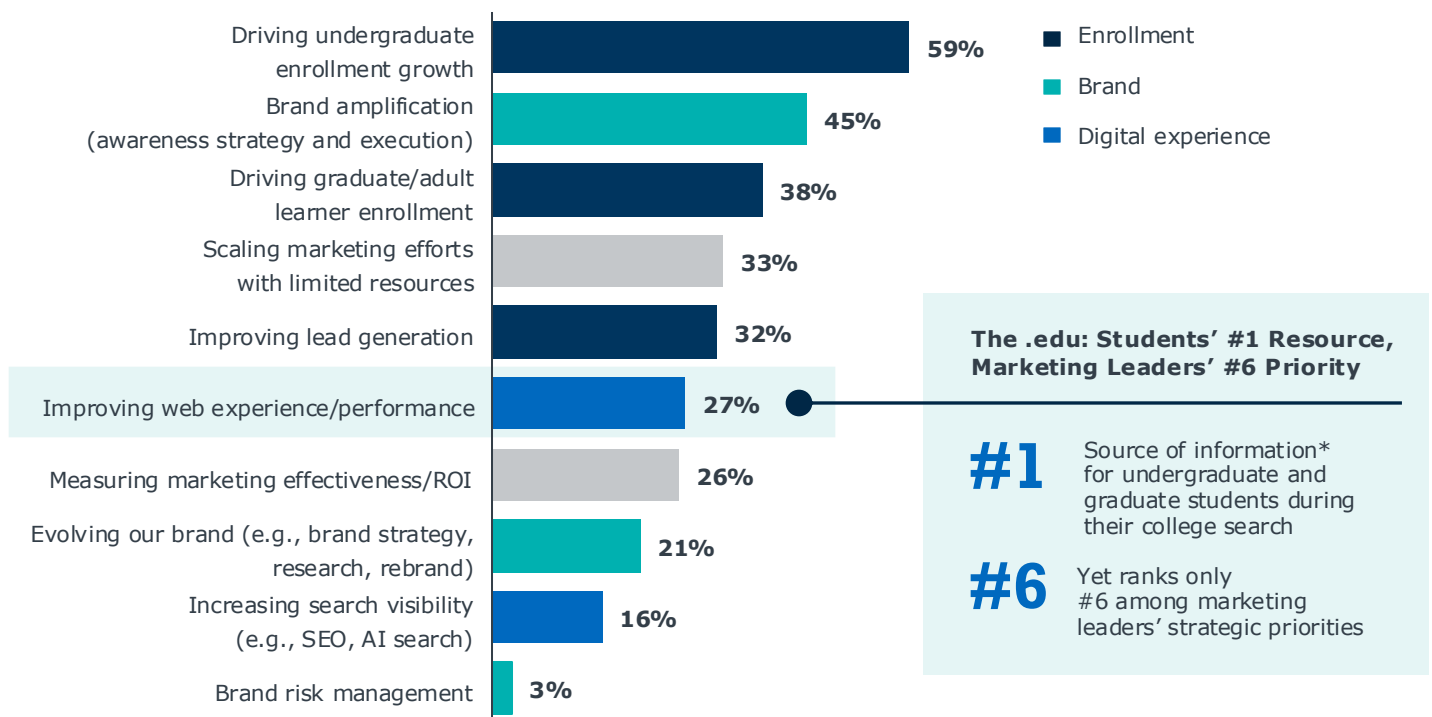
Enrollment and Brand Dominate Priorities—but .edu Visibility Is the Missing Link

Marketing leaders are balancing near-term enrollment targets with the long-term imperative to strengthen brand visibility in AI-driven discovery. Undergraduate enrollment remains the top focus, but the growing attention on brand amplification signals a turning point: Leaders see that awareness now fuels next year's funnel. While graduate enrollment ranks third, it still accounts for nearly 40% of net tuition revenue, underscoring the need to engage and convert those audiences through more agile digital strategies. This emphasis on enrollment and scaling efforts highlights how marketing leaders are focused on protecting enrollment gains, especially amid shrinking student pools, tighter budgets, and growing pressure to demonstrate marketing's impact.

Yet a gap remains: Few institutions rank web experience or search visibility among their top priorities, though they're the foundation that connects brand visibility to conversion. A strong, [AI-ready .edu experience](#) provides the clearest proof that marketing drives applications, yield, and ultimately, tuition revenue.

Which of the following are top priorities for your enrollment marketing strategy this year?

Top three priorities selected



Brand Marketing's New Urgency

While respondents allocated just 24% of marketing budgets to brand, it consistently appeared as a top-three priority across every institutional segment. [Brand marketing is gaining new urgency](#) as AI reshapes how students discover colleges and as organic reach declines. With more students researching independently and forming opinions long before they reach a school's website or inquiry form, a strong brand is now essential to earning attention early in the search journey.

At the same time, visibility now defines brand strength. A school's digital presence—especially how it appears in search and AI-generated results—has become central to reputation and reach. Marketing leaders recognize that amplifying brand through digital channels isn't just about awareness; it's what drives future demand and, ultimately, student choice.

Related Resource

Scan the QR code or visit eab.com/brand-marketing



*Tied with college search sites

Sources: EAB 2025 survey of marketing leaders; Adult Learner Recruitment Survey 2025; [Student Communications Preferences Survey 2025](#); [Benchmarking Graduate and Online Enrollment 2025](#); EAB research and analysis.

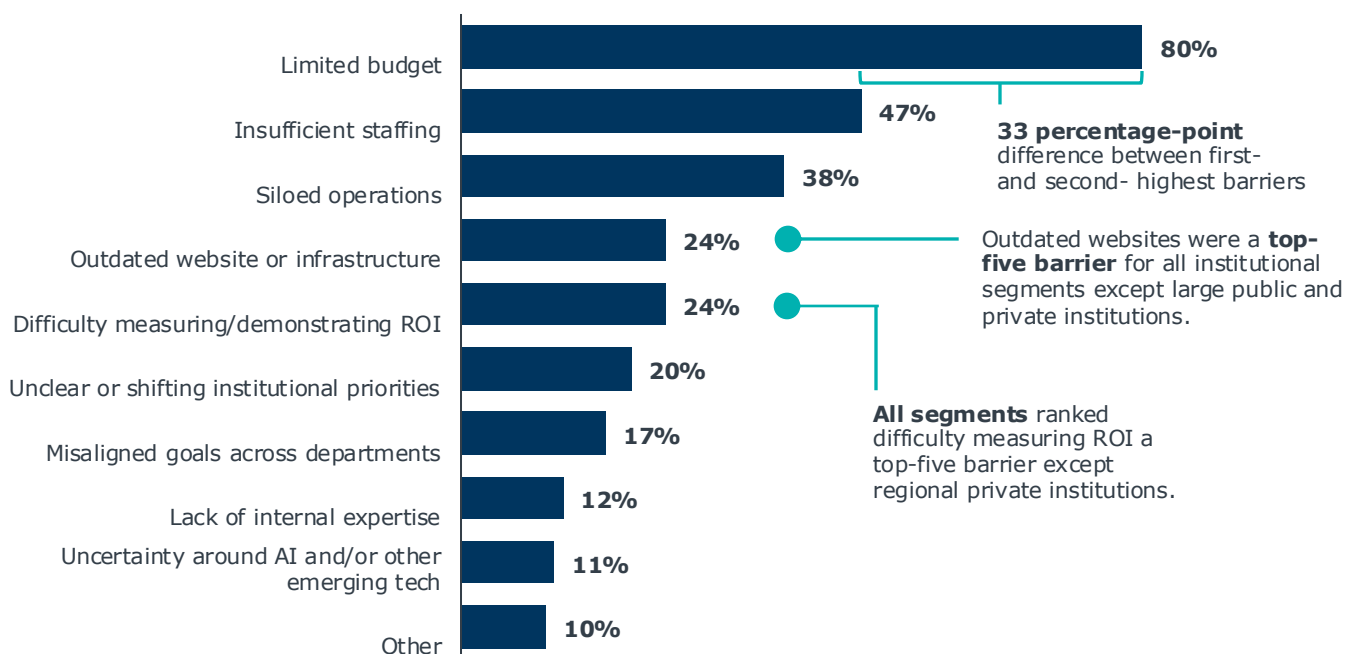
Budget and Staffing Limit Progress on Digital Goals

When Strategy Meets Capacity Limitations

While marketing leaders' priorities center on enrollment and brand, insufficient staffing and resources reveal why many institutions struggle to translate strategy into measurable digital impact. Four in five marketing leaders cite limited budgets as their top obstacle, followed by staffing and siloed operations. Private institutions reported budget constraints most often (75%), followed closely by public institutions (70%), underscoring that funding pressures cut across the sector.

Yet beneath those issues lies a bigger challenge: limited capacity to execute the right digital strategies at scale. Marketing teams know what to do—personalize content, improve site performance, optimize for AI search—but not how to do it quickly with the people and tools they have in place. About one in three marketing leaders said they are already realigning priorities to counter these challenges, with 33% identifying “scaling efforts with limited resources” as a top-three strategic focus. Leaders want to grow enrollment but feel underresourced, a tension that drives them to seek partners who can deliver measurable results without expanding staff.

Which of the following are the main barriers to achieving your enrollment marketing goals? (Top three barriers selected)



In Their Own Words

Verbatim responses to this question: "What do you expect to be your biggest challenge for the coming year?"

- ▶ "Budget and staffing to support a revamped website"
- ▶ "Balancing increasing demands against limited resources"
- ▶ "Competing for an increasingly smaller number of students in a saturated market"
- ▶ "Adapting to AI search"
- ▶ "Convincing people that higher education is worth the investment"
- ▶ "Managing with a 25% reduction in communications and marketing staffing due to budget cuts"

Source: EAB research and analysis.



How Marketing Leaders Fund and Structure Their Work

Adapting Budgets and Teams to Meet Higher Expectations

INSIGHT

2

The Growing Divide Between Expectations and Resources

Teams Are Lean, Underresourced

The average marketing division includes 22.1 full-time employees (FTE), with just over two staff per digital area. Paid Search and advertising are the least resourced, averaging fewer than two team members. Across institution types, staffing levels vary with size and funding, but the pressure to perform above capacity persists in all segments.

Nearly half of marketing leaders cite insufficient staffing among their top barriers to achieving enrollment goals, and one in ten points to a lack of internal expertise.

Small teams often rely on generalists who have limited time to stay ahead of emerging tactics. This reality underscores the importance of external support and systems that expand staff capacity while still delivering results.

22.1 Full-time employees (FTE) in average marketing division

FTEs by Marketing Area

Web marketing	2.7
Email marketing	2.1
Paid Search/advertising	1.6
Social media	1.7
Lead generation	2.2

Marketing Leaders Redefine How to Meet Expanding Demands

Over the past three years, 65% of marketing leaders said their responsibilities have grown faster than their resources. The squeeze is most acute for regional institutions, especially publics, which also report the smallest marketing teams and budgets.

Rather than focusing on the familiar refrain of limited staff and funding, many leaders are shifting attention to how they meet growing expectations. They are [modernizing staffing structures](#), testing automation and AI, and prioritizing training and cross-campus alignment to maintain marketing momentum. Ultimately, this widening gap between expectations and resources is driving a new era of operational creativity. Institutions that rethink capacity models and focus on measurable digital impact are better positioned to sustain enrollment growth despite static budgets.

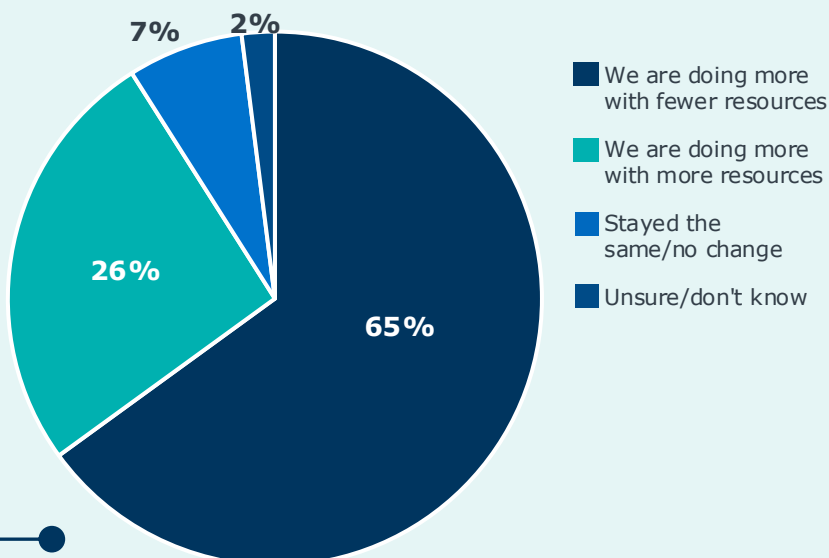
Over the past three years (since 2022), how has the scope of your team's workload changed relative to your resources (e.g., staff, budget, technology)?

Marketing leaders being asked to do more with *more* resources are more likely to be ...

- VPs (compared to CMOs, AVPs, and EDs)
- Large public and private institutions
- Selective institutions

Marketing leaders being asked to do more with *fewer* resources are more likely to be ...

- CMOs (compared to VPs, AVPs, and EDs)
- Regional public and private institutions
- Medium-sized institutions



Source: EAB research and analysis.

Resources Under Pressure

Budgets Stay Flat as Expectations Climb

A majority of survey respondents (69%) reported that marketing budgets either remained flat or decreased from academic year (AY) 2024–25 to 2025–26, while only 32% saw an increase. Regional privates reported the highest share of increases (42%), while large publics and privates reported the largest share of losses (21%). These flat budgets come as marketing costs continue to rise, particularly as [AI-driven search reshapes visibility and competition](#).

Most marketing leaders are being asked to deliver more impact with the same dollars and are responding by redirecting spend toward owned channels such as their website and organic search. While budget scarcity remains a real threat, marketing leaders are not without control. Many are rethinking resourcing, insourcing strategically where expertise can be built, and partnering externally where speed and specialization matter most. Flexible staffing models that can scale quickly are helping teams maintain momentum.

Budget Benchmarks

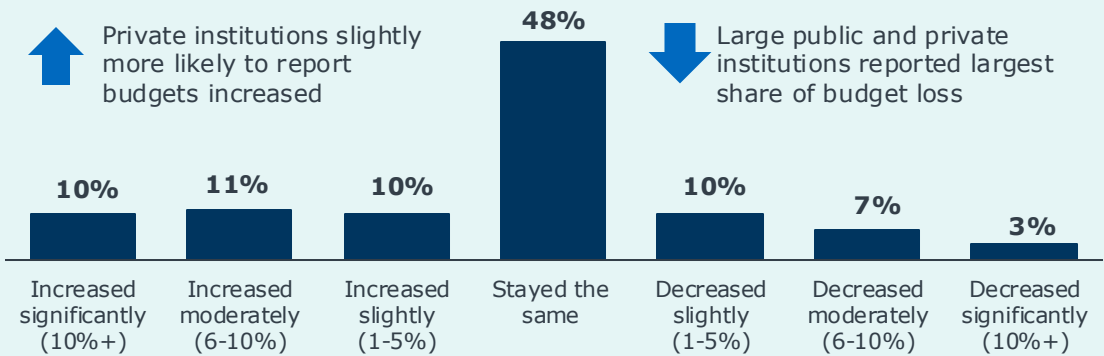
69%

of enrollment marketing budgets remained flat or decreased YOY

31%

of enrollment marketing budgets increased YOY

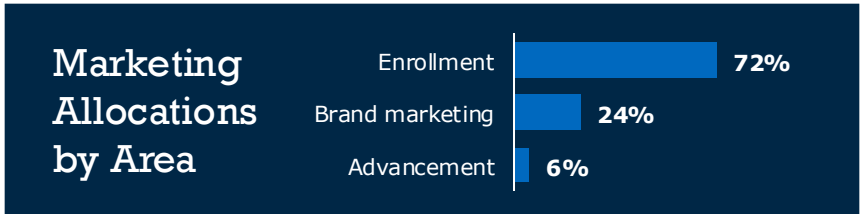
How has your digital enrollment marketing budget changed since last year (AY 2024–2025)?



Stable Allocations amid Uncertain Budgets

Respondents reported an average marketing budget of \$4.15 million, allocating roughly half to staffing (\$1.97M) and half to non-staff (\$1.94M) expenses. Budget fluidity remains high: 44% of marketing leaders were uncertain about their staffing budgets, and 31% were uncertain about non-staff budgets, reflecting how often marketing funds shift midyear.

Allocation patterns, however, are consistent. On average, 72% of budgets go toward enrollment, 24% toward brand, and 6% toward advancement, with 61% of enrollment marketing dollars devoted to digital. These numbers confirm that, even under constraint, higher ed marketing is becoming digital-first and performance-driven.



Total Budget and Digital Focus

\$4.15M

Average overall marketing budget

61%

of enrollment marketing dollars are allocated for digital marketing on average

Extending Capacity Through Strategic Partnerships

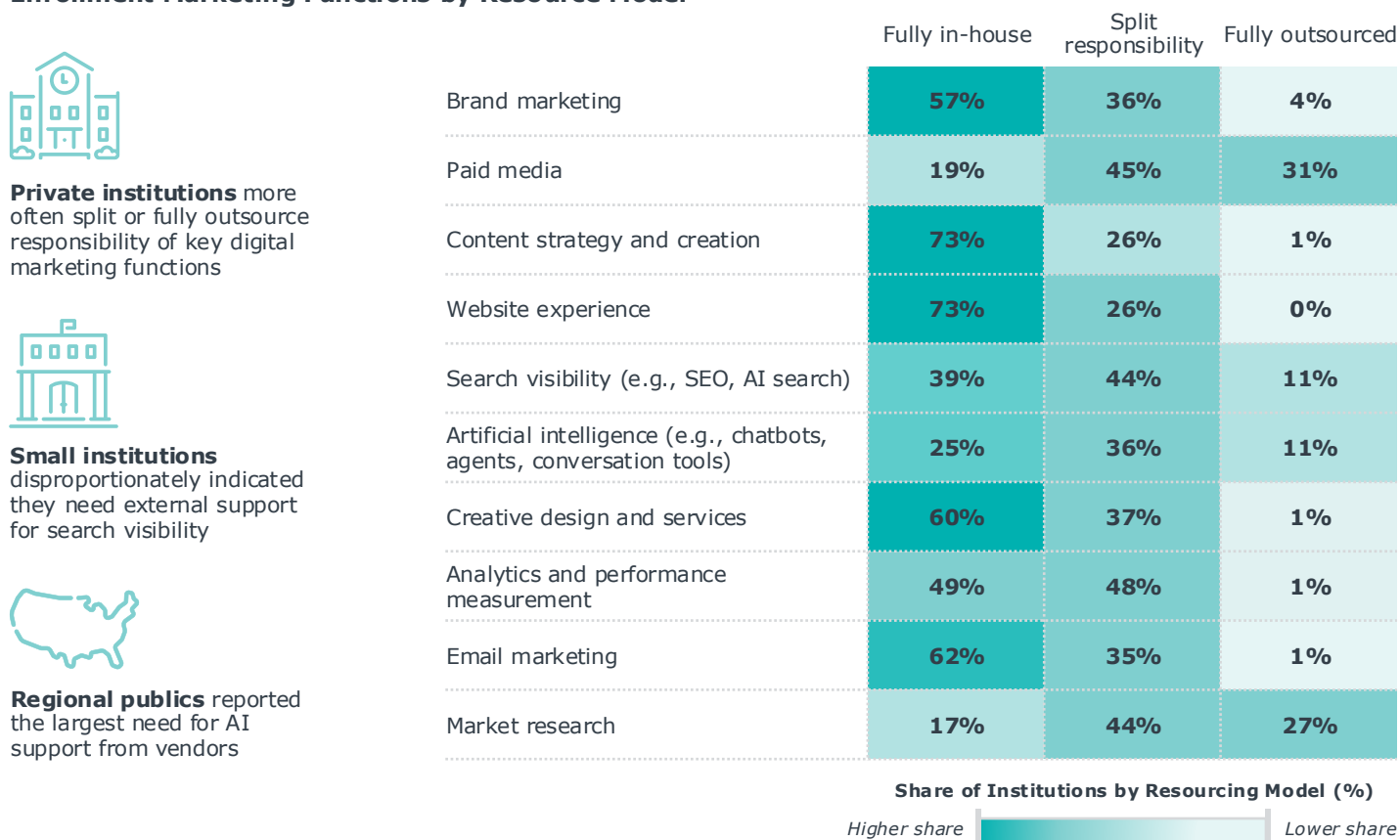
How High-Impact Work Gets Done

Nearly all marketing teams supplement internal capacity with external partners. Ninety-three percent report using vendor support, and three in four work with two or more partners. Partnerships are most common in Paid Search (76%) and market research (71%), while AI support is the most frequently cited area of unmet vendor need (53%).

Most teams keep day-to-day execution of assets such as content strategy and web experience in-house and rely on partners for specialized or high-impact work. However, as marketing leaders plan to increase spending on search visibility, brand, and AI tools, these models are beginning to evolve.

The most effective institutions treat vendors as extensions of their teams, collaborating on outcomes rather than transactions. Smart partnerships are no longer optional; they are how lean teams deliver enterprise-level marketing impact. Institutions that combine internal insight with specialized support are moving faster, proving ROI sooner, and protecting brand strength. Ultimately, investments in the .edu, search visibility, content strategy, and applied AI are not just tactical—they connect marketing activity directly to key enrollment metrics.

Enrollment Marketing Functions by Resource Model



Private institutions more often split or fully outsource responsibility of key digital marketing functions



Small institutions disproportionately indicated they need external support for search visibility



Regional publics reported the largest need for AI support from vendors

Strategy Recommendations

- ▶ **Rebuild budgets around ROI, not tactics:** Prioritize investments that tie directly to applications, yield, and net-tuition outcomes each cycle.
- ▶ **Adopt an elastic team model:** Pair in-house brand expertise with external specialists to scale technical execution and analytics without expanding staff.

Source: EAB research and analysis.



Evolving Channel Strategies

A Shift to Owned Assets That Strengthen Visibility and Paid Efficiency

INSIGHT

3

Your .edu: #1 in Effectiveness for Driving Enrollment

What Marketing Assets Drive Enrollment?

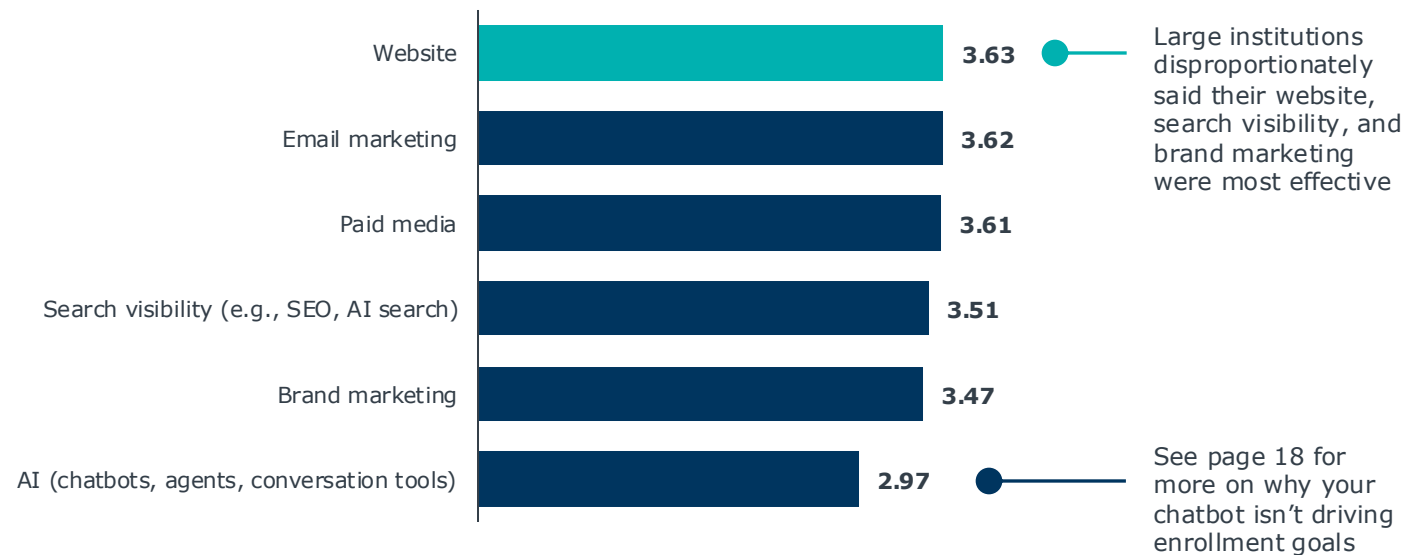
Marketing leaders ranked [the .edu as their most effective marketing asset](#), ahead of paid media and email marketing. EAB's student research mirrors these findings: Prospective students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels consistently identify an institution's website* as their #1 resource when exploring colleges, even when using AI platforms to search for information.

Your website is now your most powerful enrollment driver, and falling behind comes at a cost. In a time of AI-driven discovery, schools whose sites are invisible in search or underperform as lead capture tools risk losing prospective students before they even reach the funnel.

Notably, the top two most effective marketing assets, the .edu and email, are both "owned" channels—those that teams can fully control and measure. As AI reshapes visibility and the performance of paid media, institutions that strengthen their owned foundations can reduce long-term dependency on paid channels while continuing to drive sustainable enrollment growth.

How effective are the following aspects of your digital-marketing strategy in contributing to your enrollment goals?

Scale of 1-5, with 1=not effective and 5=extremely effective



Explore Resources to Optimize Your .edu for Enrollment

Access the latest trends in today's student enrollment journey—and how to **turn your .edu into an AI-ready enrollment engine**.

[Optimize your .edu for conversion and enrollment](#)

[Explore the latest undergraduate trends](#)

[Get new insights on graduate, adult and online learners](#)

#1

Your .edu is the **most effective** marketing asset in driving enrollment

*Tied with college search sites.

Source: EAB research and analysis.

Reallocating Budgets Toward What Works Best

Leaders Prioritize Owned Channels over Paid Growth

Given the value and efficacy of owned channels, a growing share of marketing leaders are reallocating budgets toward areas they can control and measure. Owned assets such as the .edu, brand, and search visibility will lead investment areas for the next 12–18 months. Nearly half of respondents plan to increase spend in search visibility and more than one-third in AI tools. Still, 23% are unsure how to allocate their AI-related spend over the next year, revealing a gap between intent and execution.

This reallocation isn't just tactical; it's strategic. By scaling investments in foundational assets such as site performance and [search visibility](#), institutions build resilience against rising ad costs and declining organic reach. To make these investments count, owned assets—anchored by an AI-optimized .edu—must serve as the foundation of enrollment strategy, converting visibility into traffic, inquiries, and applications.

Over the next 12–18 months, how will the amount you are spending in the following areas of your digital enrollment marketing budget change?



In a flat-budget world and with AI reshaping search, **leaders are shifting focus to owned sources** and decreasing market research



Search visibility and AI tools were the only areas where plans to **"increase spend" outpaced "stay the same"**



23% of leaders remain unsure how their AI-related spend will change in the next year

	Increase	Stay the same	Decrease	Unsure
Paid media	36%	45%	11%	8%
Brand marketing	37%	45%	9%	5%
Content strategy and creation	29%	59%	5%	6%
Website experience	42%	43%	8%	5%
Search visibility (e.g., SEO, AI search)	46%	42%	6%	5%
Artificial intelligence (e.g., chatbots, agents, conversation tools)	37%	32%	0%	23%
Creative design and services	20%	64%	11%	2%
Analytics and performance measurement	30%	61%	2%	6%
Email marketing	19%	68%	7%	2%
Market research	31%	35%	19%	7%

Share of Marketing Leaders Planning to Adjust Spend* (%)

Greater share Lower share

*White cells represent "stay the same" and "unsure" responses.

A Look Across Segments

- ▶ Large public and private institutions and regional privates are leaning most boldly into search visibility, web experience, and AI, giving them a competitive advantage in the digital landscape.
- ▶ Private institutions are planning to shift focus to search visibility more quickly than publics (54.2% compared to 36.1%).
- ▶ Regional publics appeared the most constrained in terms of proposed increases, which makes sense as they also had the largest share of flat budgets.

Source: EAB research and analysis.

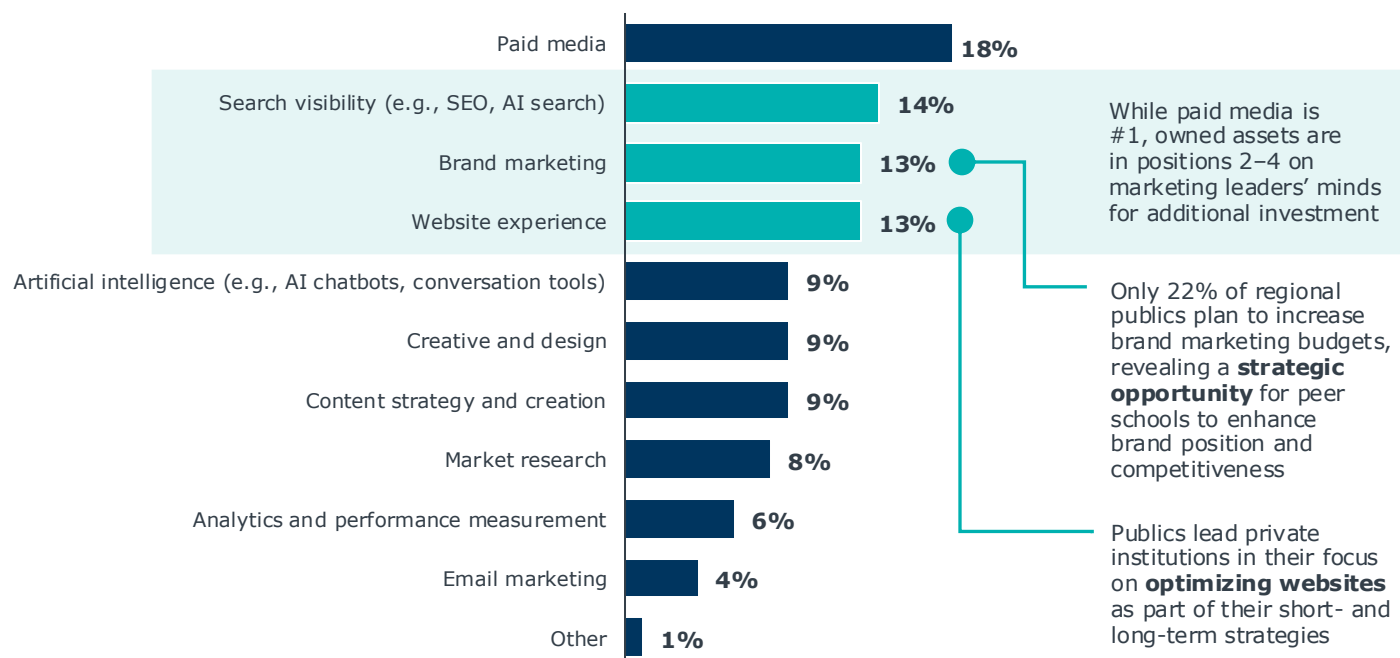
Where Leaders Would Spend New Funding

Paid Media Still Tops the Wish List as Owned Channels Gain Ground

If given additional budget, marketing leaders would direct it toward owned and emerging channels, particularly search visibility, website experience, and AI tools, just behind paid media. This reinforces that leaders increasingly view these foundational assets as the engine of long-term efficiency and growth across the funnel.

Large public and private institutions, along with regional privates, appear furthest ahead. Nearly half in these segments plan to expand investment in search visibility and web experience, and both groups said they would go even further with additional funding. For institutions still early in this shift, the takeaway is clear: The schools investing now will define digital competitiveness in the next cycle.

If you had a larger budget for enrollment marketing, where would you allocate the additional dollars? Indicate what percentage of the additional budget would be allocated for each function.



Protecting Enrollment Starts with an AI-Proof Digital Strategy

AI tools, search visibility, and website experience are becoming essential links between brand and enrollment. As AI-driven discovery expands, a [strong website is no longer a nice-to-have but a strategic necessity](#)—the authoritative source that determines how institutions appear and perform in AI search.

Schools investing in site performance, content quality, and technical optimization are best positioned to maintain reach and convert prospective students more effectively. Large publics and regional privates are leading this shift, reallocating spend and prioritizing owned ecosystems that improve efficiency and performance across every channel.

Related Resource

Scan the QR code or visit eab.com/digital-agency



Source: EAB research and analysis.

Diversifying Channels to Strengthen the Funnel

Balancing Paid, Organic, and Emerging Channels

Across segments, marketing leaders continue to rely on a [mix of channels to feed the enrollment funnel](#). In-person outreach remains the most effective source (3.81), followed closely by the .edu (3.61) and paid digital media (3.59). Organic SEO and purchased test-taker lists perform moderately well, reflecting the ongoing value of owned visibility and validated data.

Paid media continues to deliver high-intent leads but is becoming more difficult and costly to sustain. Reflecting this shift, 11% of leaders plan to decrease paid media spend in the next year. As AI-driven search reduces organic reach and drives up ad costs, institutions are shifting toward diversified strategies that balance organic, paid, and [pre-validated lead sources](#). Schools using this mix often see steadier lead flow and improved efficiency across the funnel.

Use and Effectiveness of Lead Sources

Scale of 1-5, with 1=not effective and 5=extremely effective

	Use	Efficacy	
In-person events/outreach	93%	3.81	
.edu site	93%	3.61	
Paid digital media (e.g., Paid Search, Paid Social)	90%	3.59	Large institutions rated organic search and the .edu disproportionately more effective for lead generation than smaller schools
Organic SEO	88%	3.38	
Purchased test-taker lists	84%	3.33	
Pay-per-lead platforms (e.g., Niche, Appily, U.S. News)	70%	3.04	PPL platforms tend to be even in effectiveness across school sizes
Chatbots or AI assistants	34%	2.59	

Social Media’s Expanding Role

As roughly 70% of Gen Z students now use [social channels](#) to search for colleges, visibility on these platforms is increasingly essential to discovery and brand consideration. Institutions that connect social content to owned channels—such as their .edu and inquiry forms—will see stronger brand visibility and steadier lead flow than those using social solely for storytelling.

Survey data shows that social platforms continue to play an upper-funnel role for most institutions. Marketing leaders report a greater emphasis on LinkedIn, with 54% considering it a significant part of their digital marketing strategy. In contrast, 59% said they no longer use X (formerly Twitter), reflecting its rapid decline.

Experimentation on newer or emerging platforms remains limited. The highest share of experimentation also centers on LinkedIn (39% overall), and all marketing leaders at regional publics (100%) reported using LinkedIn experimentally compared to just 5% of selective institutions.

Strategy Recommendations

- ▶ **Strengthen the owned foundation first:** Focus investment on the .edu, search visibility, and content that drives measurable enrollment outcomes.
- ▶ **Use Paid Search and Paid Social to amplify, not anchor:** Let paid campaigns extend your owned reach while directing audiences back to the .edu for conversion.



AI in Practice

From Experimentation to Personalization and Predictive Insight

INSIGHT

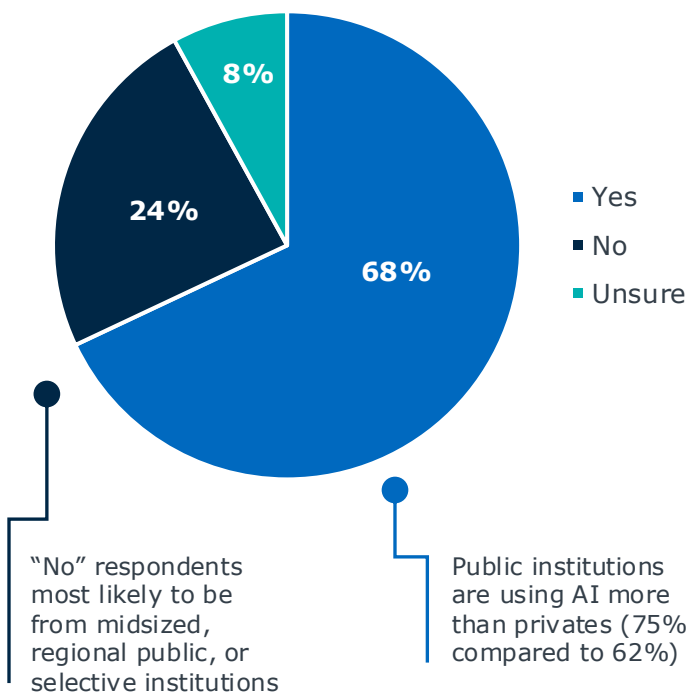
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A Surprising Gap in Current AI Usage

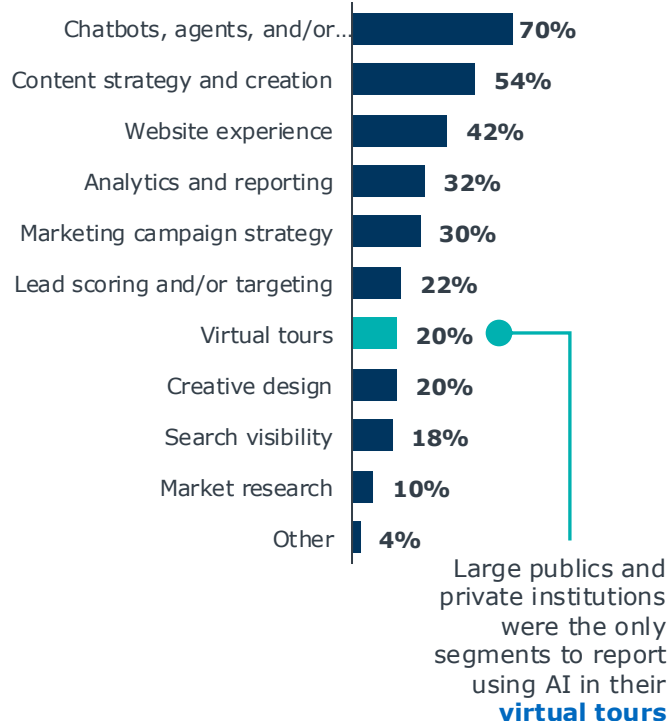
Most Are Using AI, but Integration Remains Shallow

Most marketing teams (68%) are now using AI in enrollment marketing, with publics leading adoption (75%) as compared to privates (62%). Yet nearly one in four teams are not yet using AI to enable enrollment marketing activities. Among users, AI is applied most often to chatbots (70%), content creation (54%), and website experience (42%). Far fewer marketing teams use it for analytics or lead scoring, where the ROI potential is highest.

Is your team currently using AI for any of your enrollment marketing efforts?



In which of the following areas is your team using AI for enrollment marketing efforts? (Select all that apply.)



AI's Impact on Enrollment Goals Leaves Opportunity on the Table

Despite broad adoption, AI has yet to demonstrate its full potential in enrollment marketing. Tools such as chatbots and conversation agents are widely used but often lack personalized knowledge bases, scalability, or integration with lead-capture workflows. Many remain disconnected from website updates and fail to stay aligned with brand messaging, leaving gaps in the user experience.

Schools that want a competitive edge should focus on [AI tools that personalize the website experience](#), align with content and SEO strategies, and automate lead follow-up. These applications help institutions prove ROI faster and deliver the real-time responsiveness that prospective students expect.

Related Resource

Scan the QR code or visit eab.com/ai-chat



Source: EAB research and analysis.

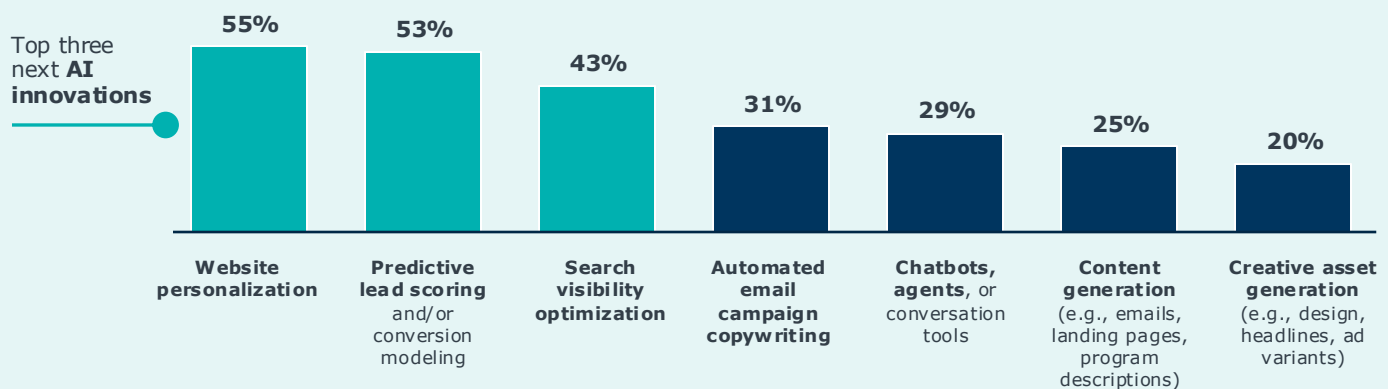
The Next Wave of AI Adoption

AI Moves from Automation to Personalization and Prediction

As marketing leaders gain confidence with AI, many are moving beyond simple copy generation toward tools that personalize the .edu experience and improve predictive lead scoring. Around half of survey respondents said these capabilities are their top priorities for the year ahead, highlighting a shift from AI experimentation to measurable early funnel impact.

This trend aligns with institutions' broader focus on owned assets, particularly their websites and search visibility, which remain the foundation of digital performance. Nearly 22% of current AI adopters already use AI for lead scoring, and interest in search visibility optimization continues to rise as AI-driven discovery reshapes how prospects find schools.

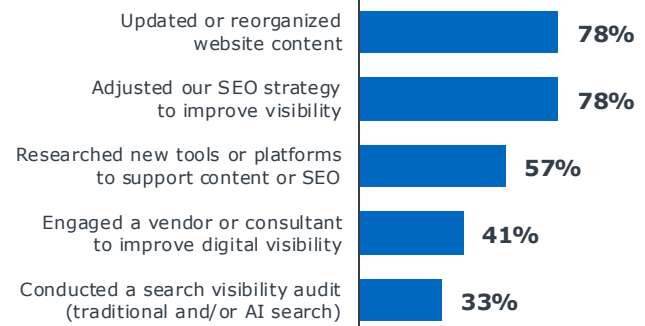
What AI-driven tools or capabilities are you most interested in exploring in the next year? (Select up to three.)



Interest Outpacing Implementation in AI Search Visibility

Most marketing leaders are actively monitoring and adjusting content and SEO to improve search visibility and engagement. Forty-one percent have already engaged a vendor or consultant to improve their results. Notably, nearly 60% had researched tools to adapt to AI search visibility as well. Yet only 33% have conducted a formal search visibility audit in the past 12 months. This gap suggests that while awareness is high, many teams still lack the data foundation needed to benchmark progress and adapt quickly as AI search evolves.

What actions has your team taken in the past year to improve students' search experience? (Select all that apply.)



Strategy Recommendations

- ▶ **Prioritize AI that personalizes and proves impact:** Invest in tools that enhance the .edu experience and improve conversion analytics, not just chat automation.
- ▶ **Audit and align content for AI search:** Conduct regular visibility and content audits to ensure your site is optimized for AI-driven discovery and measurable enrollment performance.

Source: EAB research and analysis.

Key Takeaways



The .edu opportunity gap persists

Enrollment remains the top strategic priority, yet many marketing leaders continue to deprioritize optimizing the .edu experience—the most powerful and measurable link between marketing spend and enrollment results. This disconnect creates a clear opportunity gap in institutional marketing strategy.



Your next step: Advance your enrollment strategy by anchoring your marketing efforts in your .edu—the most powerful driver of visibility, engagement, and conversion.



Owned media is central

Website, content, search, and brand remain the foundation of digital performance. With budgets flat and paid marketing costs rising, leaders are reallocating toward assets they control and can measure—channels that consistently deliver stronger, more measurable impact.



Your next step: Focus investment on refining these owned assets for stronger visibility, lead capture, and attribution across the funnel.



Capacity models are evolving

Institutions that rethink staffing structures and vendor partnerships and focus on measurable digital performance are better positioned to sustain enrollment growth despite static resources.



Your next step: Build flexible teams and partnerships that expand technical expertise and capacity without increasing permanent headcount.



Brand visibility drives future demand

As AI reshapes search and discovery, digital presence increasingly defines brand strength and institutional reputation. Schools that amplify brand through digital channels will reach students earlier, driving stronger awareness and future demand.



Your next step: Prioritize digital brand visibility that ensures your institution shows up where students search and engages them earlier in the journey to build long-term demand.



AI visibility and personalization define the next competitive edge

Most teams are experimenting with AI, but few understand how their institution appears in AI-driven search. Those that combine visibility with AI-powered personalization and predictive insight will be best positioned to drive measurable enrollment impact.



Your next step: Audit your .edu for AI search visibility, then invest in tools that personalize the site experience and drive enrollment impact across the funnel.

More Resources to Help You Stay Competitive

▶ *Insight Paper*
[Enrollment-optimize your website](#)

▶ *On-demand webinar*
[Is your .edu ready for AI search?](#)

▶ *Case Study*
[909% boost in AI Overview presence](#)

▶ *Blog*
[The CMO Playbook](#)

▶ *Blog*
[How AI disrupts your graduate lead pipeline](#)

▶ *Toolkit*
[Four tools to navigate AI search visibility](#)

Source: EAB research and analysis.

Research Overview

About the 2025 Marketing Leaders Survey

EAB’s University Research Partners conducted a survey of higher ed marketing leaders from August 5 to September 7, 2025. The survey asked heads of marketing about their strategic priorities, budget allocations and planned investments, channel strategies, and use of emerging AI tools. The findings in this report are based on responses from 121 marketing leaders.

Participant Profile

Marketing Role	
Vice President	55%
Chief Marketing Officer	16%
Executive Director	16%
Assistant Vice President	14%

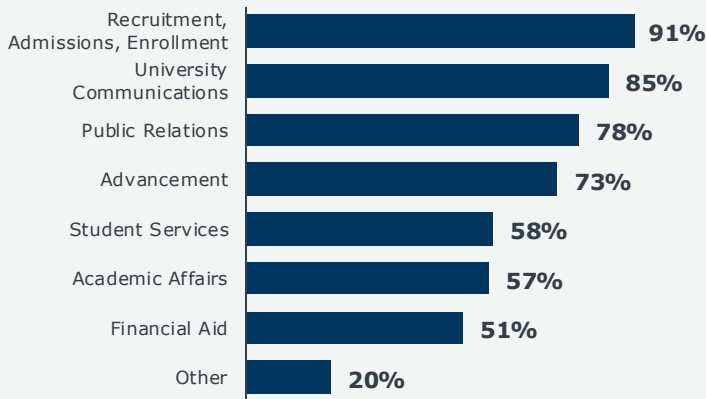


2–5 Years
Most common response to
time in current role (**44%**)

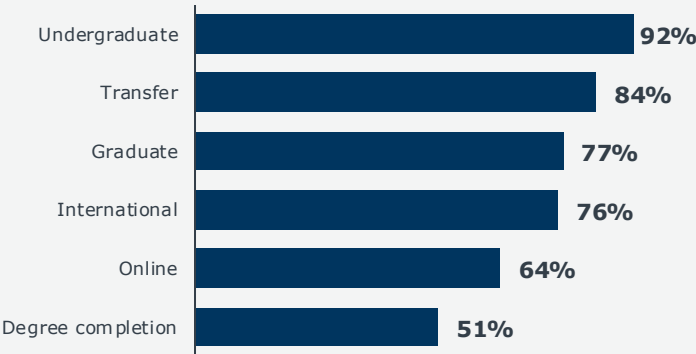


10+ Years
Most common response to years
worked in higher education (**79%**)

Functions Supported



Student Audiences Supported



Institution Structure	Institution Type	Marketing Focus
Private 57%	Large Public and Private 40%	MarComm 77%
Public 43%	Selective 26%	Enrollment 18%
	Regional Private 25%	Brand/Strategy 5%
	Regional Public 9%	

School Size (Number of Undergraduate Students)	
Small (<3,000)	38%
Medium (3,000–9,999)	24%
Large (10,000+)	38%

EAB's Digital Agency

AI-Ready .edu Optimization for Enrollment Growth

Turning Your .edu into Your Most Powerful Marketing Tool

User-Centric Website Content Strategy

Transforming .edu from content warehouse to marketing engine

Enrollment Marketing Best Practices

Backed by data from 1B+ student interactions and 25K students surveyed annually

AI-Forward Search Optimization for Higher Ed

Expert strategy aligned to search intent and AI visibility

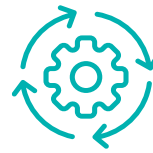
What Sets Us Apart



Experience across **all institution types and tech stacks**



Authoritative content strategy backed by best-practice research



Search and UX insights to inform **ongoing optimization**



Workshops and **professional development**

Proven Expertise

100+

Partner institutions served

200+

Combined years of enrollment marketing experience

360°

Website strategy in a single team

To learn more, visit eab.com/digital-agency or email LexRubyHowe@eab.com.

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