Data management may be becoming more important for marketers, but it isn’t getting any easier.

In a survey of 154 marketing influencers and research subscribers by Adestra and Ascend2, data management and marketing technology were considered to be the most difficult digital marketing tactics. Nearly half of respondents reported that they find data management to be challenging.
The study noted that marketing technology and data management are difficult to execute because marketers don’t always have the proper resources available in-house. In a separate survey of marketers, Adestra and Ascend2 found that just 5% relied strictly on in-house resources to manage their data. And a survey of 120 CMOs worldwide by NewBase found that marketers outsource programmatic more than other tasks.

One reason why marketers seek data management help from outside their companies is because the landscape is changing rapidly. Another reason is that some of these technical functions have historically been outside of marketers’ control, instead handled by IT departments.

For marketers who take control of their data management, a major obstacle is bringing all the data together. Marketers often work with a plethora of vendors, which means that their data can be scattered. That’s why some marketers view the centralization of data ownership as a major priority.
Programmatic advertising relies heavily on data, and its growth will likely make data management increasingly important in upcoming years. eMarketer predicts that 82.5% of US digital ad spending will transact programmatically in 2018.

“High-quality data and its effective management are the lifeblood of a digital marketing program,” wrote the Adestra and Ascend2 researchers. “Marketers must make sure they aren’t short-changing future results by being short-sighted about data quality and management.”