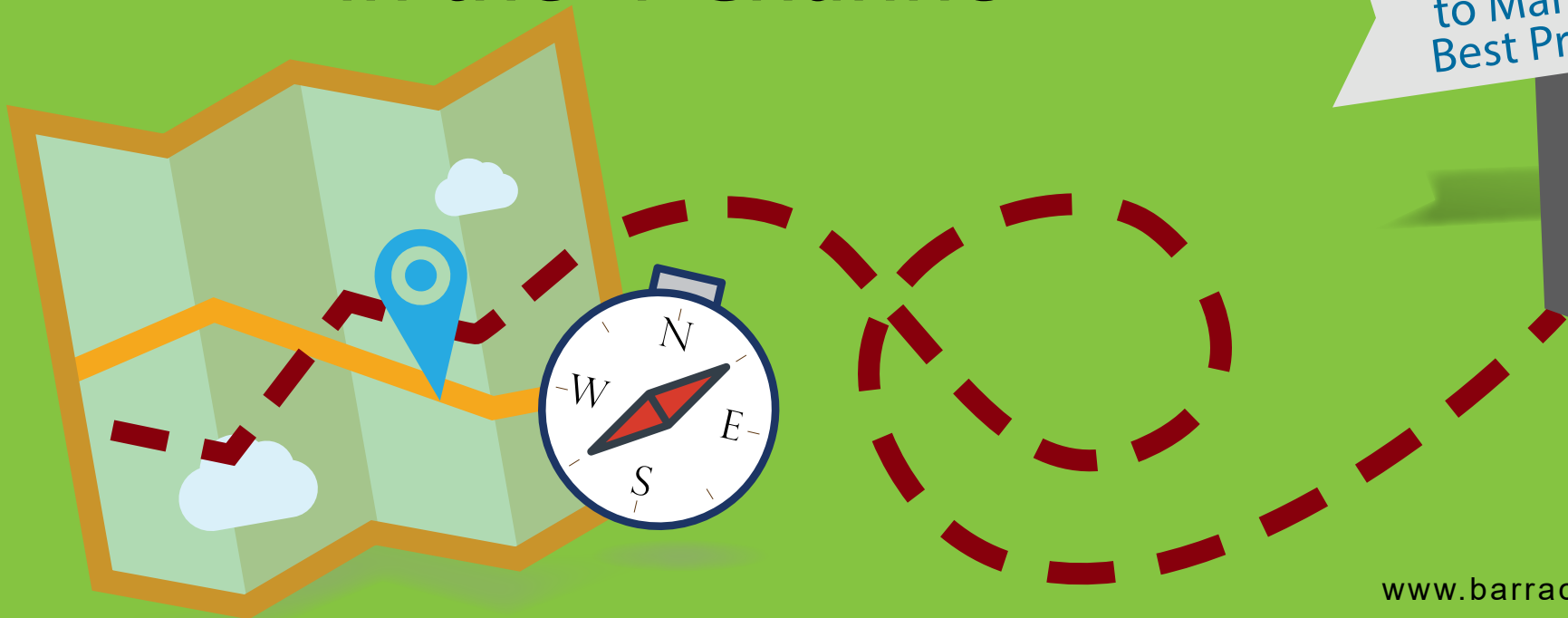




11 Habits of Highly Effective MSP Marketers:

A Field Guide to Marketing in the IT Channel

This Way to Marketing Best Practices



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Introduction

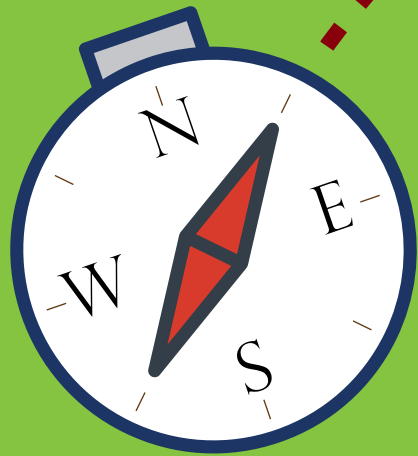
It's an unfortunate reality that marketing often gets overlooked or ignored by MSPs and IT service providers. For many, marketing is something that's outside their skill set and their comfort zone. For others, limited resources and competing priorities mean they don't have time to give marketing the attention it deserves.

Whatever the cause, though, the results are the same—these service providers are missing a critical opportunity to grow their business and make it more successful.

But as an IT service provider, how can you tell if you're doing enough marketing or spending your time on the right marketing tactics? To help answer this question, **we surveyed more than 150 IT service providers about their marketing habits** to find out what's working and what's not, and **the results were eye-opening**.

Overwhelmingly, **MSPs who feel highly confident that their marketing activities will help them achieve their business goals are doing more marketing across the board** in nearly every category than MSPs who aren't confident about their efforts. The gulf between the two is wide, and many of the things confident MSP marketers are doing, companies that aren't confident have no plans to address.

How do your marketing habits compare? Let's find out.



What confident
MSP marketers
have in common

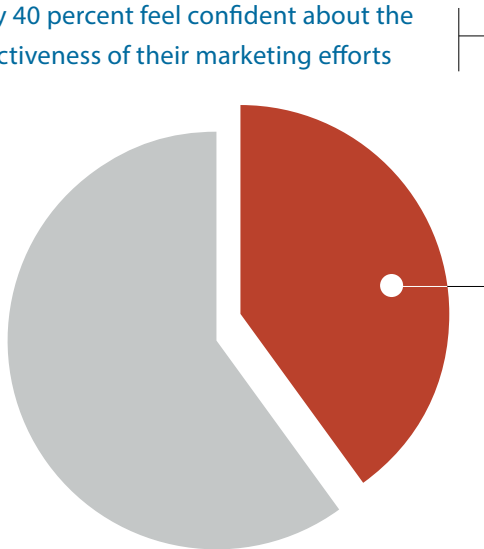


Larger companies are much more confident in their marketing than smaller companies.

This confidence is understandable because larger companies are also more likely to have at least one dedicated marketing resource, so they know marketing is getting consistent focus.

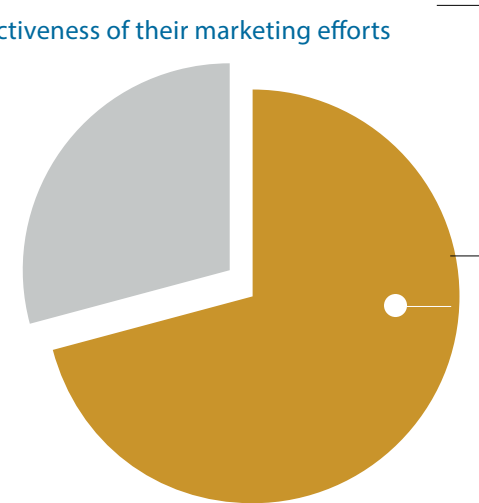
MSPs with less than 10 employees

Only 40 percent feel confident about the effectiveness of their marketing efforts



MSPs with less than 5 employees

71 percent are NOT confident in the effectiveness of their marketing efforts



“When discussing brand development strategies, MSPs should stop the ‘One size fits all messaging’ because it has lost its effectiveness.”

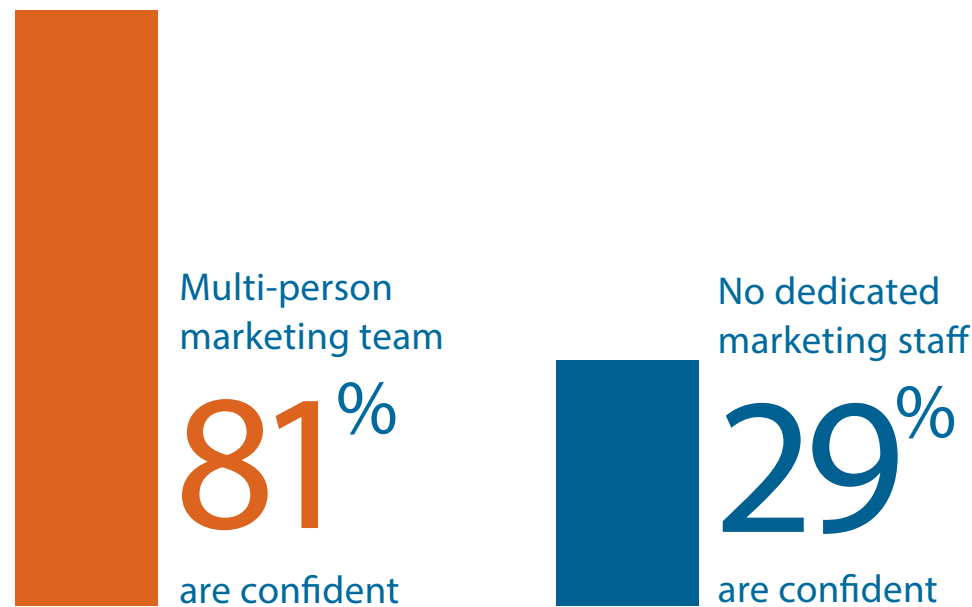
— Angela Leavitt, [How MSPs can develop their brand in 2020](#)

A larger marketing team translates to more confidence.

Companies with a multi-person marketing staff are almost three times more likely to be confident that their marketing efforts are helping them achieve their goals than companies with no dedicated marketing staff.

“Using a marketing engine to define your audience helps you crystalize that target in your mind, giving you a better chance of hitting it in the long-run.”

— Nate Freedman,
[Marketing engines for MSPs](#)



As marketing teams **get smaller,** **confidence goes down.**

That doesn't have to be the case, though. Vendors have tools that can help IT service providers with small teams execute their marketing efforts more easily and efficiently. For example, MSP Partners have access to the Barracuda MSP Partner Toolkit, a library of sales and marketing tools, including rebrandable marketing materials they can use.

"If you really want to win more customers for your MSP business, you need to build a strong promise statement and polish it however you can.

— Nate Freedman, [Polish your promise, win more customers](#)





What confident MSP marketers are doing



The marketing tactics that **confident marketers** are using most are:

Confident marketers are consistently using a wider variety of marketing tactics as part of their overall marketing strategy instead of focusing on just one approach.

37%



social media

29%



digital marketing

23%



web videos

22%



PR

22%



tradeshows

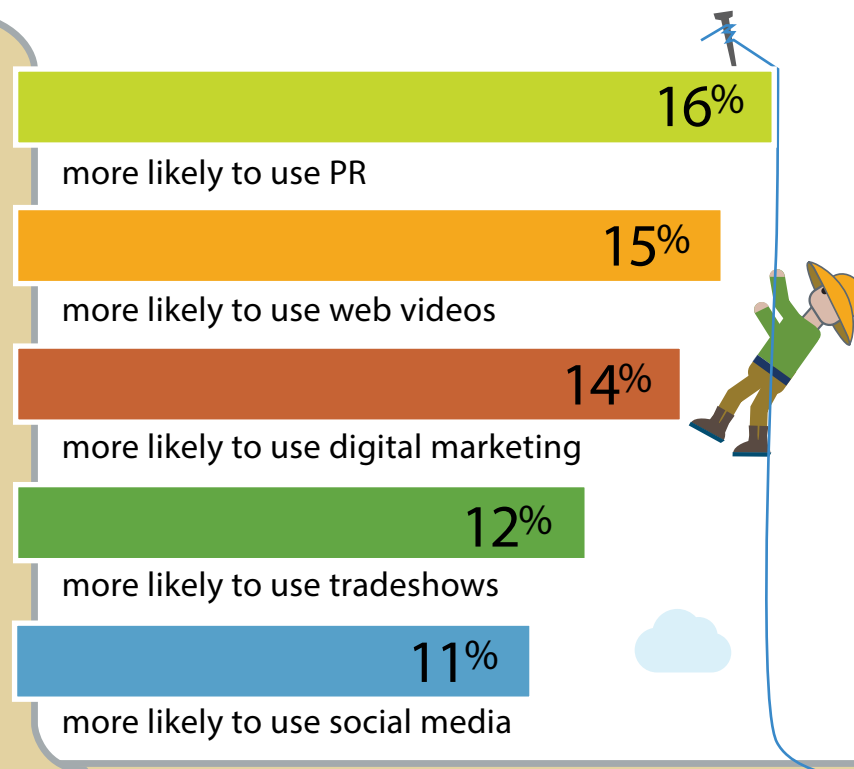
Confident marketers are also more likely to try **new marketing tactics**.

Incorporating these types of tactics help confident marketers build a more robust marketing strategy and creates more opportunities to test and refine new ideas.



“There are no such things as irredeemably boring products that cannot be rescued from commoditization — only people with boring ways of marketing and promoting.”

— Robin Robins, [How does your MSP marketing stack up against these four questions?](#)



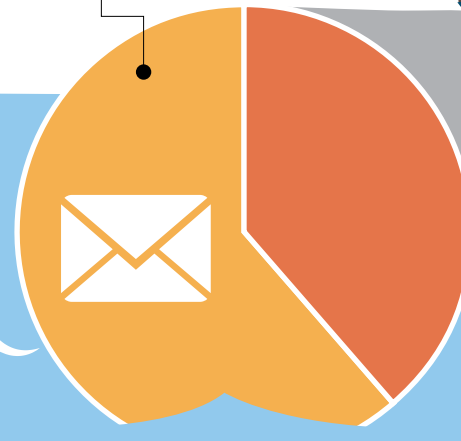
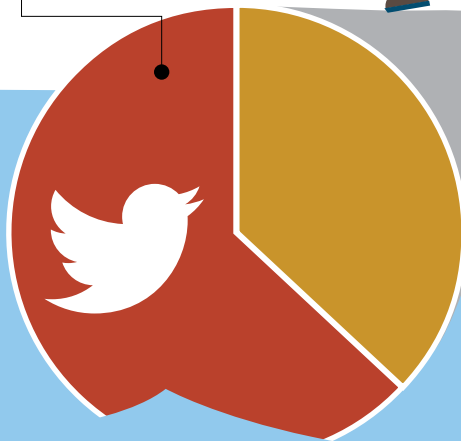
Social media and email marketing are top priorities for most MSP marketers.

These popular tactics are the backbone of many MSP marketing strategies, but confident marketers build on this foundation, using additional tactics to create a balanced approach.

63%
Use social
media



60%
Use email
marketing



More than one-third of marketers who aren't confident use social media marketing or plan to use it.

This indicates that they see the value in this marketing tactic but perhaps don't have resources available to put toward the effort.

Social media is a good way to get marketing messages out there quickly, or to raise issues where immediate action is required.

— Clive Longbottom, [Social media – an MSP's friend or foe?](#)

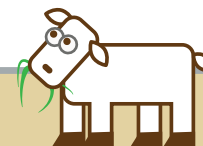
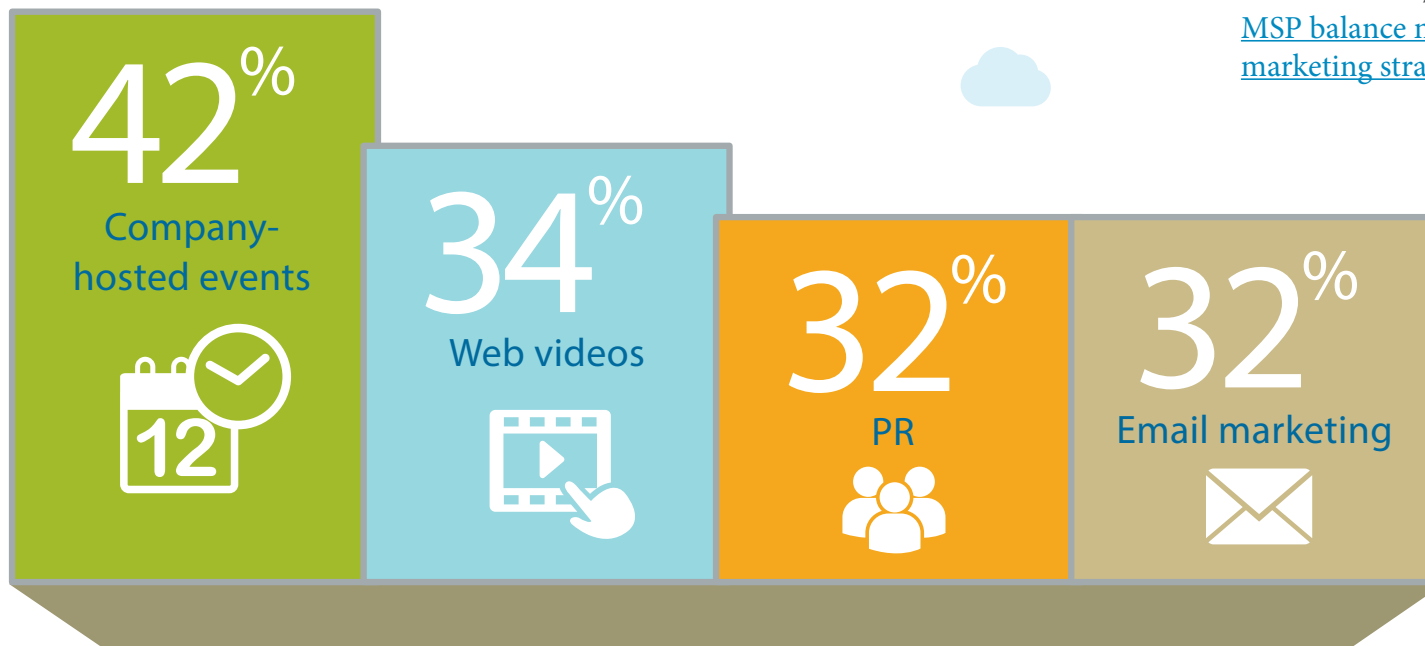


Marketing tactics MSPs plan to start using in the near future:

Company-hosted events are at the top of MSP marketers' to-do list. These types of events could include anything from lunch-and-learns to casual cocktail hours, and they give MSPs a good opportunity to connect with potential customers face-to-face.

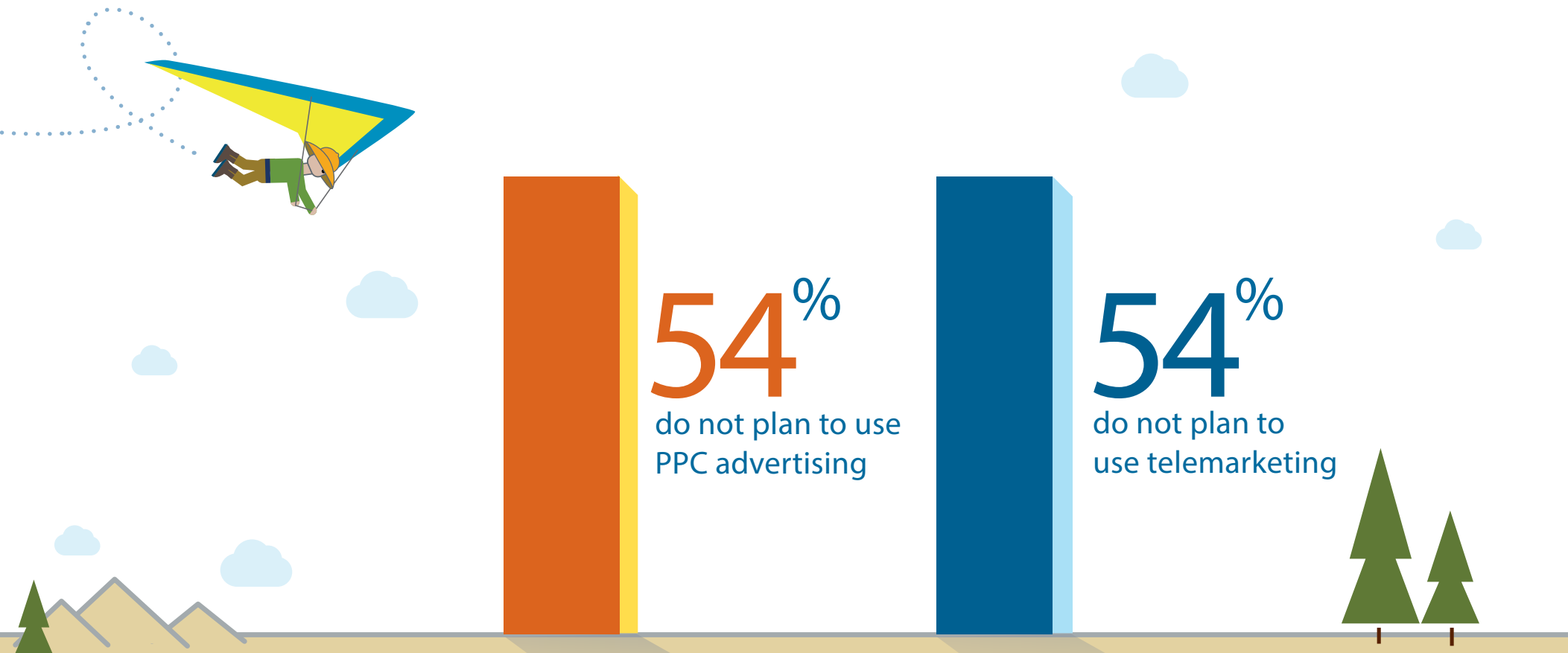
“Maintaining a balance between old and new marketing tactics won't be a challenge for MSPs who commit to making marketing a priority.”

— Derek Marin, [How can my MSP balance new and old marketing strategies?](#)



Most of the marketers surveyed do not plan to use PPC advertising or telemarketing.

This is short-sighted and creates an opportunity for MSPs who take the time to make an effort with these strategies. With fewer cold calls and PPC ads muddying the water, they can be more effective than ever.

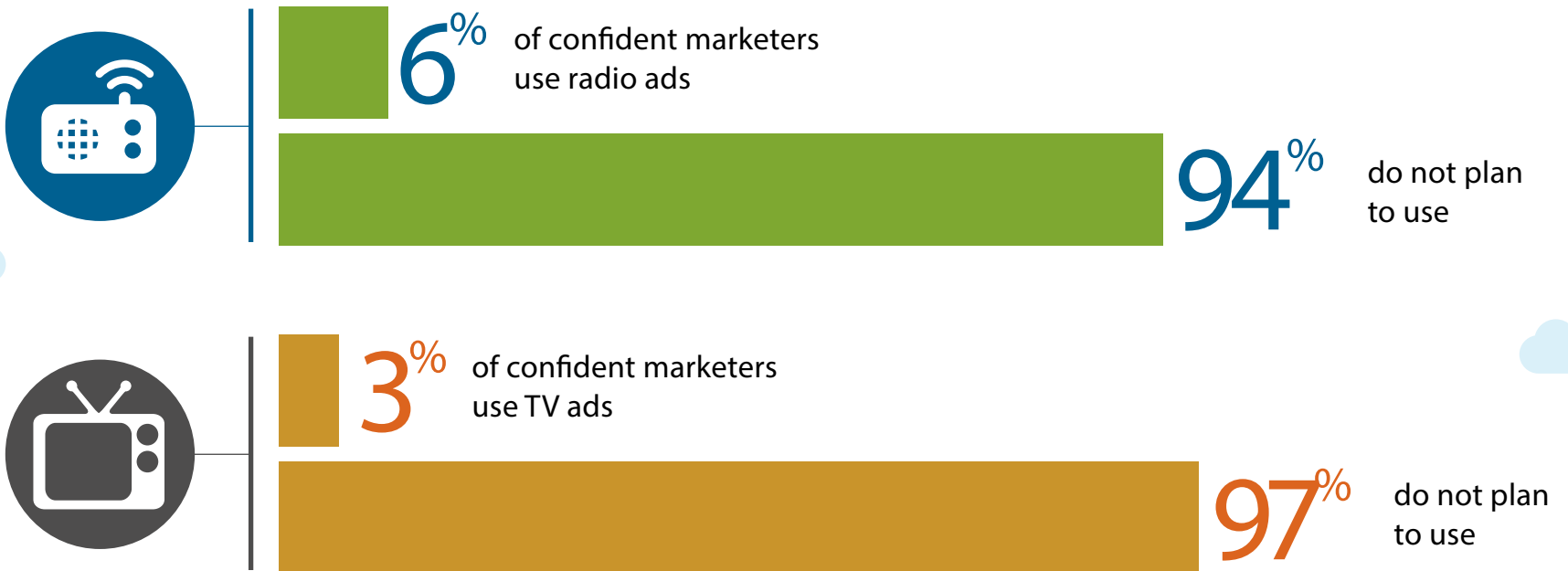


TV and radio advertising is out of reach for most MSP marketers.

These two marketing tactics can be too costly for many MSPs, and confident marketers prefer other marketing tactics that let them reach a more targeted audience.

“Recent research shows that search engine optimization STILL provides one of the best returns on marketing spend available to MSPs.”

— Stuart Crawford, [How important is SEO for MSPs?](#)



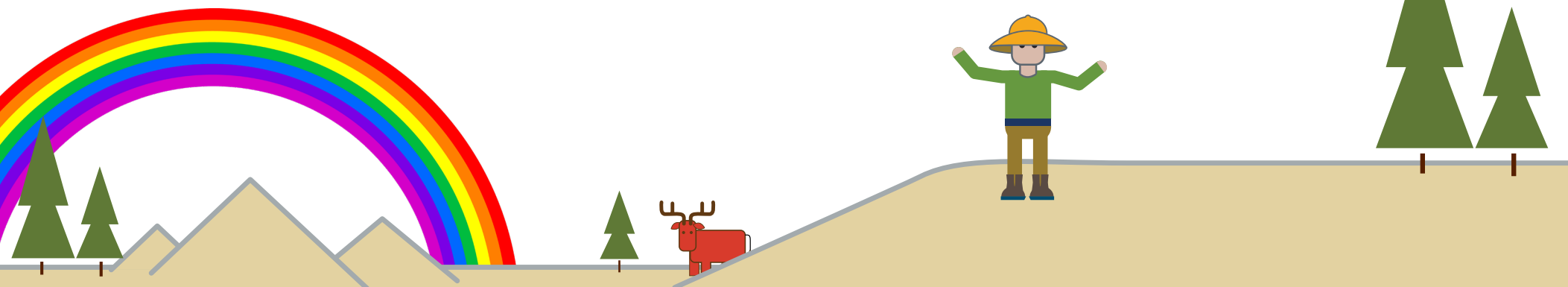
Conclusion

No matter what size your business is or how large your staff may be, the message from the MSPs we surveyed is clear: You need to make marketing a priority in order for it to be effective.

This means establishing clearly defined marketing goals and who will be responsible for achieving them. It also means planning ahead to create a balanced marketing strategy that includes a variety of marketing tactics and testing different approaches to see what works best for your company.


Time constraints and limited resources are roadblocks to marketing success for many MSPs. This doesn't have to be the case, though. Seek out training and resources that will help you make the most of what you have available. For example, Barracuda MSP offers Partners both the MSP Marketing Booster Pack which helps MSPs establish a foundation for a marketing program, and the Barracuda MSP Partner Toolkit, which provides a library of rebrandable sales and marketing materials, such as email campaigns, presentations, and more that MSPs can use to making their marketing efforts easier.

So, it's time to think about what you can do to get more out of your MSP marketing. Use the following MSP marketing checklist to get started the right way.



MSP Marketing Checklist

- Decide what you're looking to accomplish (i.e. generate new leads, reach current prospects more effectively, etc.)
- Choose marketing tactics to focus on
- Establish clear goals and key metrics to track
- Create a 12-month marketing plan
- Take a critical eye to your website and make sure it looks professional
- Review website content and ensure it clearly explains your services
- Evaluate website SEO
- Establish social media accounts for your business
- Test initial marketing campaign
- Evaluate results
- Fine tune and repeat



Calendar

Make planning easier! Download our 12-Month IT Services Marketing Plan Template

[Download](#)

About Barracuda MSP:

As the MSP-dedicated business unit of Barracuda Networks, Barracuda MSP enables IT managed service providers to offer multi-layered security and data protection services to their customers through our award-winning products and purpose-built MSP platform. Barracuda MSP's partners-first approach focuses on providing enablement resources, channel expertise, and robust, scalable MSP solutions designed around the way managed service providers create solutions and do business. Visit barracudamsp.com for additional information.

Blog: smartermsp.com

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