# 2015 Marketing Trends

## What your business needs to be thinking about

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## Welcome to the findings of this year's survey

The 2015 marketing trends survey shows an interesting development on previous year surveys.

We are seeing a divergence appearing between companies on their willingness and ability to retain investments into marketing.

While there is a general feeling of confidence continuing on from last year, we have a growing group who are looking to reduce their marketing team and to cut their marketing budget. What is interesting is that it is predominantly the larger companies who are making the cuts.

This divergence in approach shows that the majority of organisations are continuing to ensure investment and cash are available for marketing whether it is marketing activities or team resources. 85% of organisations are retaining or increasing their marketing spend compared to previous years. In a similar trend organisations are retaining or increasing their marketing teams. This is an encouraging affirmation for the UK that businesses are continuing their growth programmes after the previous cash and spend constraints.

The divergence between those who are using marketing to gain growth and those who are forced to cut spend is highlighted through the growing number of organisations who are increasing the size of their marketing team, it is almost double the size on the previous year. The active recruitment is already stimulating movement within the market as Marketing Directors feel confident about seeking new roles.

While the overall trends demonstrate a positive approach to marketing, it has been shown that there is a small, but growing, group of organisations who are experiencing difficulties in both funding marketing teams and in providing a marketing budget. The ability to demonstrate and understand the value that marketing brings to an organisation is often difficult to quantify. It is one of the ongoing challenges for Marketing Directors to clearly vocalise the competitive advantages of their effective marketing strategies.

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The other interesting development of notes is the remarkable convergence in priorities for the first time; there is now one shared top priority for the business and marketing. This is a clear demonstration of the important role marketing can play within the business growth agenda. The top strategic marketing priority for Marketing Directors and for the business leaders in 2015 is developing client relationships.

Marketing have a surprising new second priority though, products and services has overtaken sales in where they are focusing effort. It seems that the convergence of sales and marketing was a transient phase. Marketing Directors are retreating to their traditional arena, demonstrated by a more equal spread across the marketing activities, in marked contrast to the business which seems to place little importance on those marketing activities (ie brand, pr, advertising, exhibitions) which are more difficult to actively track and monitor in terms of their ability to deliver direct sales.

The major game-changer consideration on the Marketing Directors‘ radar is last year’s number two; customers driving change is now the main consideration for Marketing Directors with Big Data falling into second place. It would appear that the problem of how to extract real value from the client data we hold continues to be elusive; instead the immediate opportunity lies in engaging customers within product/services lifecycles more effectively, thus using an informed customer base as part of product and service development.

Overall the results show a continuing confidence on last year’s findings. As a result marketing is a strong component of the plan to deliver the business objectives and generate the sales to help deliver the growth agenda.

With the increasing marketing role opportunities, combined with the business commitment to marketing, there are some exciting opportunities for Marketing Directors over the coming 12 months.

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# Results of the Survey

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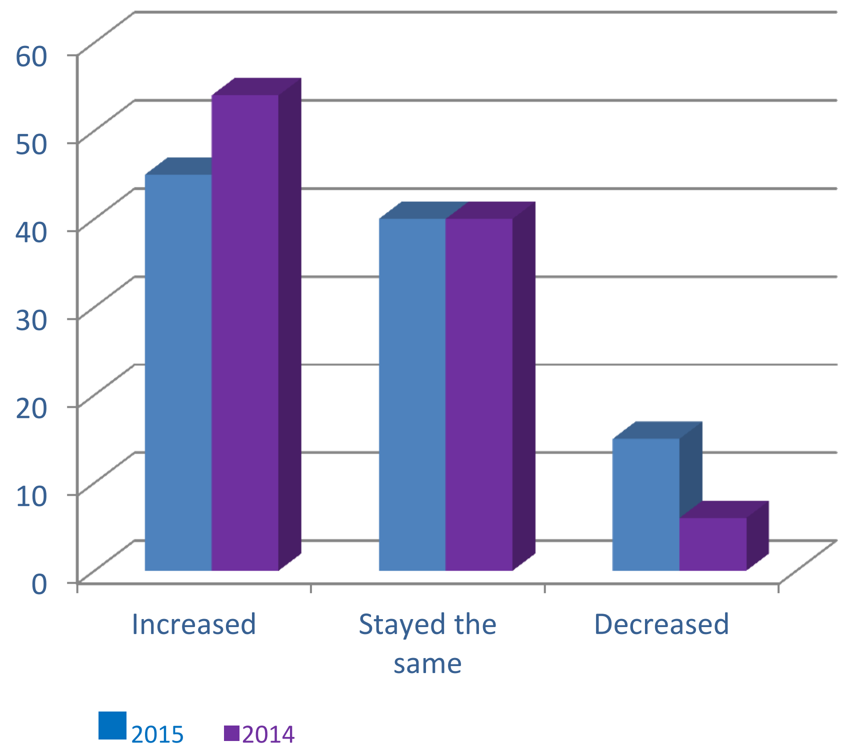
## Q1. Are companies investing in marketing?




The results show that 85% of companies are continuing to experience confidence in the need for marketing, following on the trend from 2014.

Although the number of organisation increasing their budgets has fallen slightly there are still over 40% of organisations looking to increase their marketing spend.

The number of companies retaining their marketing spend has stayed level, showing companies are committed to marketing as a way of helping their business grow.

There is a worrying upward trend of companies who continue to experiencing difficulties and are looking to reduce costs and budgets as a result. 15% of the respondents are reducing their marketing budgets this year, which indicates some organisations are continuing to struggle to justify marketing spend in order to generate the required growth.

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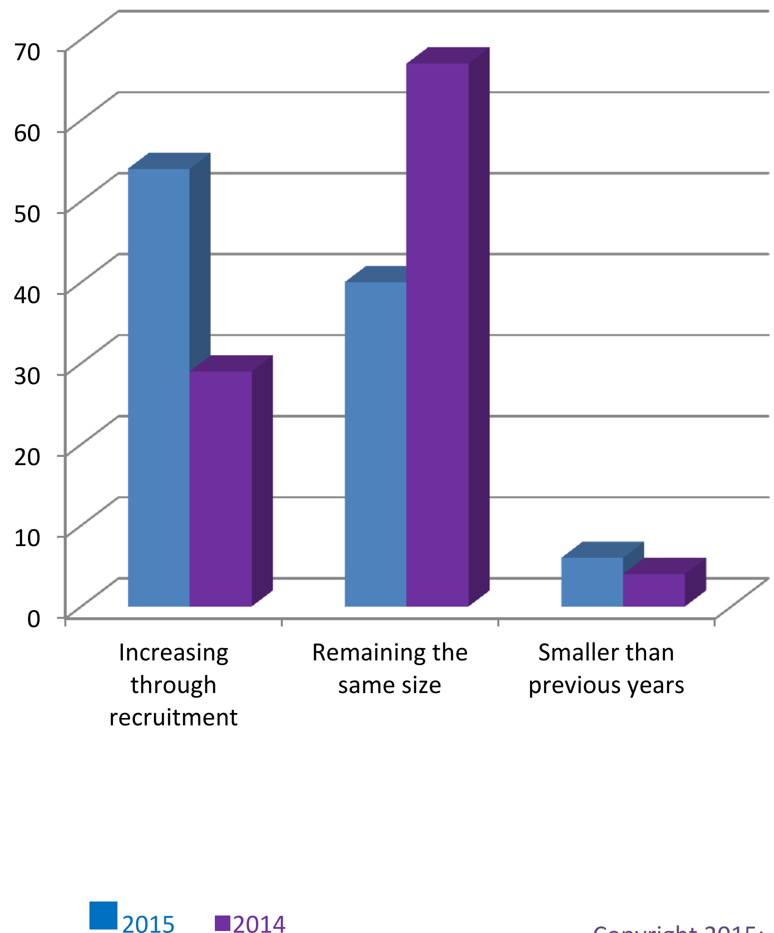
## Q2. How is the marketing team being resourced?




The question regarding the planned size of marketing teams shows an encouraging trend with over half the organisations looking to increase their marketing team through recruitment.

There is real encouragement that companies are now investing in their marketing resources with over half the organisations looking to fill new roles.

However, as with the marketing spend, there is an increasing number of companies who are having to reduce their marketing teams; giving a clear message that not all businesses are benefiting from a return of business confidence.

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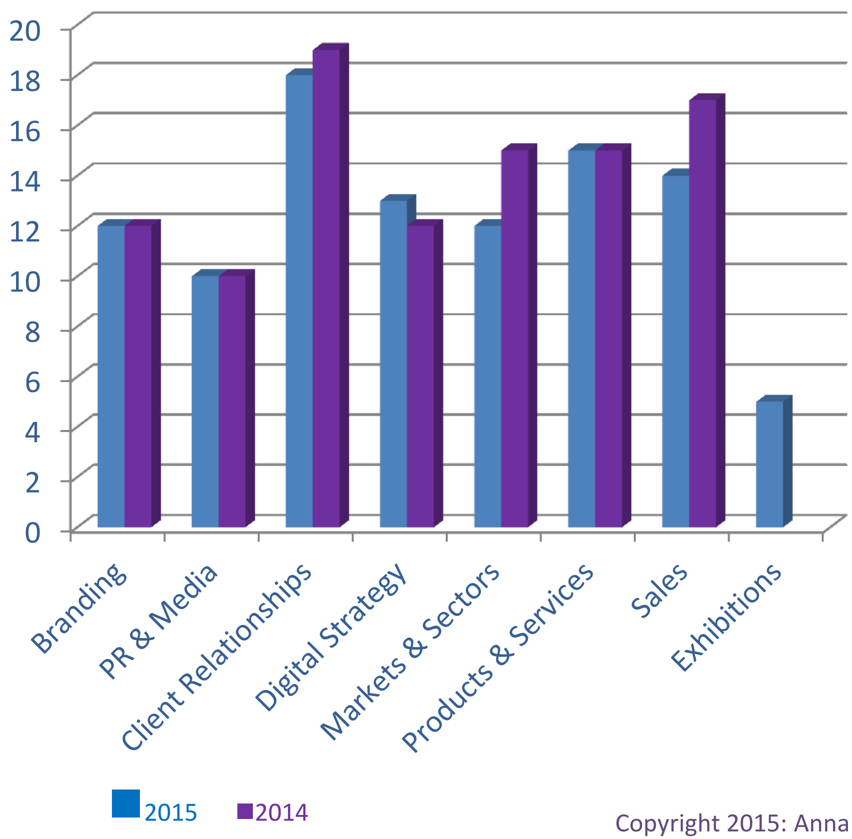
## Q3. What are the priority marketing areas in 2015?




The 2015 results show some movement within the top priorities for this year. Although the top three places contain the same priorities, there has been some surprising movement. The importance of client relationships continues to be the key priority for 17% of organisations, this is a slight fall on last year, however the movement in results shows a more even spread of distribution.

Products and services has moved to become the second highest priority for marketing teams; reflecting the obvious need to ensure the company's offerings are in line with customer demands.

In third place was sales, down 4%. It is interesting that the traditional separate roles of marketing and sales is creeping back into business after the fitful union immediately post-economic crisis.

The fairly equal spread of the remaining priorities shows that companies are devising their own strategies to create competitive advantage.

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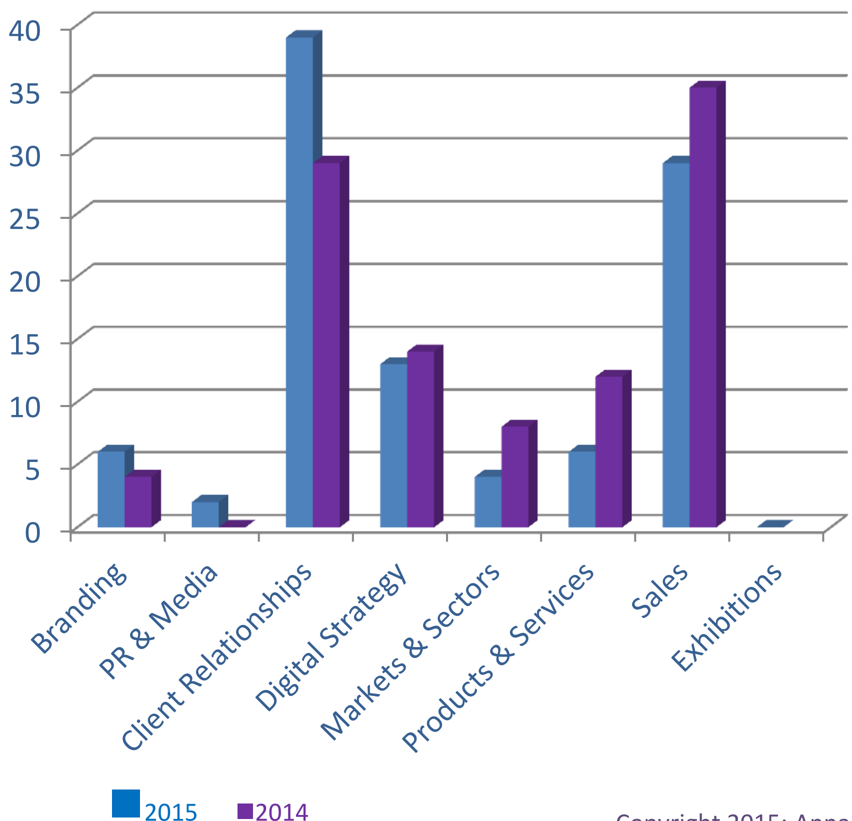
## Q4. Where is business focusing in 2015?




Having seen within Question 3 what the marketing priorities are, this year sees a much closer allegiance between the business priorities and marketing priorities and this is clearly demonstrated with the top two priorities.

For the first time there is a shared number one priority; both marketing and the business are recognising the value of client relationships to create a strong sustainable business.

This is supported by the need to increase work-winning, and again there is shared number two priority focusing on sales.

After the cuts and reduction post-recession, organisations are recognising the value that marketing can deliver within organisational growth.

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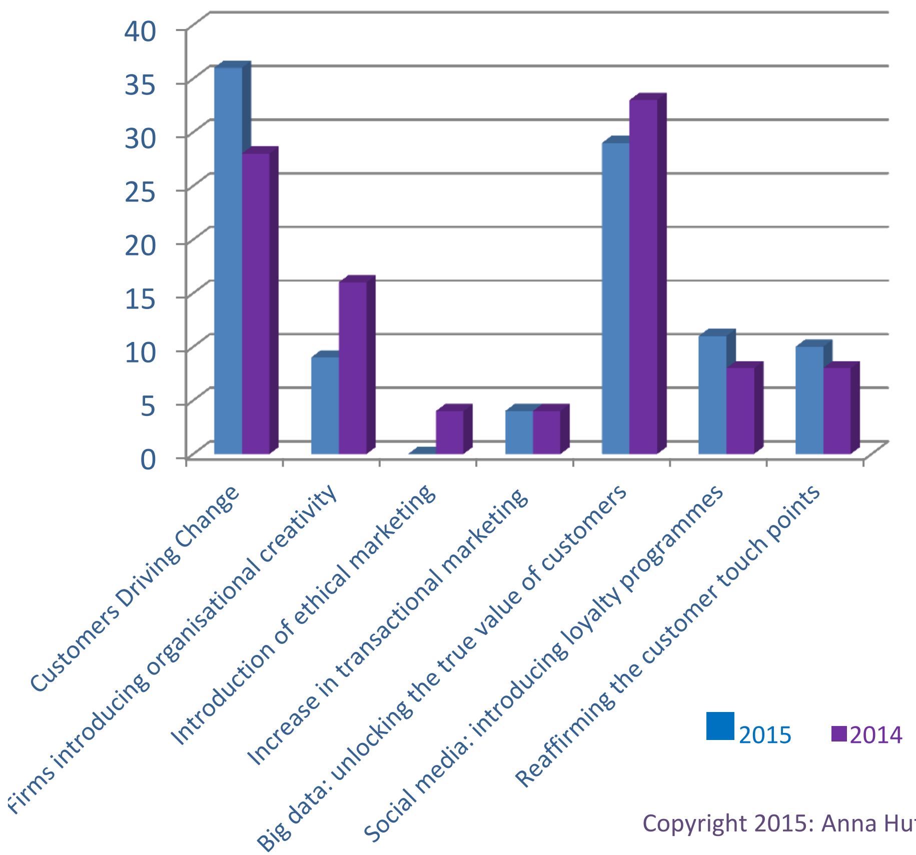
## Q5. What is the next big consideration for marketing?




The 2015 results are an interesting mix compared with 2014. The top two big considerations have swopped round, with over a third of organisations believing that the marketing agenda would be dominated by Customers Driving Change.

This trend is in line with the focus on client relationships; recognising the need to put the client central to the business offering means adopting a new inclusive approach to market, where the customers are raised up the value chain to actually become definers and refiners of the market offering.

Just over a quarter of organisations see Big Data as being a main topic for consideration. Few businesses have yet managed to effectively tap into their collective information to truly exploit it. One interesting point to note is the sad trend away from innovative thinking. The number of organisations who believe in the need for organisational creativity has almost halved. When organisations are looking to create a competitive difference, embracing creative thinking is a core component.

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# Respondent Information

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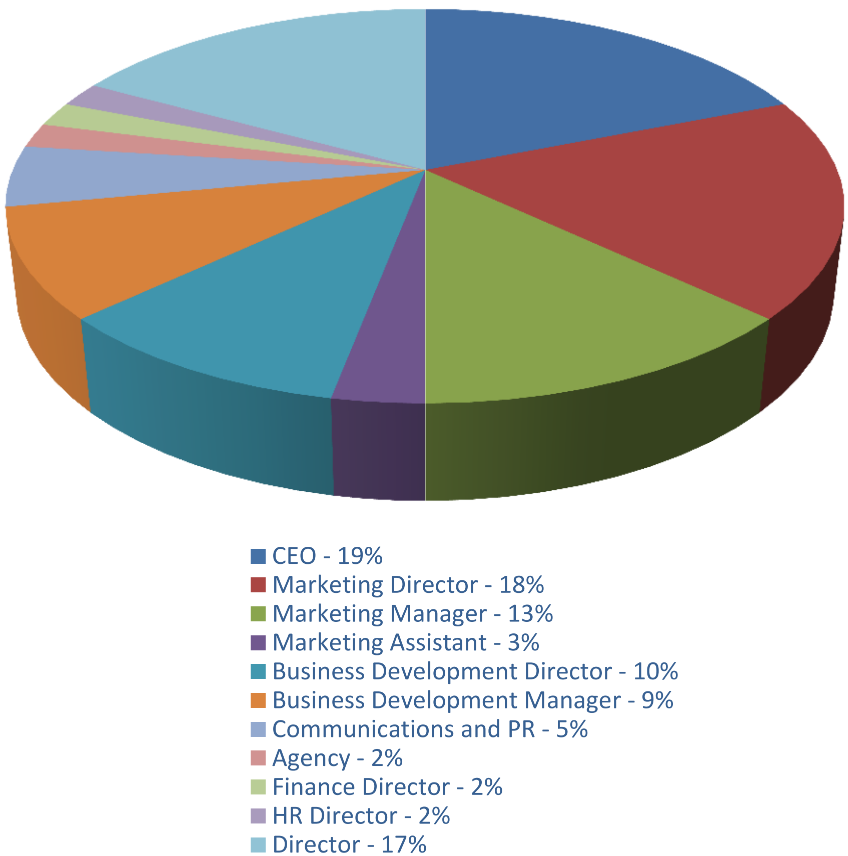
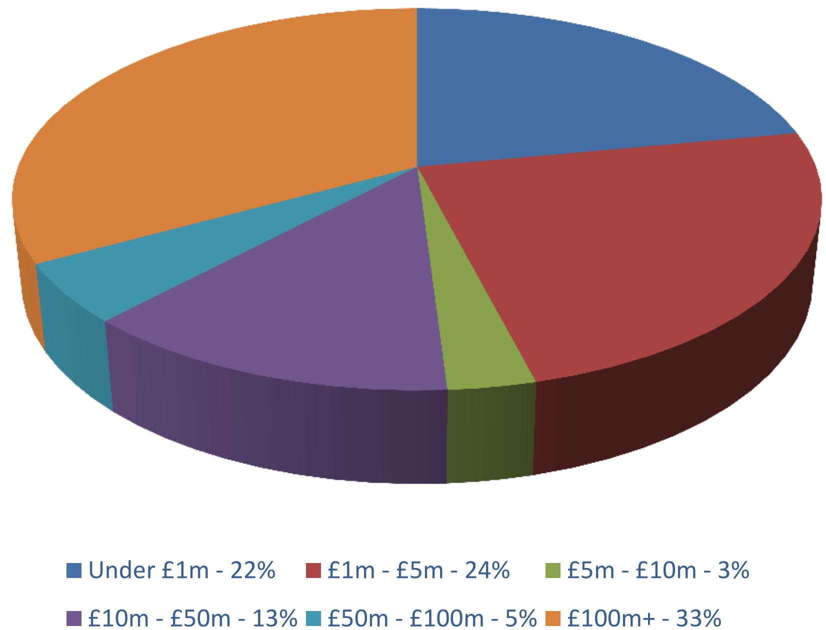
## Profile of Respondents

### Role




### Turnover

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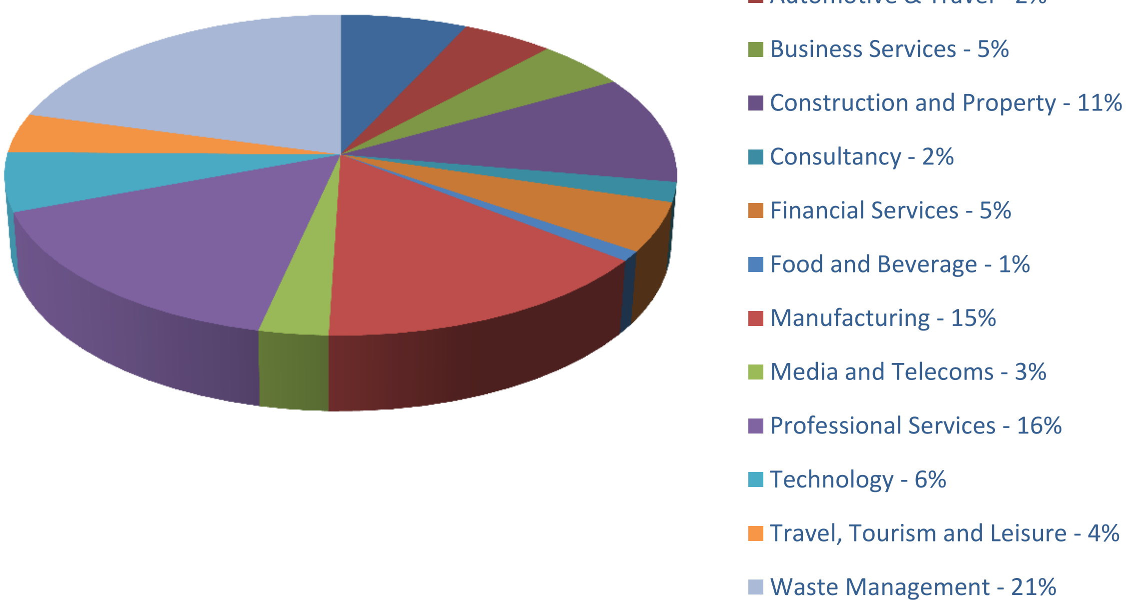
## Profile of Respondents cont.

### Organisation Type




*The information contained herein is of a general nature and is not intended to address the circumstances of any particular individual or entity. Although we endeavour to provide accurate and timely information, there can be no guarantee that such information is accurate as of the date it is received or that it will continue to be accurate in the future. Non one should act on such information without appropriate professional advice.*

*Data has been collected in a standardized form by means of an online questionnaire. The response rate was 1 in 8, with a total of 53 marketing and business professionals completing the questionnaire.*

*The numbering of percentages can occasionally be off by a tenth of a percentage point due to the amounts being rounded.*

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