

A STUDY BY
MUCK RACK

STATE OF
MARKETING AND
PR LEADERSHIP

2023

Roles and responsibilities of marketing and communications leaders

Muck Rack conducted a survey focusing on professionals in leadership roles in marketing and communications. We received 384 responses and used a total of 193. The respondents hold titles such as CCO, CMO, Director, Vice President, or other C-suite positions. We asked a series of role-confirming questions that allowed us to sort them into three groups: **marketing leaders**, **communications leaders**, and **marcom leaders**, based on their primary function. Marcom leaders are those that describe their role as a blend of marketing and communications functions.

Just under **70%** of respondents reported that they manage a combination of both marketing and communications responsibilities.

We complemented this quantitative data by carrying out one-on-one interviews with survey participants.

The following section provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities of marcom leaders.

Executive summary

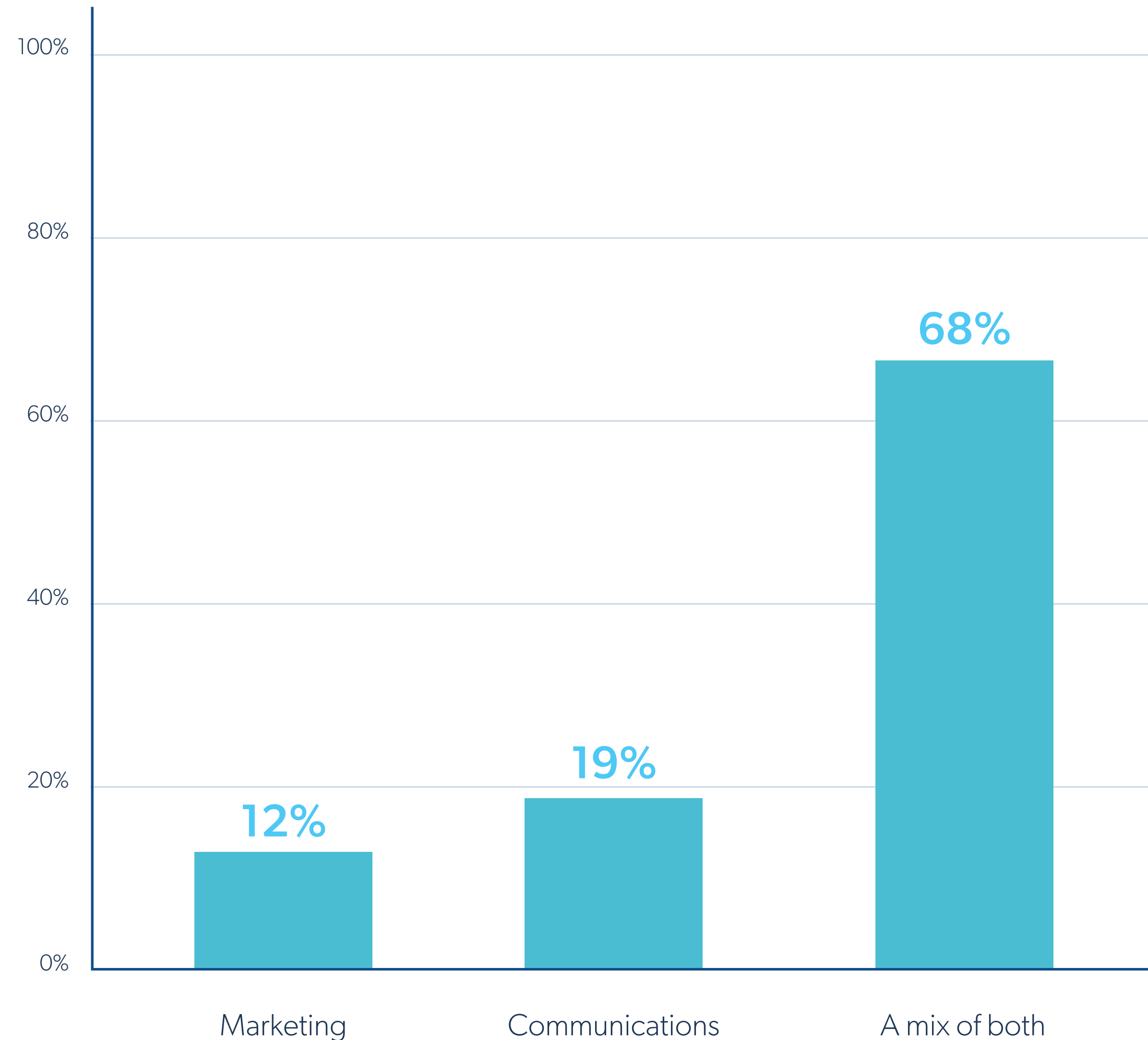
- Approximately **70%** of respondents say their role is a mix of marketing and communications
- Internal communications is **more likely** to be overseen by comms and HR/people ops than marketing
- Marketing and marcom leaders are optimistic about their budgets, with **42%** and **49%** respectively increasing their budgets in 2024 and content marketing will be a top area of investment
- Broadening reach and share of voice is a top priority for **76%** of marcom leaders
- Lead generation is the top metric for **67%** of marcom leaders

More than half of leaders surveyed say both marketing & comms are part of their role

68% of all leaders surveyed say their role is a mix of both marketing and communications.

In most cases, respondents say they are *both* the highest ranking comms and marketing executive at their company.

Which option best describes your current role?





LEADER SPOTLIGHT

Kelly Gardiner

VP of Communications & Brand, Thirty Madison

Thirty Madison exists to deliver on healthcare's biggest opportunities: access and affordability; patient outcomes; and patient experience. Kelly has been there for two years and focuses mainly on corporate communications, brand PR and brand strategy.

What keeps you up at night?

"Being able to keep everyone updated on everything that's going on in a way that lets them do their jobs effectively. It is really like every day is a crash test in if we are effectively communicating to our people."

Spotlight Statement:

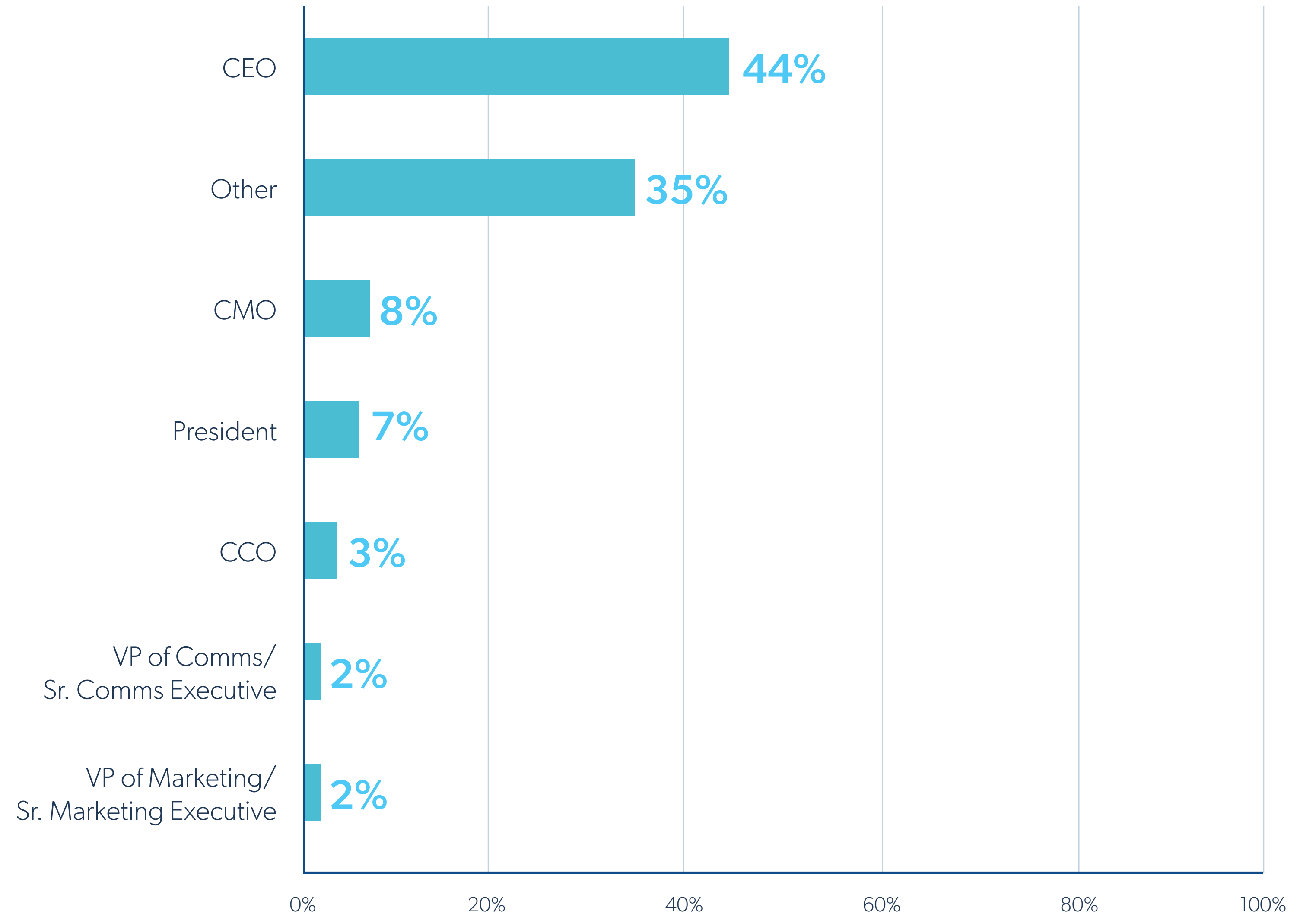
"We treat our employees as our first audience. Understanding how they react to messaging and how they respond will determine what happens externally."

Marketing and comms leaders tend to report to CEO

Many leaders who selected the “other” option reported in to the COO. Growth and revenue leaders were also common among write-in responses.

Leaders also reported collaborating most frequently with the CEO and other chief executives.

Who do you report to?



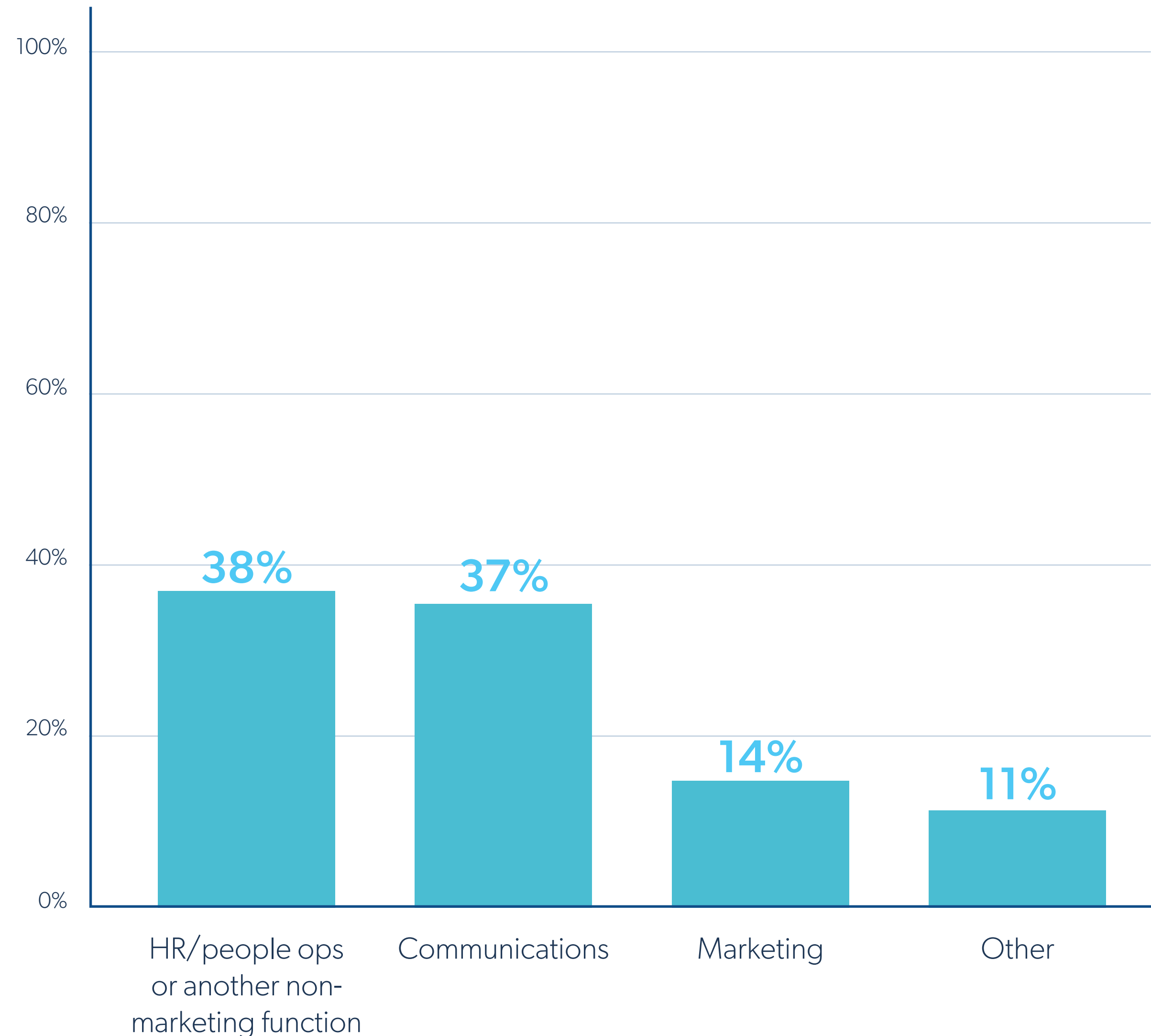
Communications or HR are the most likely to oversee internal comms

While fewer organizations have marketing run internal comms, they're evenly split on using comms versus another team, like HR, for this purpose.

The respondents who replied "other" often said internal comms is handled by a group of people from different departments, or occasionally, handled solely by the CEO.

"Internal has become so important because executives finally understand the power of their employees voice," Kelly Gardiner said. "Both as customers and because they're either your supporters or your detractors"

Which function oversees internal/employee communications in your organization?



Priorities

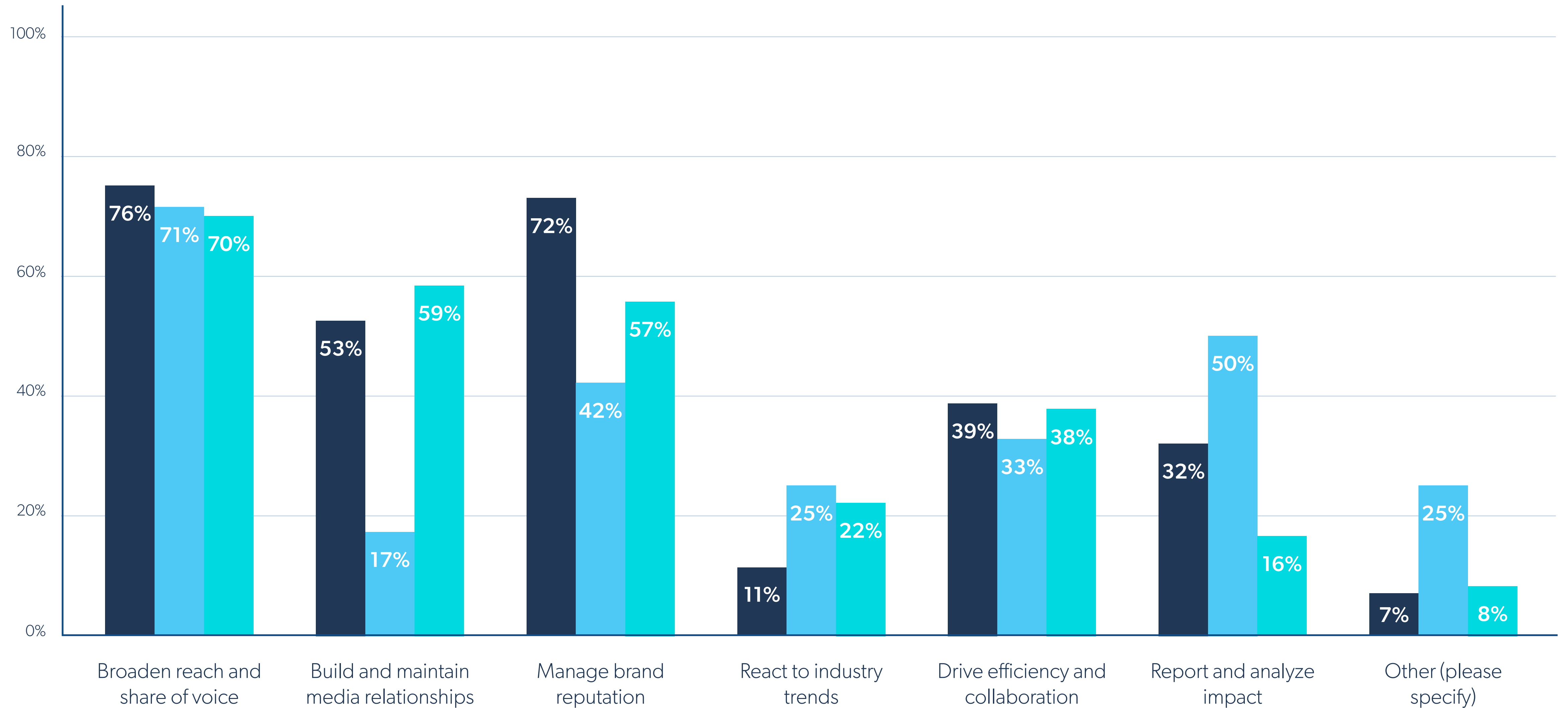
Overall, leaders have almost identical top priorities. In another example of the blurred lines between marketing and communications, **“broaden reach and share of voice”** is the top priority of leaders regardless of their station.

Marketing, communications and marcom leaders also rank **“manage brand reputation”** as a top priority.

The main differences in the top concerns comes down to the media. For comms and marcom leaders, **“build and maintain media relationships”** is a top priority, while marketing leaders are more likely to prioritize **“report and analyze impact.”**

What are your top priorities today? (Select top 3)

■ Marcom leaders ■ Marketing leaders ■ Comms leaders





LEADER SPOTLIGHT

Claire McKinney

CEO, McKinney Media Group

McKinney Media Group is a Public Relations agency focusing on digital PR, digital marketing and content marketing. Claire has been there for 15 years and focuses mainly on integrated media strategies, content creation, social media and SEO.

What keeps you up at night?

"What haven't we done? What haven't we gotten? What haven't we planned for? What eventuality," she said. "You're hoping that all of the funnels and things you've set up will all go through and it's wondering if you've missed a step that's going to break the whole process."

Spotlight Statement:

"It's how engaged the audience you have is at any given time that makes a difference in terms of how much people are listening to you. You want to build your own armies."

Metrics

The following charts show the preferred marketing and comms metrics for different leaders.

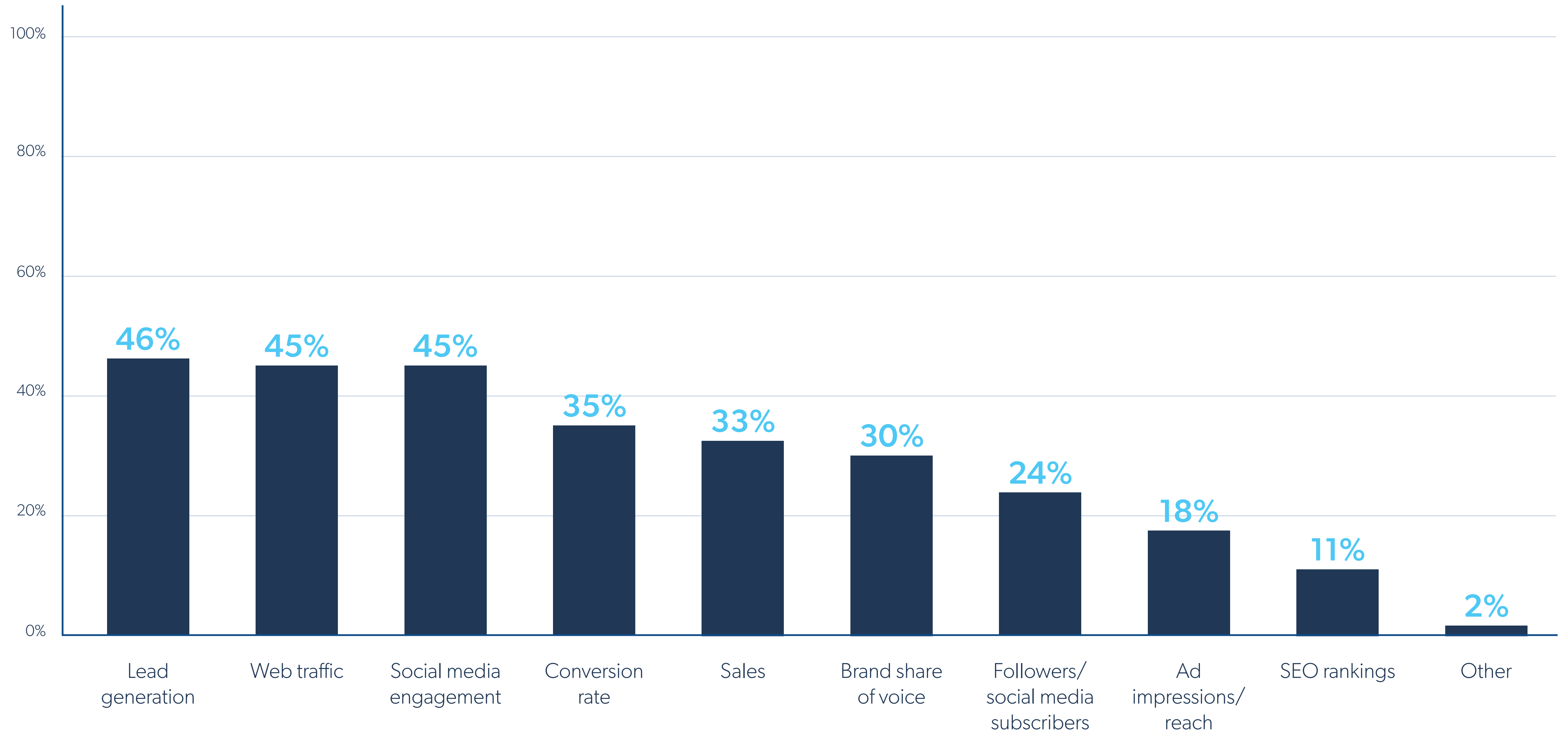
Lead generation is important to marketing and marcom leaders and **number of stories placed** is important to marcom and communications leaders. Marketing leaders have a strong preference for an additional three metrics: **sales, web traffic** and **conversion rates**.

Claire McKinney, CEO of McKinney Media Group said it's important to look at metrics beyond impressions.

"A lot of people use key performance indicators like impressions as one of their major measurements," she said. "I really care about what the actual interaction is. I want to know what the engagement is because impression just means that something appears in front of eyeballs, but those eyeballs might not be looking at that screen at that moment."

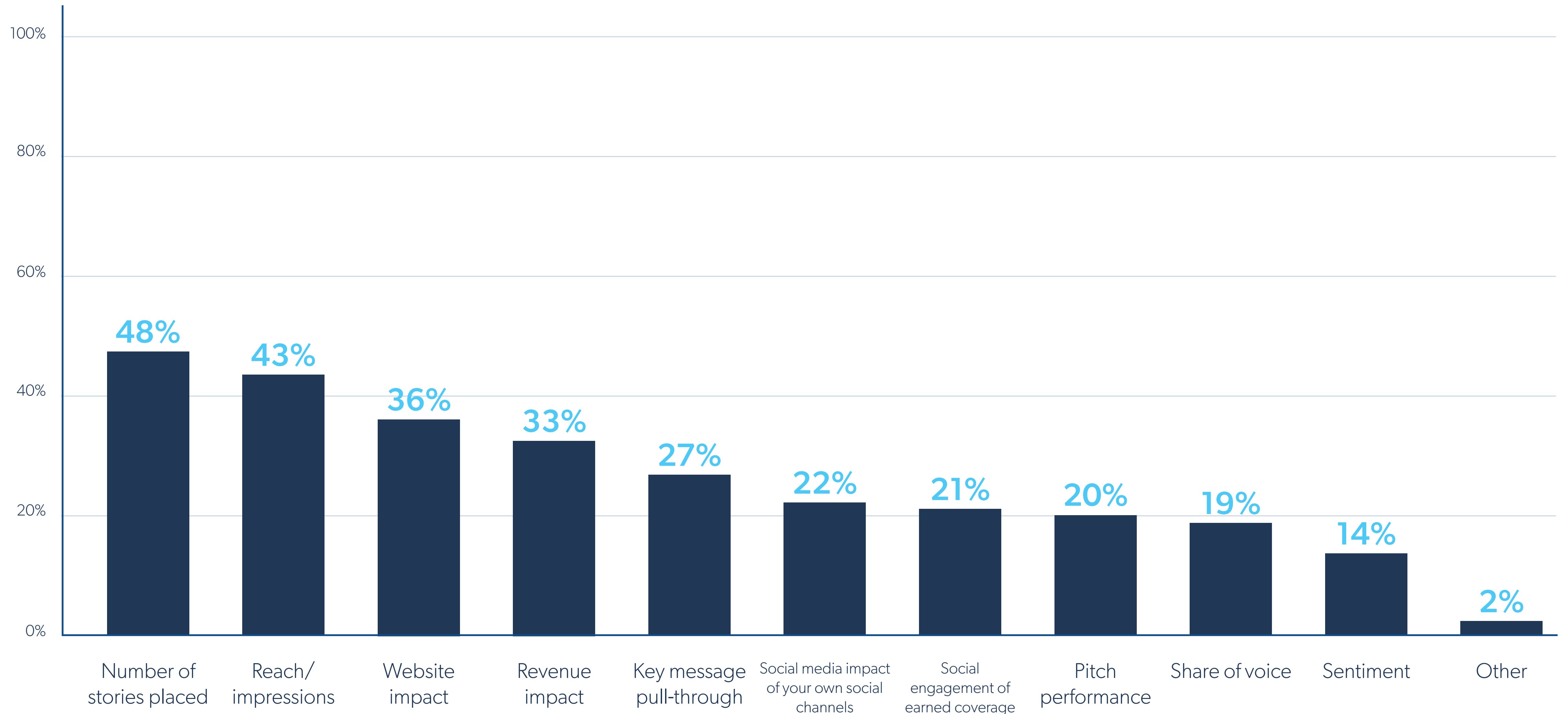
Top marketing metrics for marcom leaders

What are the most important marketing metrics for your team to measure your success? (Select top 3)



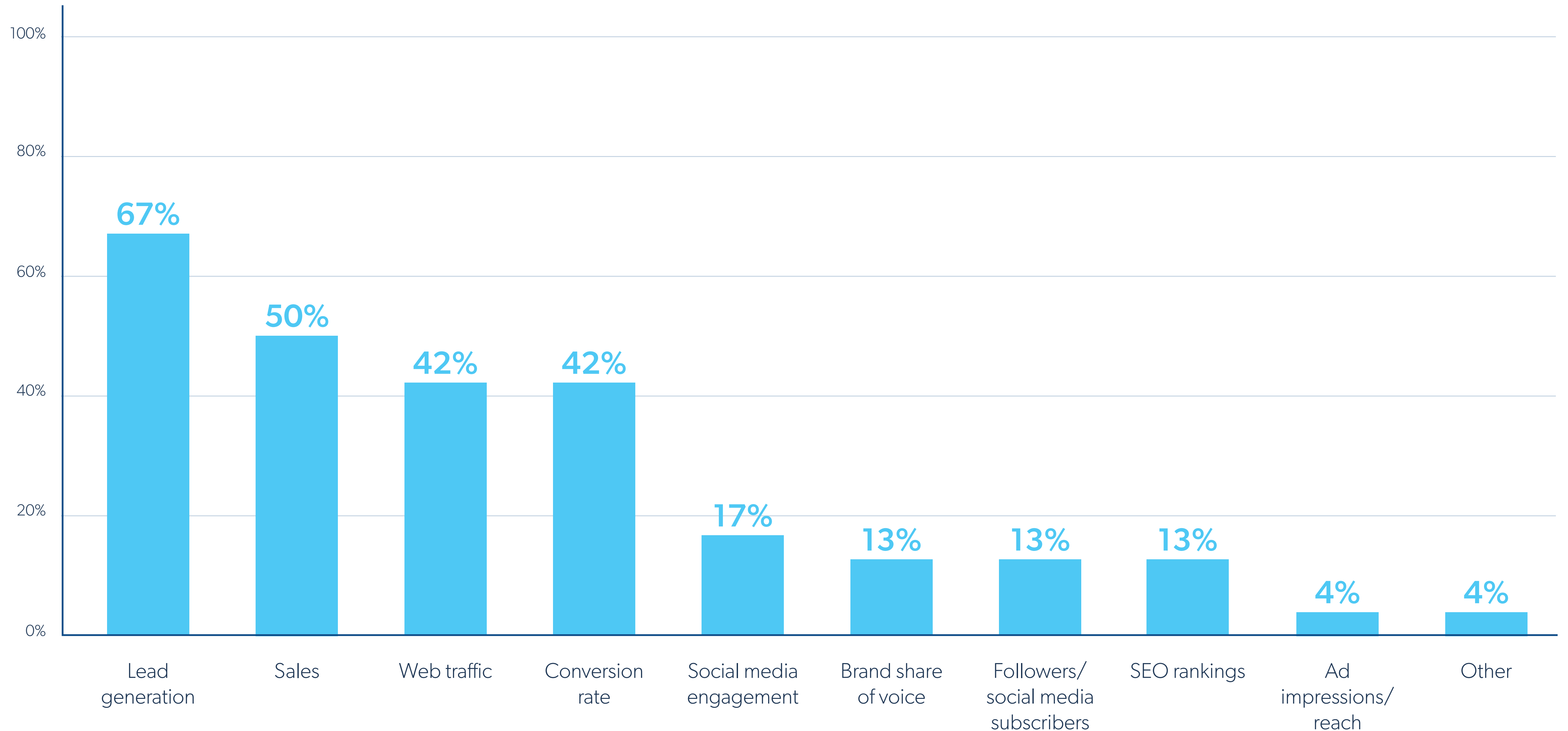
Top PR metrics for marcom leaders

What are the most important metrics for your PR/communications team to measure your success? (Select top 3)



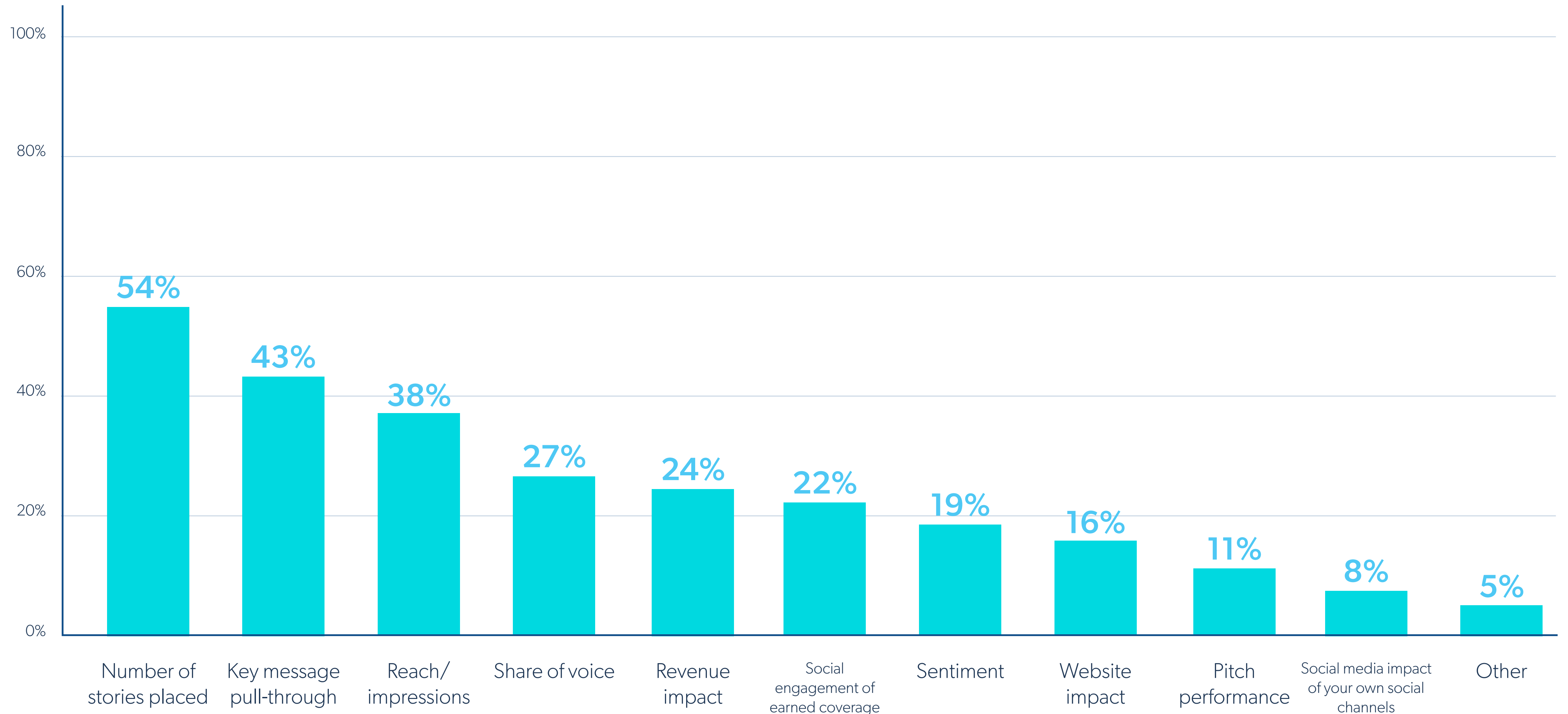
Top metrics for marketing leaders

What are the most important marketing metrics for your team to measure your success? (Select top 3)



Top metrics for communications leaders

What are the most important metrics for your PR/communications team to measure your success? (Select top 3)





LEADER SPOTLIGHT

Elisabeth de Gramont

**Chief Brand Officer & Head of Impact,
Unified Commerce Group**

Unified Commerce Group is a retail platform that acquires and scales purpose-driven lifestyle brands including Frank & Oak. As part of the founding team, Elisabeth focuses on brand strategy for a growing portfolio of brands.

What keeps you up at night?

"How do we generate awareness, interest and traction in markets that are new to us, but where we know we have potential customers who will be very receptive to our product and our message? How do we get in front of them and differentiate ourselves?"

Spotlight Statement:

"I think from our perspective—we're a fashion apparel brand—we need to be present in people's lifestyle and overall environment rather than just being purely functional driven."

Budgets

Leaders are overall optimistic about their budgets going into 2024.

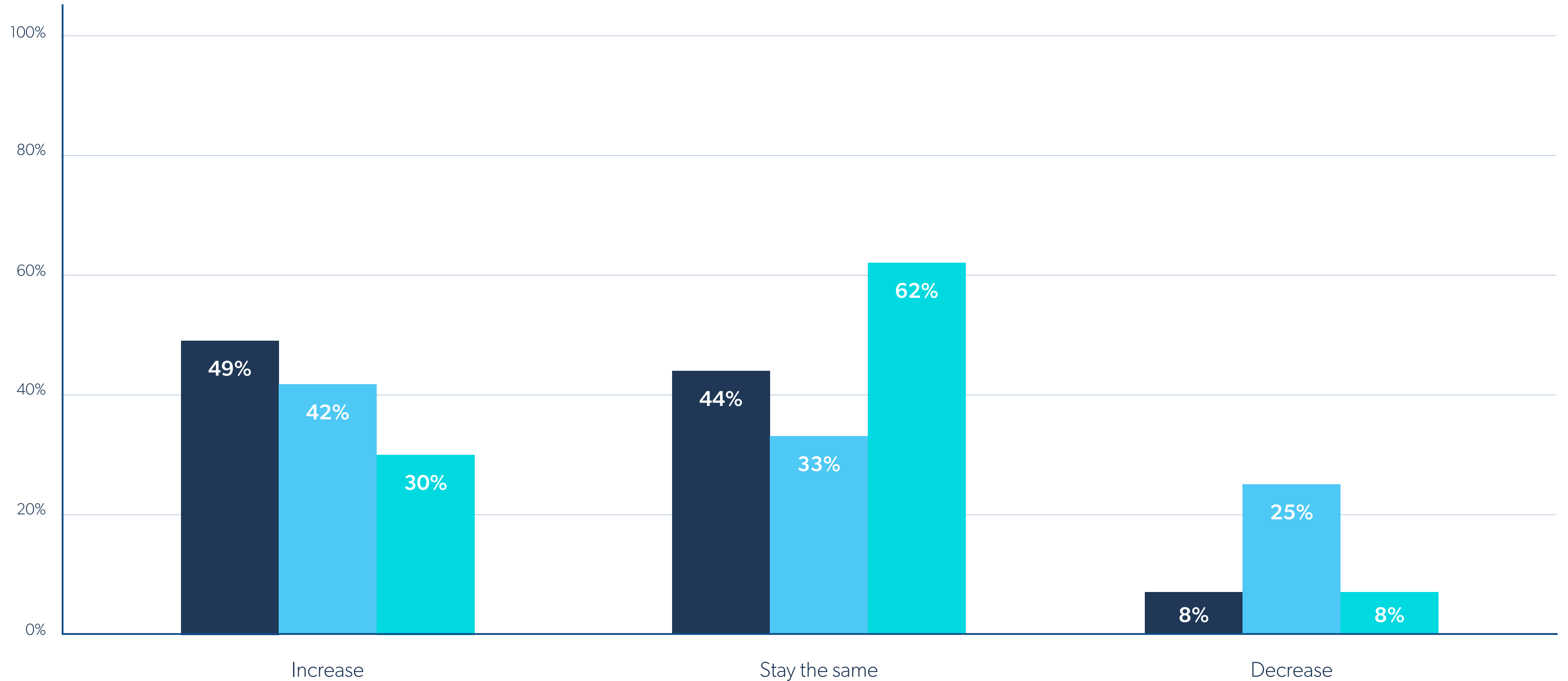
Marketing and marcom leaders are most optimistic about their budgets with **42%** and **49%** respectively saying they expect budgets to increase over the next year. In comparison, just **30%** of comms leaders expect to increase their budget.

Content marketing, social media and **media relations** will be the top areas of investment for 2024 for all leaders.

Elisabeth de Gramont echoed this optimism but with a cautious reminder of the tough choices that come with budget constraints. *“Ideally everyone would have a big team and a big budget,”* de Gramont observed, *“But the reality is that PR can really build a brand and create momentum, especially in terms of share of voice. However, when it’s down to the wire—particularly for D2C online e-commerce brands—there’s a tendency to prioritize spending on guaranteed traffic over PR.”*

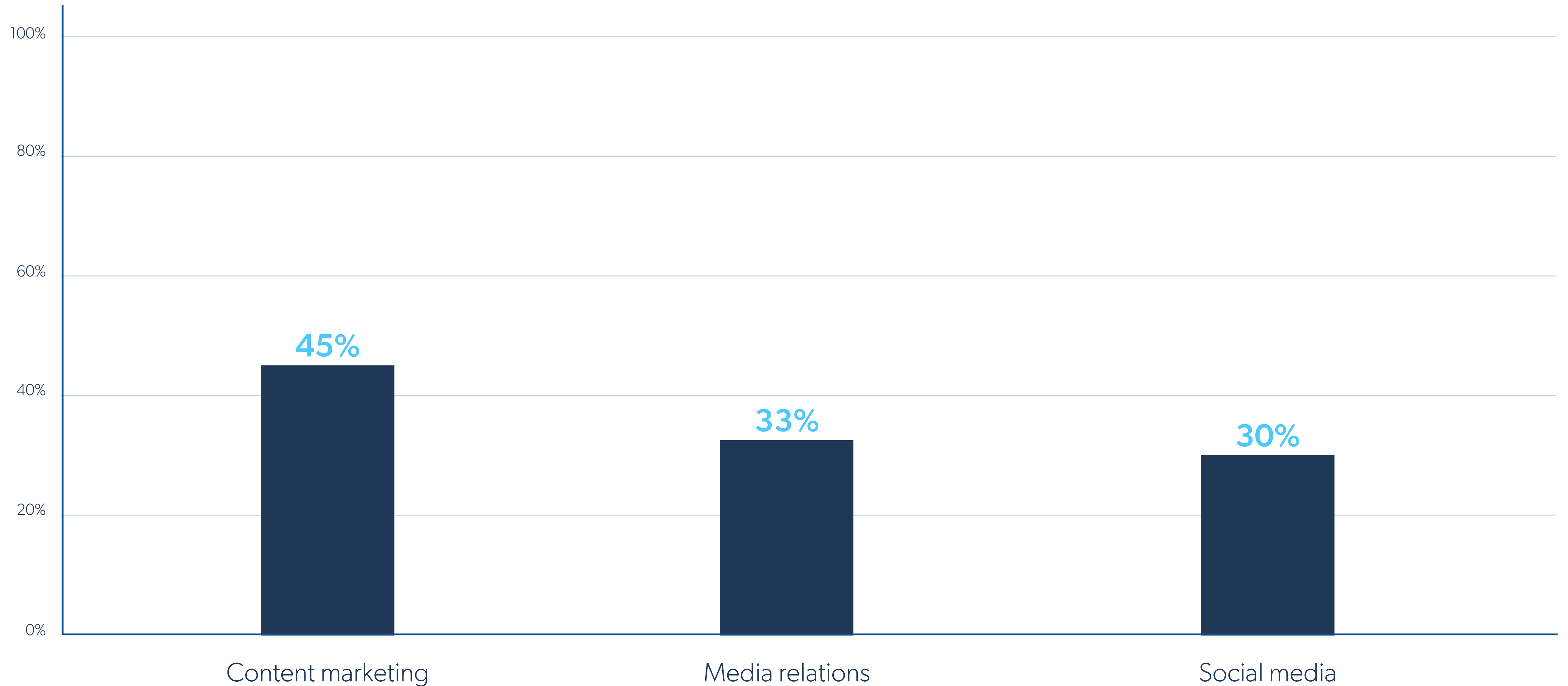
In the next 12 months, do you expect your overall budget to:

■ Marcom leaders ■ Marketing leaders ■ Comms leaders



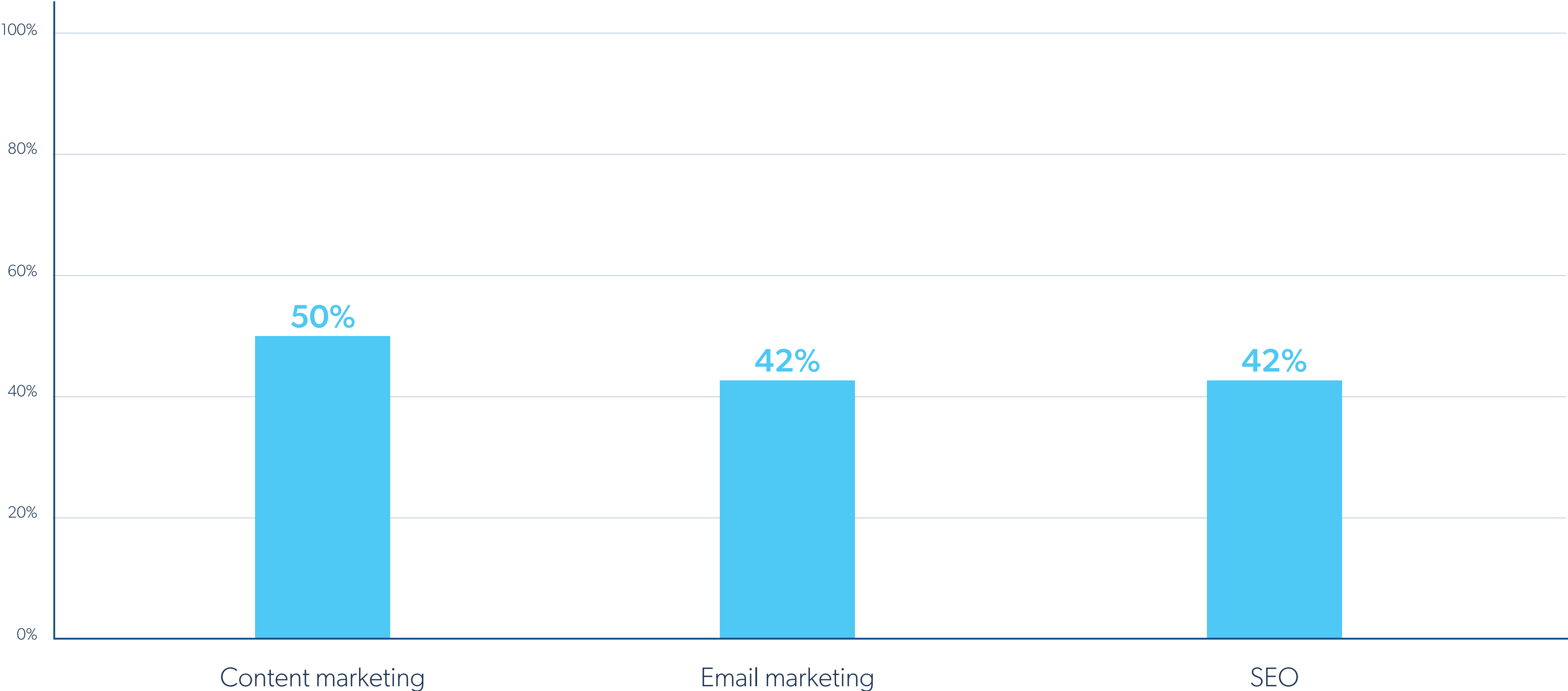
Marcom leaders will invest in content marketing in 2024

In 2024, which of the following areas will receive increased investment in either budget or headcount?



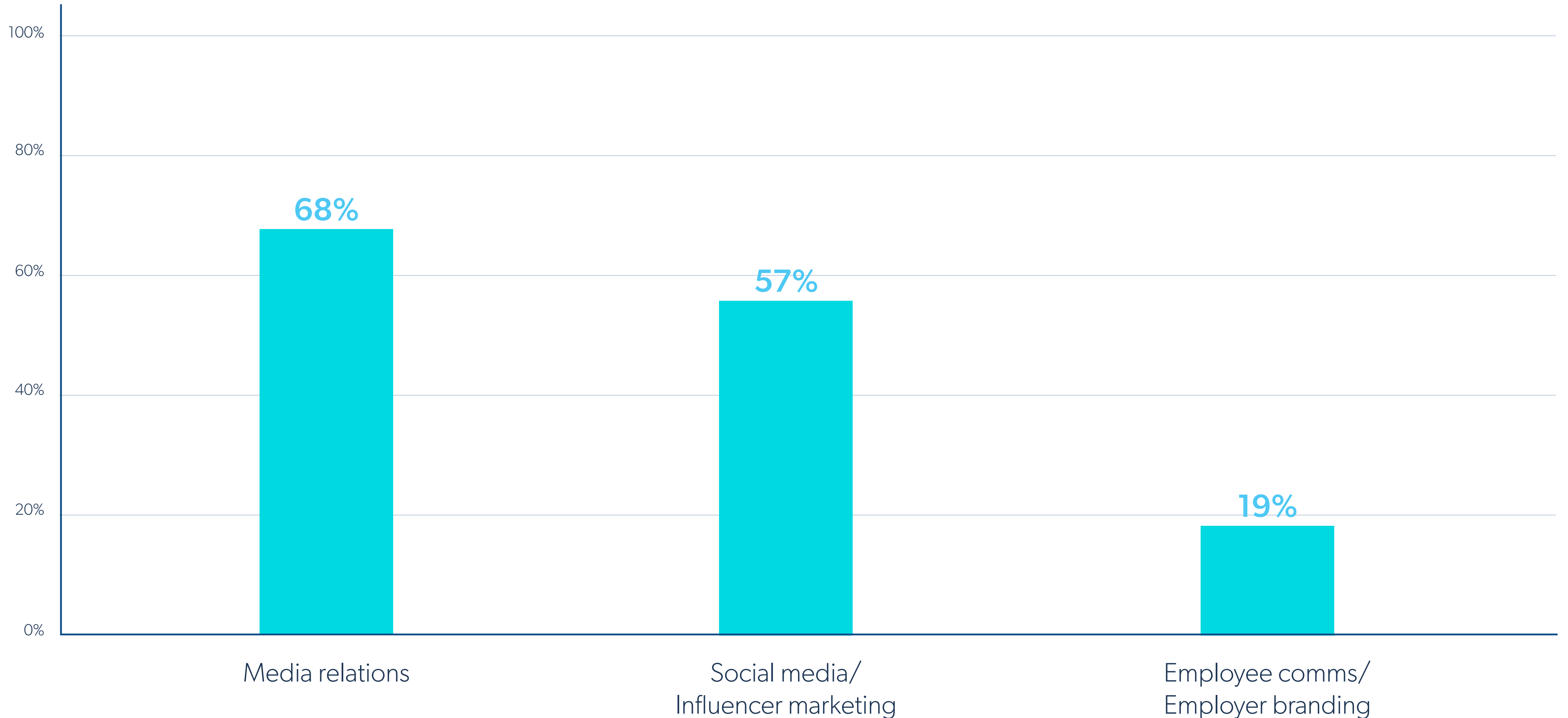
Marketing leaders will invest in content marketing in 2024

In 2024, which of the following areas will receive increased investment in either budget or headcount?



Comms leaders will invest in media relations and social media in 2024

In 2024, which of the following areas will receive increased investment in either budget or headcount?





LEADER SPOTLIGHT

Buck Dutton

VP of Marketing, Native Roots

Native Roots is a vertically integrated cannabis company in Colorado. Buck has been with the brand for just over 2.5 years and primarily focuses mainly on driving traffic and loyalty to their 21 retail locations across the state.

What keeps you up at night?

"Native Roots does really well with brand awareness, but further down the funnel is harder to market simply because of the regulations that we have to abide by."

Spotlight Statement:

"When you're looking at customer loyalty, it needs to be more than just sending an email to a customer," he said. "It's finding those new and interactive ways to engage with our customer base and drive more loyalty."

Team alignment

When marketing and communications teams are separate, they collaborate frequently. Leaders from each group say they meet with the other team at least once a week in most cases.

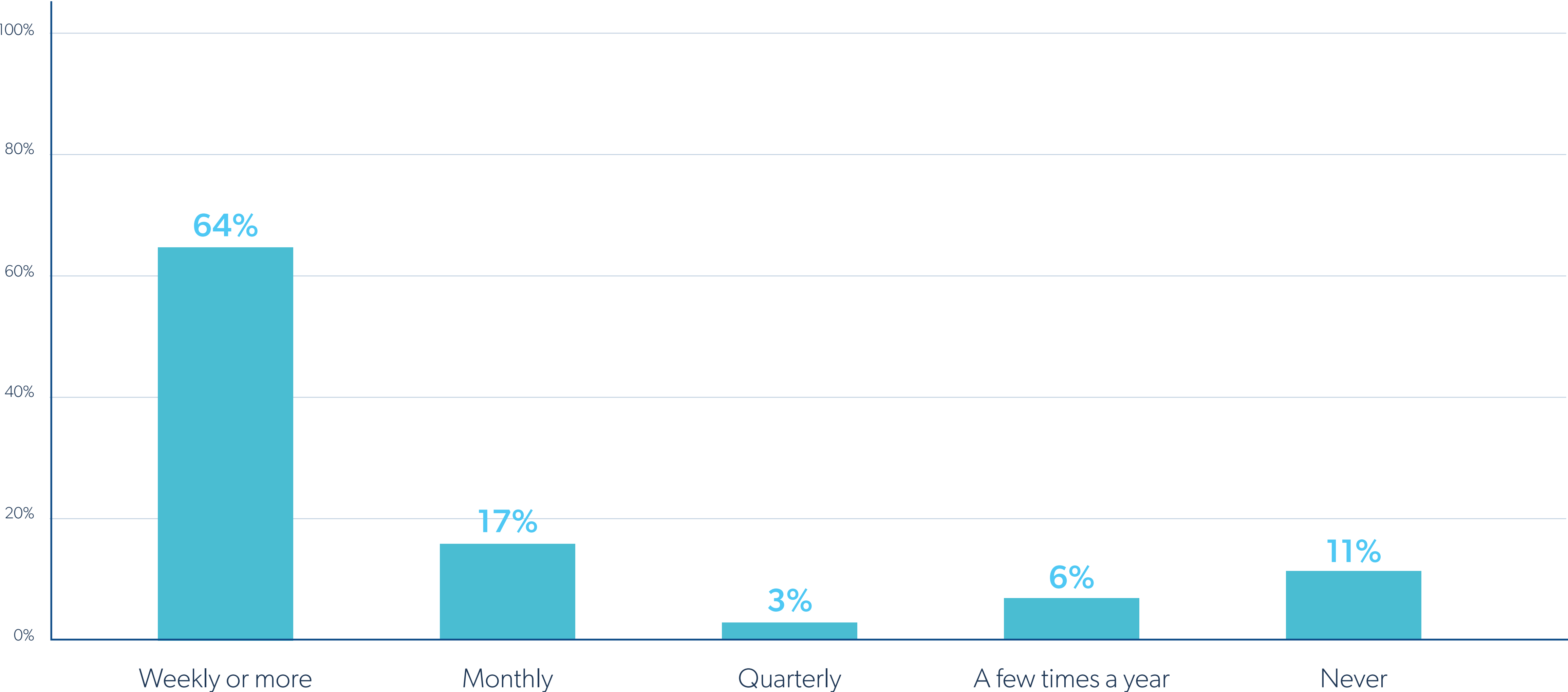
We also asked leaders how comms and marketing can be better aligned and the answers from both sides were similar. Both marketing and comms leaders say they need to plan early, communicate often and align on their shared goals to bring the teams into harmony.

Buck Dutton provided a look into how his team is structured. *“We do most of our marketing in-house with our team of seven. We have a public relations firm on retainer that assists in earned media and public affairs, but for the most part, we do all of our marketing and communications in-house,”* he said.

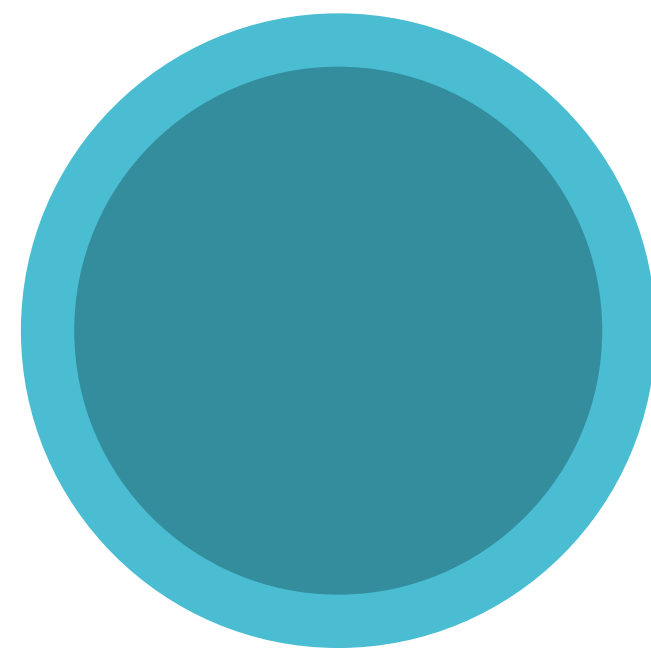
“We operate with a director of digital marketing, a team member focused primarily on omni-channel customer communications and a team member focused primarily on events. We also have a team member focused on our individual stores as each of our locations is in its own unique community, and community is one of our brand values. Finally, we do most of our graphic design in-house.”

The following graphs show the combined responses from marketing and communications leaders.

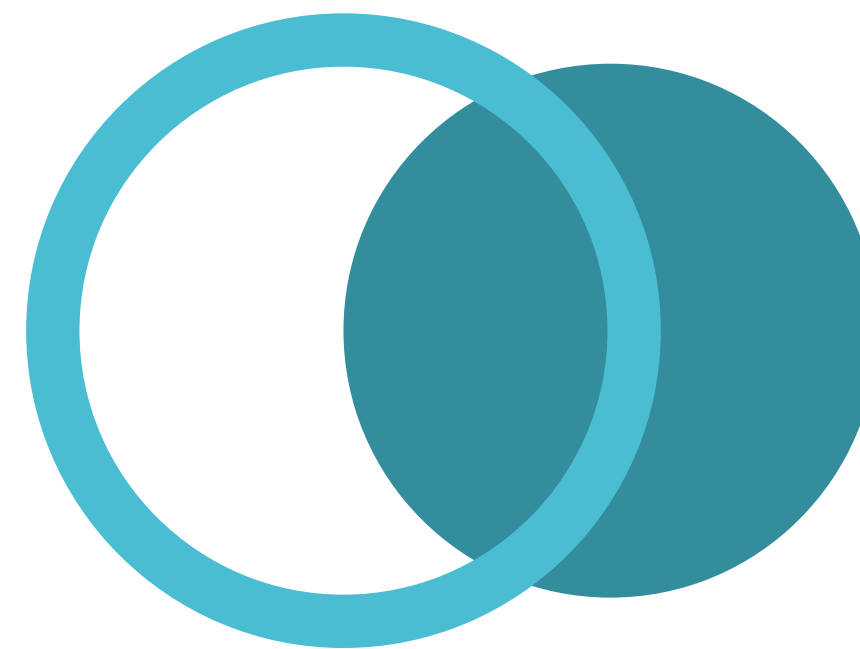
How often do you meet with the opposite team?



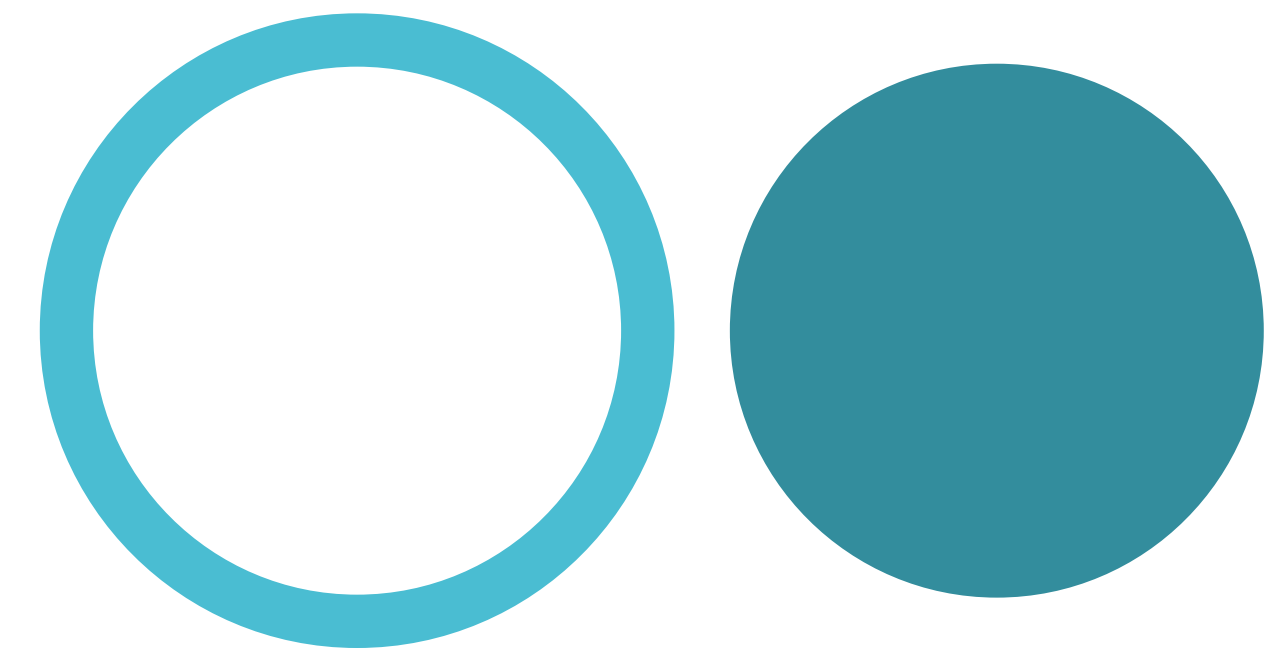
How aligned are your marketing and communications teams?



56%
Very aligned



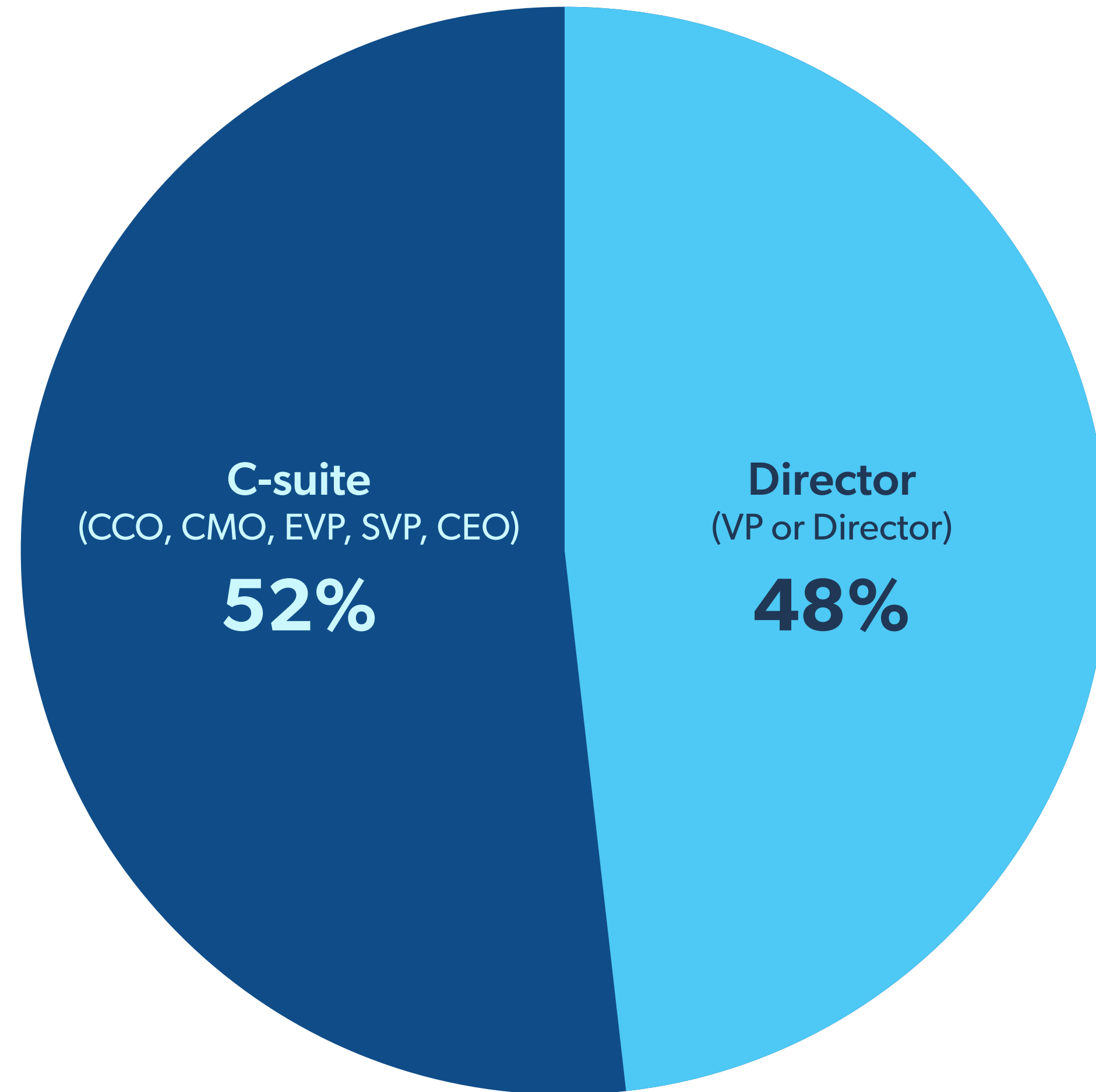
42%
Somewhat aligned



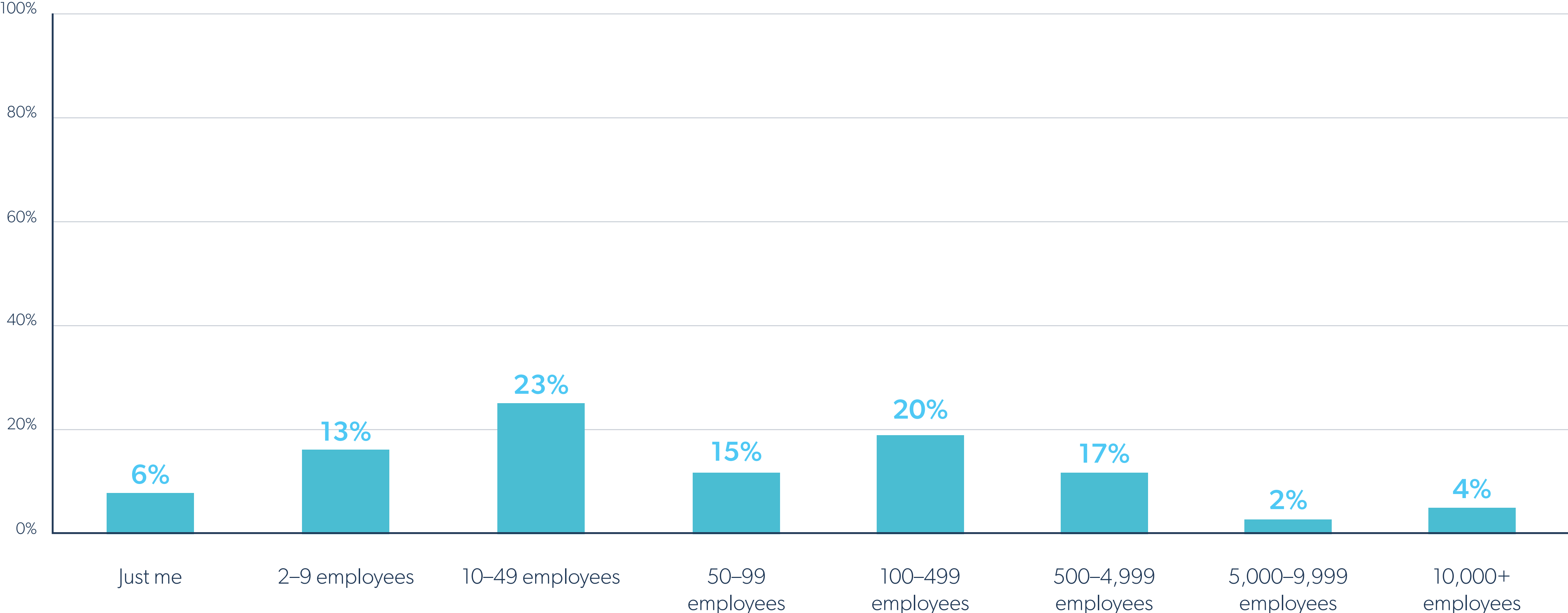
2%
Not aligned at all

Audience breakdown

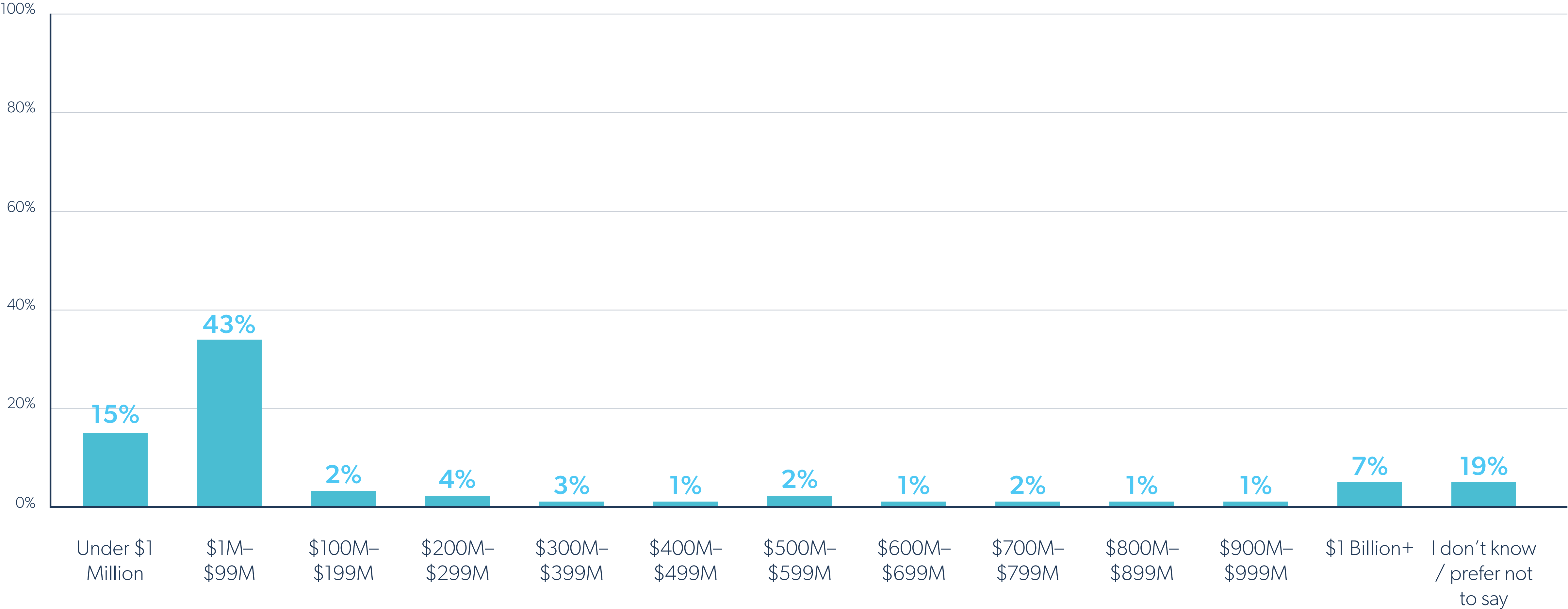
What best describes your level in your company?



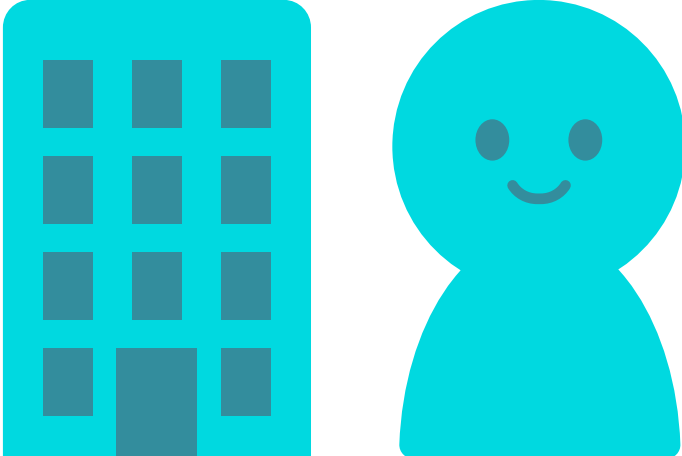
How many full-time employees work at your company?



What best describes your company's average annual revenue? (all answers in USD)

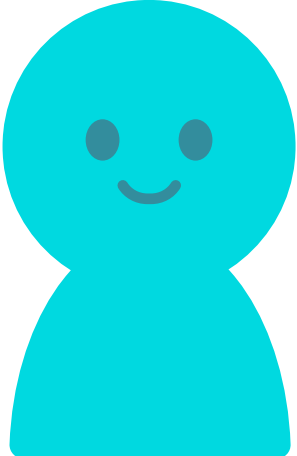


The primary audience my organization/clients sell to are:



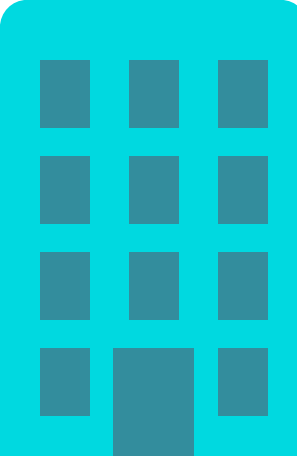
30%

Both (B2C and B2B)



27%

Business to
consumer (B2C)



40%

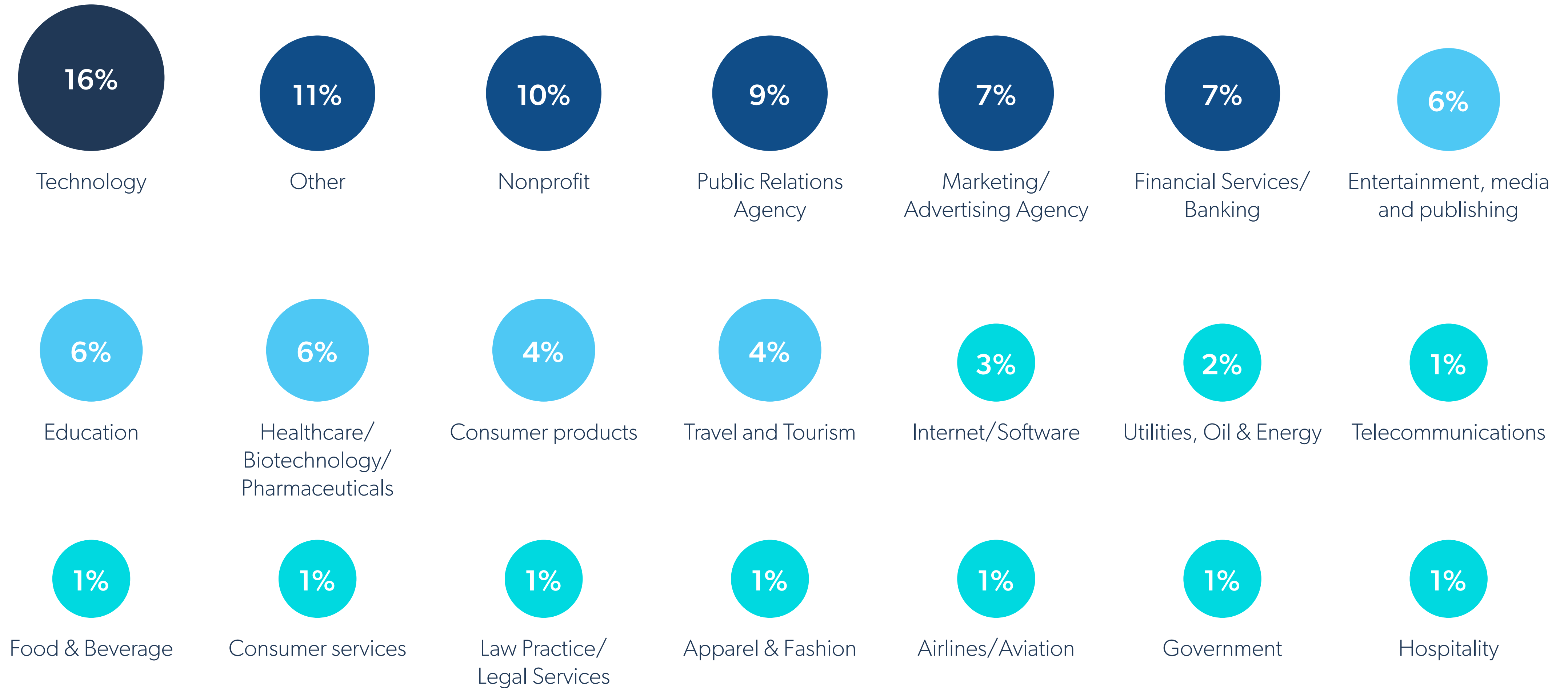
Business to
business (B2B)



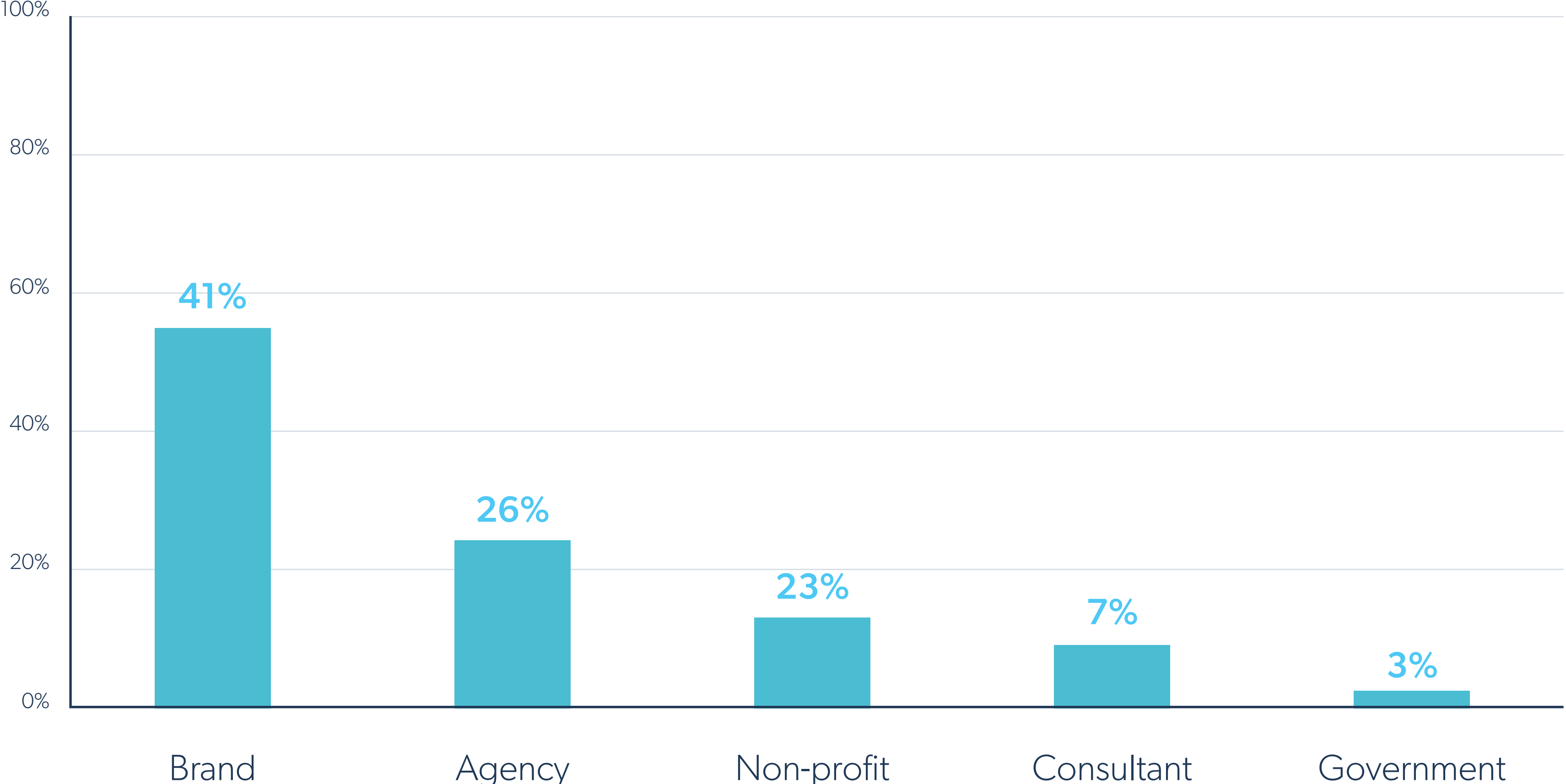
3%

Other

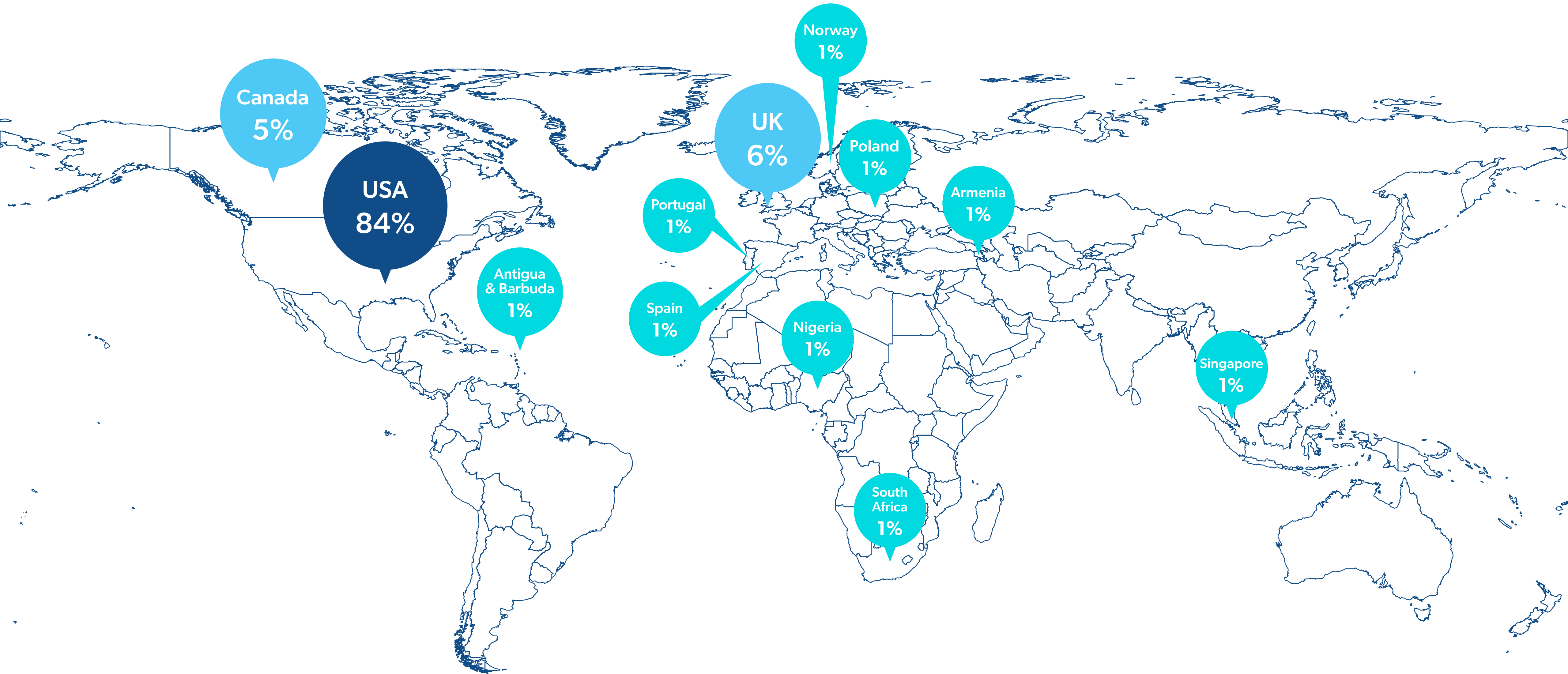
Which of the following best describes the principal industry of your organization?



Which of the following best describes where you work?



In what country do you work?



Methodology

We conducted a survey of 384 PR and marketing professionals in leadership roles between September 7 and October 26, 2023. Muck Rack distributed the survey primarily via email to individuals at the director level or higher.

To ensure the quality of our data, Muck Rack employed several cleaning methods. First, only fully completed surveys were considered. We also discarded responses completed in under two minutes, recognizing them as low effort. Additionally, duplicate submissions and any entries identified as originating from spam accounts were removed, and we screened for significant outliers. Our final sample size was reduced to 193 respondents. To augment our quantitative data, we also conducted follow-up interviews via Zoom with four senior leaders to gather qualitative insights.

Given the relatively small sample size, we recommend exercising caution when generalizing these findings to the broader population of PR and marketing leaders. Due to rounding and the possibility of excluding certain categories, percentages presented may not sum to exactly 100%.

MUCK RACK

Thank you!

Muck Rack is a Public Relations Management (PRM) platform that enables organizations to build relationships with the media, manage crisis risk and demonstrate PR's impact on business outcomes.

[Learn more](#)

<https://muckrack.com>