

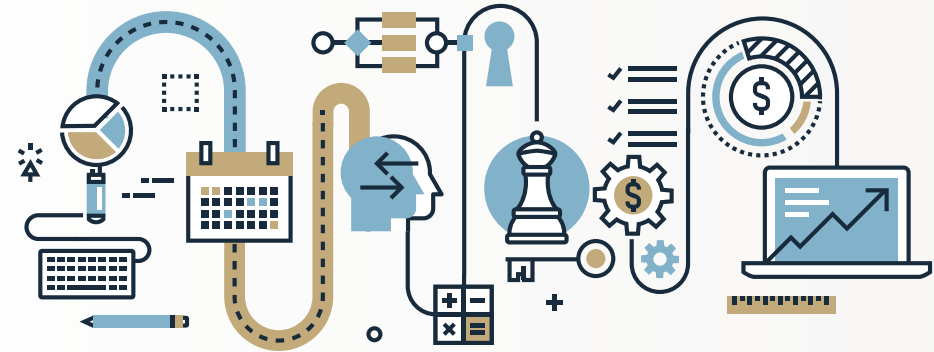


AIM B2B
by custom media

Insight from the **Content Marketing Landscape in Japan 2025**

JULY 2025

Executive Summary



Japan is a market like no other. As Asia's second-largest economy, it continues to be a hub of innovation across sectors and a global leader in industries such as advanced manufacturing, healthcare and technology. But what really sets the Japanese market apart is how business gets done. The marketing environment here remains uniquely Japanese: deep-rooted values, nuanced communication styles and high expectations for quality differ significantly from global norms.

In 2025, digital transformation and shifting demographics are accelerating changes in how companies connect with their audiences. Japanese consumers and B2B decision-makers alike expect highly localized, culturally attuned messaging delivered through trusted platforms in the right format and at the right moment. Meanwhile, the integration of generative AI into marketing workflows is gaining traction—and becoming an emerging challenge. In Japan, where adoption of AI has been more cautious, the question isn't whether to use AI, but how to use it in a way that aligns with Japan's high standards for quality and trust.

At Custom Media, we help global businesses succeed in Japan through AIM B2B, our dedicated agency that blends our publishing heritage with deep storytelling expertise and global marketing know-how. As part of Custom Media, an award-winning content and communications firm with strong local roots and a proven track record, AIM B2B offers the insight and network needed to navigate Japan's distinct business landscape.

To gain an in-depth understanding of the market and where it's headed, we conducted a survey of B2B marketing leaders—from global heads of communications to local strategists—across a range of industries. The findings highlight emerging trends in content marketing platforms, reaffirm the power of storytelling and shed light on the growing challenge of integrating generative AI in a way that respects Japan's cultural expectations and brand standards.

Key Learnings

A large majority of the companies surveyed this year reported having a defined content marketing strategy—65%, to be exact. However, this marked a slight decline from last year’s 75.6%, suggesting a growing need for clarity and alignment in strategic planning. For those with a strategy in place, the main goals remained consistent: brand awareness and lead generation were once again top priorities, followed by thought leadership and customer engagement.

Storytelling continued to play an important role in helping companies communicate their value propositions and executing their content marketing. Whether through brand narratives, case studies or customer testimonials, respondents saw storytelling as an effective way to humanize their messaging and stand out in a crowded marketplace.

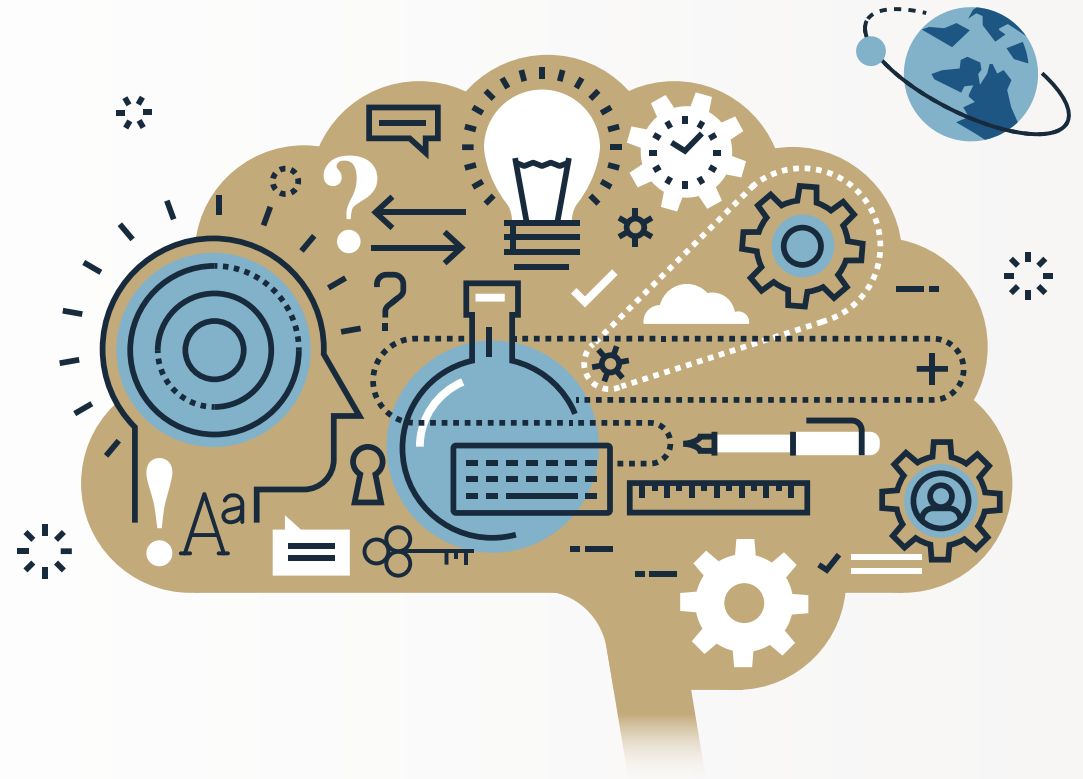
But building compelling content isn’t without its challenges. Time and resource limitations were cited by a large majority of respondents, along with the difficulty of creating diverse content formats and maintaining consistency across channels. Scaling production without sacrificing quality proved to be another common pain point. As a result, many companies have turned to outsourcing key activities to keep up with demand.



Key Learnings

Compared to last year's more cautious tone, the adoption of generative AI has accelerated, and a majority of respondents identified AI proficiency as the most crucial skill for content marketers to master in the next 1-3 years. That said, most respondents expressed caution around over-reliance on AI. Concerns about quality and accuracy, loss of creativity and ethical considerations were common. While many marketers expressed optimism about AI's potential, a majority of respondents said that human editors always review AI-generated content, indicating that human oversight remains a critical part of the process.

While spending remained closely tied to internal resources and ROI expectations, a majority of respondents allocated up to 25% of their overall marketing budget to content—highlighting its growing importance in modern marketing strategies.

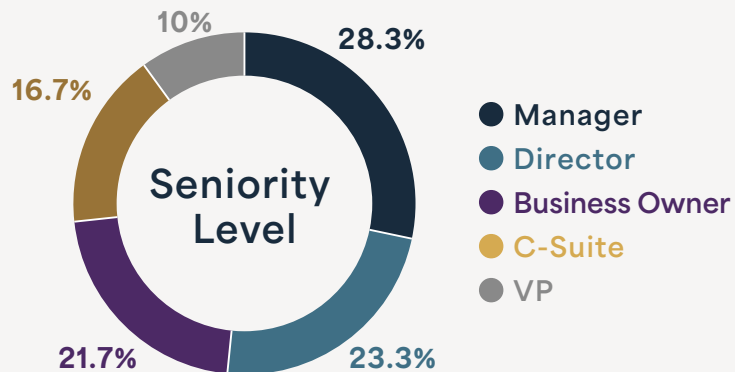


Taken together, these findings reinforce a familiar truth: content remains at the heart of effective marketing. But they also reflect a changing landscape, one where success depends not only on output, but also on strategic alignment, compelling storytelling, AI integration and an intimate understanding of audience needs and market dynamics.

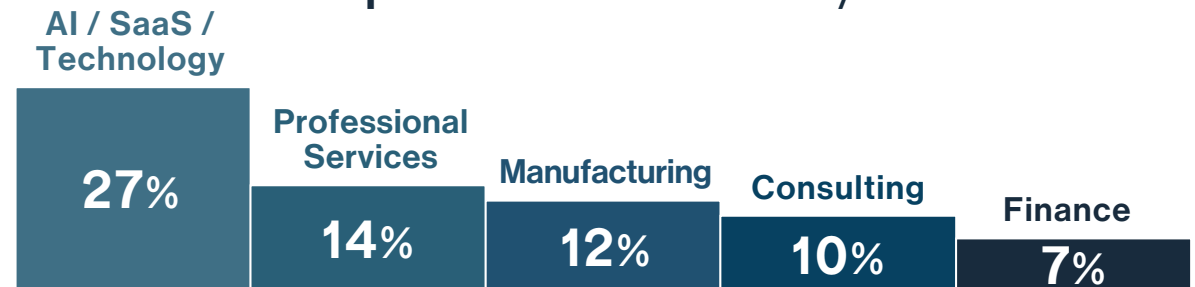
About the Study

Survey Respondents & Methodology

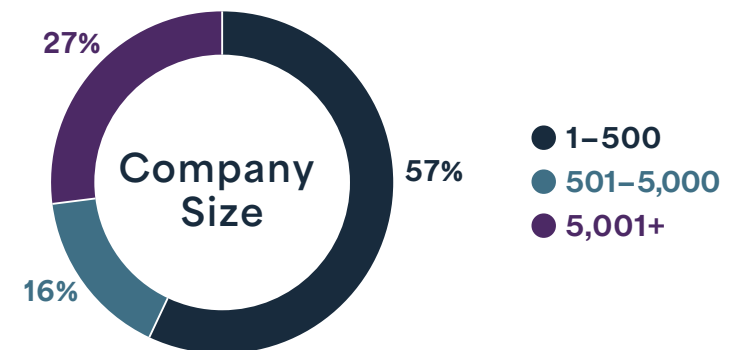
To help B2B companies better understand the impact of content marketing in Japan, we gathered insights from 60 professionals across a range of industries and roles within their organizations. The survey was conducted between April 15 and June 15, 2025.



Top 5 industries surveyed:



Size of companies represented:

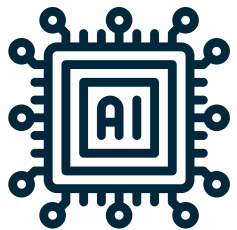


83.3%

of respondents highlighted **AI proficiency** as the most crucial skill for content marketers within the next 1-3 years.

Top 3 skills

for marketers in the next 1-3 years:



83.3%
AI
proficiency

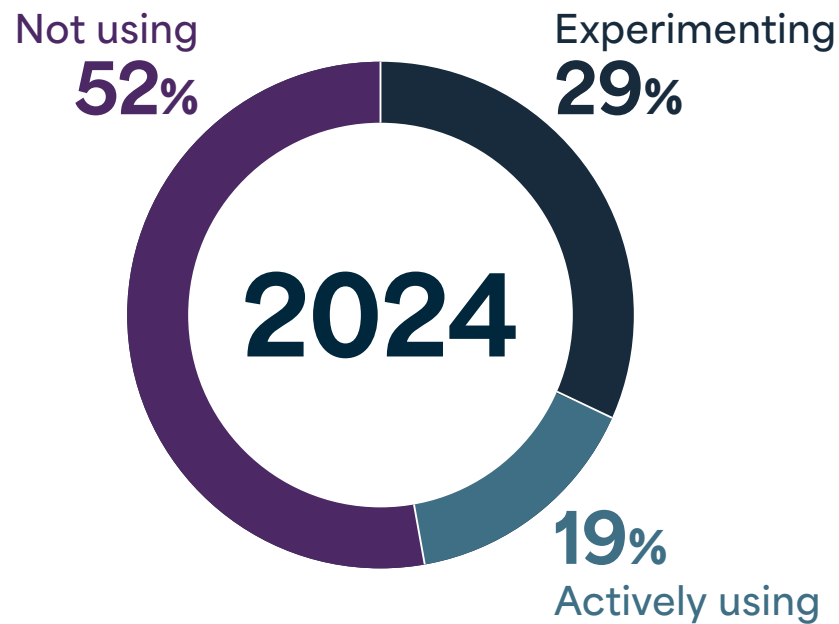


65%
Data
analysis

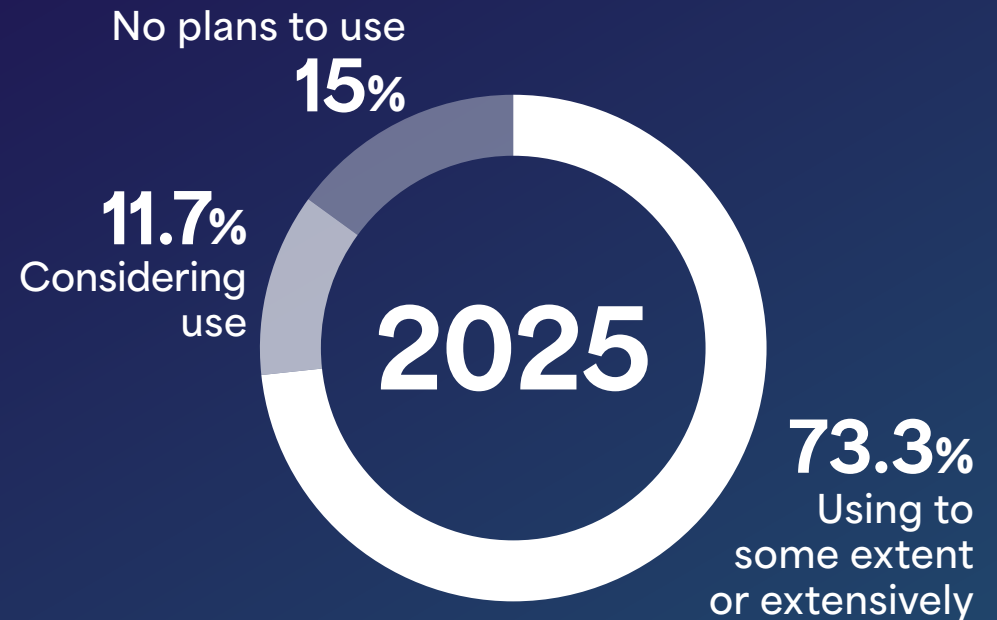


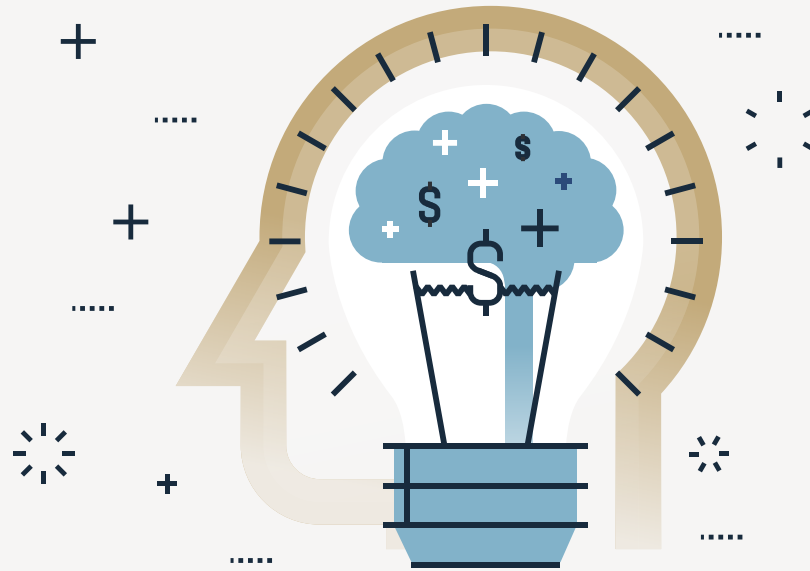
53.3%
Creative
writing

Last year, over half of respondents reported **not using** generative AI tools yet.



This year, **nearly three-quarters** of respondents are now using generative AI to some extent or extensively.





94.2%

of respondents believe that generative AI tools will have a **somewhat or mostly positive impact** on content marketing.

Top 3 AI tools that respondents use or plan to use:

88.2% ChatGPT

45.1% Gemini

21.6% Perplexity

Types of content generated with AI:

 **64.7%**
Translations

 **56.9%**
Ad copy

 **49%**
Email content

 **43.1%**
Social media

 **41.2%**
Blog posts

88.2%

said they **always** have human editors check AI-generated content.

Do human editors review AI-generated content?

Always



88.2%

Never



5.9%

Sometimes



3.9%

Rarely



2%

Top 5 concerns

about using AI in content marketing:

76.7%

Quality
and accuracy

60%

Loss of
creativity

41.7%

Dependence
on AI

35%

Ethical
concerns

25%

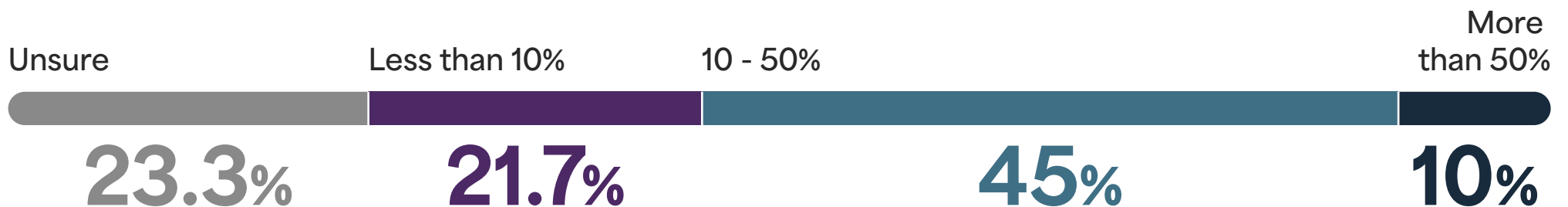
Plagiarism

65%

of respondents have a defined content marketing strategy, compared to **75.6%** from last year's survey.

Budget percentage

allocated to content marketing:



96.7%

of respondents thought that storytelling was **at least moderately significant** in capturing audience attention and building brand engagement, compared to **95%** from last year.

Brand narratives



Case studies



Customer testimonials



Q: How do you incorporate storytelling into your content marketing strategy?

70%

of respondents incorporate storytelling into their content marketing strategies for **brand narratives**, followed by case studies and customer testimonials.

Top 5 content formats:

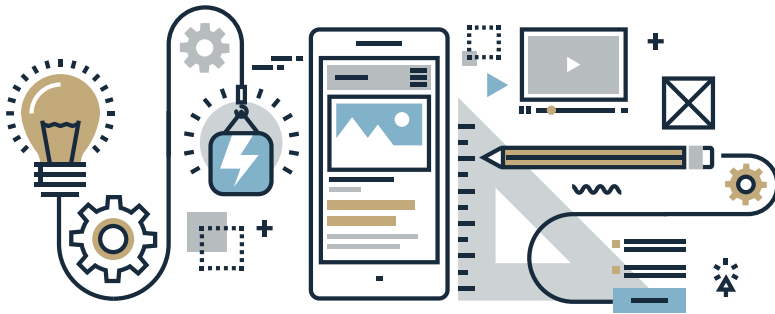
80% Social media posts

70% Blog posts

58.3% Case studies

40% Videos

40% Webinars



Top 5 objectives for using content marketing:

81.7% Brand awareness

75% Lead generation

55% Thought leadership

51.7% Customer engagement

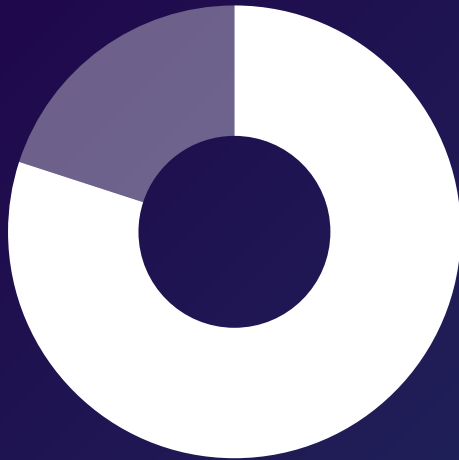
50% SEO and GEO





30%

of respondents said that **thought leadership** was essential to their company's content marketing strategy.



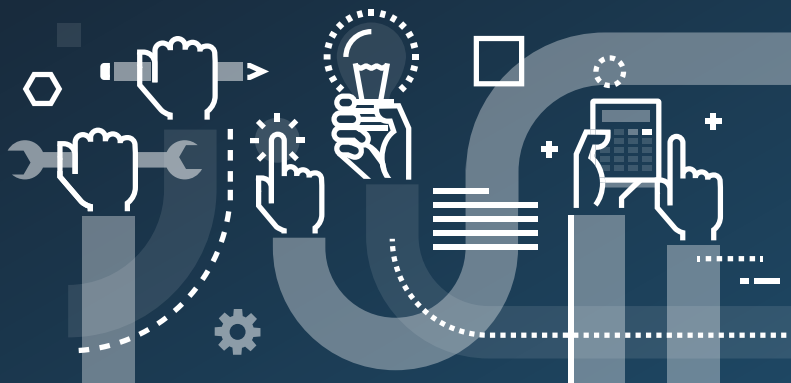
80%

said that the biggest challenge in developing thought leadership content was time and resource constraints.



55%

of respondents outsourced part of their content marketing, compared to **62%** last year.



Top outsourced work:



69.7%

Video production



57.6%

Writing



54.5%

Translation



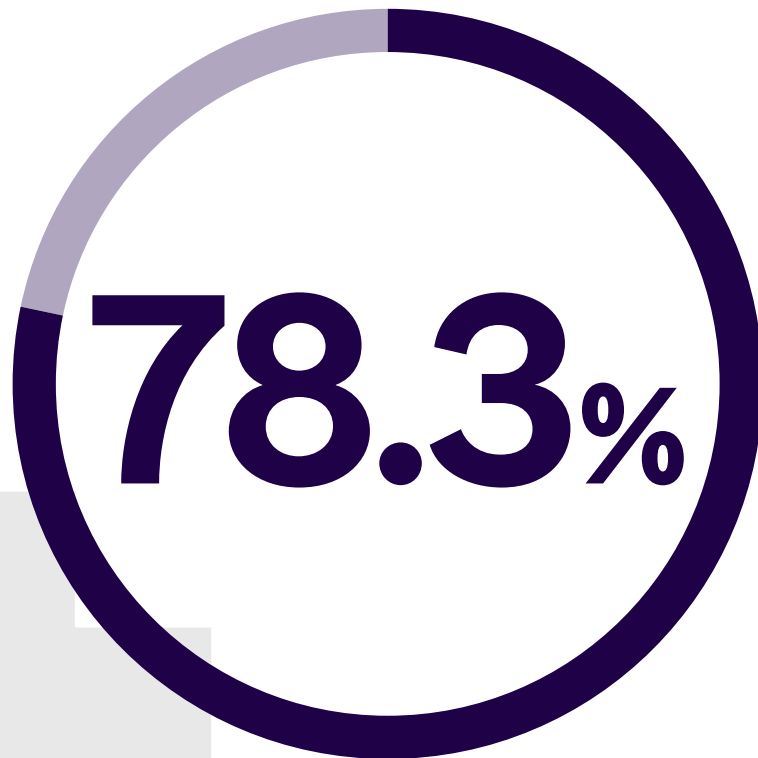
45.5%

Graphic design



42.4%

Website design



of respondents said that creating content for diverse formats and channels is a challenge for their organization.

The key challenges were:

46.7% Consistent production

43.3% Resource allocation

38.3% Audience reach

36.7% Standing out

35% Narrative creation

THANK YOU

We sincerely thank all the professionals who completed the survey and shared their insights. Your contributions were invaluable to the creation of this report.



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