



Introducing the Hinge Research Institute

Research: Key to Association Growth in a Digital World

Members look to their professional associations for market insights and community. If those insights are high-quality and relevant, members are more likely to renew year after year.

How do you generate unique, high-quality insights? In a word, research. Research-based content can help you achieve your goals.



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The Hinge Research Institute: Our Story

CRITICAL PROFESSIONAL SERVICES MARKET INTELLIGENCE

If you manage or market a professional services firm—or if your organization serves one or more professional services industries—you know how difficult it can be to get up-to-date information on a rapidly changing marketplace.

Yet the best performing firms rely on timely intelligence to make smarter business decisions. Data, when clearly presented and explained, can make any organization more relevant, insightful and differentiated.

We created the Hinge Research Institute to equip organizations like yours with the market information you need to engage your audiences like never before.

What Is the Hinge Research Institute?

The Hinge Research Institute conducts and publishes independent research on professional services firms and their clients. This groundbreaking research is available nowhere else.

The Institute is dedicated to achieving one goal:
Understanding what drives
exceptional professional
services growth.

We work with two audiences:

1. **For professional services firms:** Understanding why some firms grow faster than others and how to build a high growth firm of your own.
and
2. **For B2B companies and associations:** Getting the insights, tools and compelling research-based content they need to engage the professional services audience.

At the Hinge Research Institute, we tackle the tough, fundamental questions that drive professional services success. Question like these:

- How do today's buyers look for, evaluate, and select a professional services firm in your industry?
- Why do some firms grow faster than others—and produce higher profits?
- What marketing techniques produce the best results in your industry, and which are a waste of time?

- How can regular firms compete with the big players for top talent?
- How do some experts become industry superstars? And how can ordinary experts follow their path to prominence?

Of course, the answers—and even the questions themselves—change over time. That’s why we monitor the marketplace and update our findings on a regular basis.

A Division of Hinge

The Hinge Research Institute is one of three divisions of Hinge, the leading branding and marketing firm for professional services:

1. **Hinge Marketing**, our consulting arm, helps professional services firms build gorgeous visual brands, develop powerful research-based marketing strategies and deliver exceptional growth.
2. **Hinge Research Institute**, our research arm, studies the professional services industry and equips organizations that want to reach and engage this audience with compelling research-based content.
3. **Hinge University**, our online learning platform, teaches high-growth, high-visibility strategies and techniques to marketers, business developers, and professionals across the globe.

Our ongoing research into over 30,000 professional services firms and buyers of their services is changing the way firms go to market.

Who It's For

The Hinge Research Institute addresses the needs of two key audiences:

1. **Professional Services Firm Decision-Makers and Marketers.** Want to learn how high-growth firms outperform their peers year after year? We gather the freshest data, break it down, and publish our findings. We can also produce custom research to answer specific questions about your market.
2. **Organizations That Want to Engage Professional Services Audiences.** Does your organization target a professional services audience? We can equip you with the high-value, available-nowhere-else content it takes to make them take notice. License our existing research or collaborate on a custom study.

How We Can Help You

Clients engage us in a variety of ways. Here are some of the most common:

- **Purchase one of our industry studies.** Want to understand your industry and its high performers? Our research reports are the authoritative source for insights into professional services firms and their clients.
- **License our existing research.** License one of our general or industry-specific studies and use it to engage your clients and prospects for the next year. Mine it for insights, blog posts, social media, webinars, and more!
- **Sponsor a study.** Put your logo on the cover of an upcoming research study—and enjoy the instant credibility and exposure it generates.
- **Conduct a custom study.** Partner with the most professional services-savvy research firm in the world. We'll design and implement a study to answer your most critical questions.
- **Leverage our expertise.** Whether we produce a webinar together, develop an original piece of content, or collaborate in some other way, our expertise can raise your profile—and your game.

“Over the years we’ve collaborated with the Hinge Research Institute on a book, conducted joint research, produced webinars together, and marketed to each other’s audiences. It’s been a major win for both organizations.”

— Mike Schultz, President, RAIN Group



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How to Learn More

Ready to discover new ways to engage your audience? There are two easy ways to contact us:

EMAIL US:

kwaffle@hingemarketing.com

CALL US:

703-391-8870 x115

hingemarketing.com/research-institute

The Hinge Research Institute Helps a Professional Association Create a New Revenue Stream.

The Association for Accounting Marketing teamed up with Hinge to produce an ongoing research study, delivering insights of exceptional value to their members—and giving the organization heightened visibility and credibility within the industry as a whole.

“The Marketing Budget Benchmark Study has given us a powerful tool to help our members become more savvy, effective marketers. Of course, that’s been a boon for our reputation in the industry, as well. A record number of firms participated in the 2021-2022 survey, which demonstrates the strategic importance that is being placed on marketing budgets across the industry.”

— Becca Johns, President of AAM

A Meeting of Minds

For many years, the Association for Accounting Marketing (AAM) had wanted to produce an ongoing piece of research for their members. Hinge had been collaborating on unrelated work with this professional association when the two decided to join forces and tackle the problem together.

An Opportunity...And A Problem

There was a great deal of interest in the accounting industry around marketing budgets: How much should a firm budget for marketing? And how should they spend that money? Marketing budgets seemed like a natural area to conduct some research. But there was a problem. Different firms included different expenses in their budgets, and some firms had no formal marketing budgets—which made collecting accurate data complicated.

A Way Forward

The Hinge Research Institute devised an elegant solution to the budget inconsistency problem. To normalize the data, we asked study participants to report specific marketing expenses rather than overall budgets. We then used this information to calculate standardized budgets that could be easily compared. Once past this hurdle, we move into the next phase.

Designing The Study

Among the factors we explored were which marketing techniques these firms used and how they planned to spend differently in the future. We also developed a set of detailed benchmarks against which other firms could compare their marketing programs.



Figuring Out Growth

Accounting firms perennially lag behind other professional services industries in both marketing spend and growth rate. So we included a special section in the study that explores the fastest growing accounting firms and how they invest their marketing dollars, resources and time. At last, accounting firms of every stripe could learn from their high-performing peers.

Learn more about what the Hinge Research Institute can do for you.

[CONTACT US](#)



A Going (And Ongoing) Concern

To date, the Hinge Research Institute and AAM have produced five editions of the Marketing Budget Benchmark Study, with a new report released every two years. Each year, the number of firms participating in the study has grown, making it the largest and most comprehensive accounting marketing study of its kind. And member engagement has increased substantially with every edition.

Key Figures



140

Number of firms participating in latest study



215%

Most recent edition's growth in report sales



\$6.7B

Combined revenue of firms in the study



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Learn more about what the Hinge Research Institute can do for you.

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HRI | Research Licensing

See all current research studies and research-based materials:

hingemarketing.com/library

For more information on sponsoring research with the Hinge Research Institute, please contact Kelly

J. Waffle at kwaffle@hingemarketing.com

Existing Research Asset Licensing

Commissioning a custom research study may be the best solution for some businesses, but that approach may not fit every budget or schedule. For many organizations, licensing an existing piece of research can be a more attractive and affordable option.

Studies and Reports from the Hinge Research Institute

The Hinge Research Institute (HRI) has a variety of studies and research-based materials that are available to license. These include broad professional services-focused research studies, industry-specific research studies, special reports, books, and guides.

Here are just a few examples:

- **Research studies:** *Employer Branding Study; High Growth Study; Inside the Buyer's Brain Study*
- **Executive Guides:** *Getting Back in the Game: A Playbook to Help Professional Services Firms Win Under "The New Normal"; Research as Content: A Guide for B2B Marketers, The M&A Guide*
- *for Professional Services Firms, The Marketing Planning Guide for Professional Services*
- **Books:** *Online Marketing for Professional Services, Spiraling Up: How to Create a High Growth, High Value Professional Services Firm, The Visible Expert®*

Why License from the Hinge Research Institute?

- The cost of licensing existing research is far less than commissioning a custom study
- Flexible licensing periods and terms
- Materials are available immediately—no waiting months for the data to come in
- Unlimited, global licenses are available so anyone in your organization around the world can use the licensed content
- Engage your prospects and build their trust with less effort and greater speed
- Organizations that use research on a regular basis are more likely to grow faster and be more profitable than average (source: *High Growth Study: 2021*)

HRI | Research Sponsorships

See all the existing research at hingemarketing.com/library/format/research_studies

For more information on sponsoring research with the Hinge Research Institute, please contact Kelly J. Waffle at kwaffle@hingemarketing.com

Why Sponsor Research?

Licensing research has a lot of advantages, but sponsoring a research study amplifies the benefits. When an organization becomes a sponsor, they are associating themselves with the piece of research and positioning themselves as thought leaders. When your logo appears on the cover of an important research study, you establish instant credibility and trust. Sponsoring research is also a great way to build visibility, engage new prospects, and push a sales opportunity from “maybe” to an enthusiastic close.

Benefits of Sponsoring Our Research

- Your company logo will appear on the cover of the sponsored research report
- Place a full-page ad in the sponsored full research report and the executive summary (if available)
- Participate in a panel-based webinar describing the research
- Participate in Hinge’s podcast, *The Visible Expert*

Eligible Research for Sponsorships

- *Employer Branding Study*
- *High Growth Study 2021: Accounting & Financial Services Edition*
- *High Growth Study 2021: Architecture/Engineering/Construction (AEC) Edition*
- *High Growth Study 2021: Consulting Firm Edition*
- *High Growth Study 2021: GovCon Edition*
- *High Growth Study 2021: Law Firm Edition*
- *High Growth Study 2021: Technology & Software Edition*
- *Inside the Buyer’s Brain: Accounting & Financial Services Edition*
- *Inside the Buyer’s Brain: Architecture/Engineering/Construction (AEC) Edition*
- *Inside the Buyer’s Brain: Consulting Firm Edition*
- *Inside the Buyer’s Brain: GovCon Edition*
- *Inside the Buyer’s Brain: Technology & Software Edition*

HRI | Custom Research

For more information on conducting research with the Hinge Research Institute, please contact Kelly J. Waffle at kwaffle@hingemarketing.com

When you need answers, the Hinge Research Institute is here

Commissioning custom research is the only way to get specific answers to specific questions about specific audiences. When you need to dive deep into a special issue or group, licensed or sponsored research just won't get the job done. Whether you need to understand your clients more keenly or want to take a thought leadership position in your industry, custom research can supply insights that are exceptionally insightful, timely and relevant.

What's does custom research include?

We design every custom research study from the ground up. While no two studies are alike, here are a few of the components in a typical study:

- Online survey (quantitative and/or qualitative)
- In-depth phone interviews
- Subject matter expert phone interviews
- Expert analysis and narrative
- Data and high-quality report design
- Co-branded webinar led by one of our senior research analysts

Why commission custom research from the Hinge Research Institute?

The Hinge Research Institute is one of the most experienced and respected names in professional services research. Here are just a few of benefits of working with us:

- Specific industry insights can help you make better decisions and validate strategy
- Position your firm as a subject matter expert and industry leader
- Drive visibility, leads, and prospect engagement. Use the findings in email campaigns, webinars, blog posts, articles, social media posts, marketing and sales collateral, videos, and more
- Build trust faster with your prospects—and reach new markets.
- Grow faster. Organizations that use research on a regular basis are more likely to grow faster and be more profitable than average (source: *High Growth Study: 2021*)



How the Hinge Research Institute Can Help

The Hinge Research Institute provides comprehensive marketing research services to advance branding, market intelligence, and marketing initiatives for professional services organizations. HRI offers:

- Custom research studies
- Co-branded webinars and live events with senior research analyst participation
- Exclusive study sponsorships
- Licensing of Hinge's existing and future content
- Promotional access to Hinge's extensive database
- Research-based content development
- Research advisory



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Learn more about what the Hinge Research Institute can do for you.

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About Hinge

Hinge is a leader in branding and marketing for professional services firms. We help firms grow faster and maximize value.

Our comprehensive offerings include research and strategy, brand building, award-winning creative, high-performance websites, and outsourced marketing. And at [Hinge University](#), your team can learn all the marketing skills and strategies they need to take your firm to a higher level of performance.

Hinge also conducts groundbreaking research on professional service firms. We have identified a group of firms that grow 5X faster than average. We can show you how they do it and how you can reproduce their success.

To view our full library of research reports, whitepapers, webinars, and articles, please visit www.hingemarketing.com/library.

www.hingemarketing.com

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