

A STUDY BY
MUCK RACK

THE STATE OF

PRR

2023

About this survey

Company type:

- 55% agencies
- 23% brands
- 12% nonprofits
- 9% consultant
- 2% government

PR team size:

- Solo: 15%
- 2-19: 51%
- 20-99: 20%
- 100+: 14%

Location:

- 89% US
- 3% Europe
- 3% Canada
- 1% Asia

Primary audience:

- 27% B2B
- 30% B2C
- 40% B2B and B2C

Industry:

- Public Relations Agency: 25%
- Technology: 13%
- Marketing/ Advertising Agency: 7%
- Nonprofit: 7%
- Entertainment, media and publishing: 6%
- Other: 6%
- Healthcare/ Biotechnology/ Pharmaceuticals: 5%
- Consumer products: 4%
- Education: 4%
- Financial Services/ Banking: 3%
- Food & Beverage: 3%
- Ecommerce and Retail: 3%
- Travel and Tourism: 3%
- Government: 2%

See extended audience breakdown in the final section.

Methodology

We surveyed 1,034 PR professionals from March 31 to April 25, 2023.


The goal of this survey is to deliver insights to the PR industry to help improve the workflow of public relations professionals. Muck Rack distributed the survey primarily through email.

Muck Rack cleaned the data in a variety of ways. First, we only counted complete responses. We also removed low effort responses where the respondent completed the survey in less than five minutes. Finally, we removed any duplicate entries, responses that were generated by spam accounts and checked the data for major outliers.

Due to changes in phrasing, comparing data to previous years may not be possible. Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding errors or excluded categories.

The conservative margin of error for the survey is about 3%.

Executive Summary

- 70% of PR pros expect earned media to become more difficult to secure over the next five years.
 - LinkedIn is now the top social network for communication strategies after increasing more than 10% compared to last year, displacing Twitter.
 - More than half of PR pros say there is little to no diversity on their leadership teams.
 - AI is one of the top five skills PR pros say their companies will need to focus on to be successful in the future.
 - 44% of PR pros say they're spending more time on internal communications.
- 

1

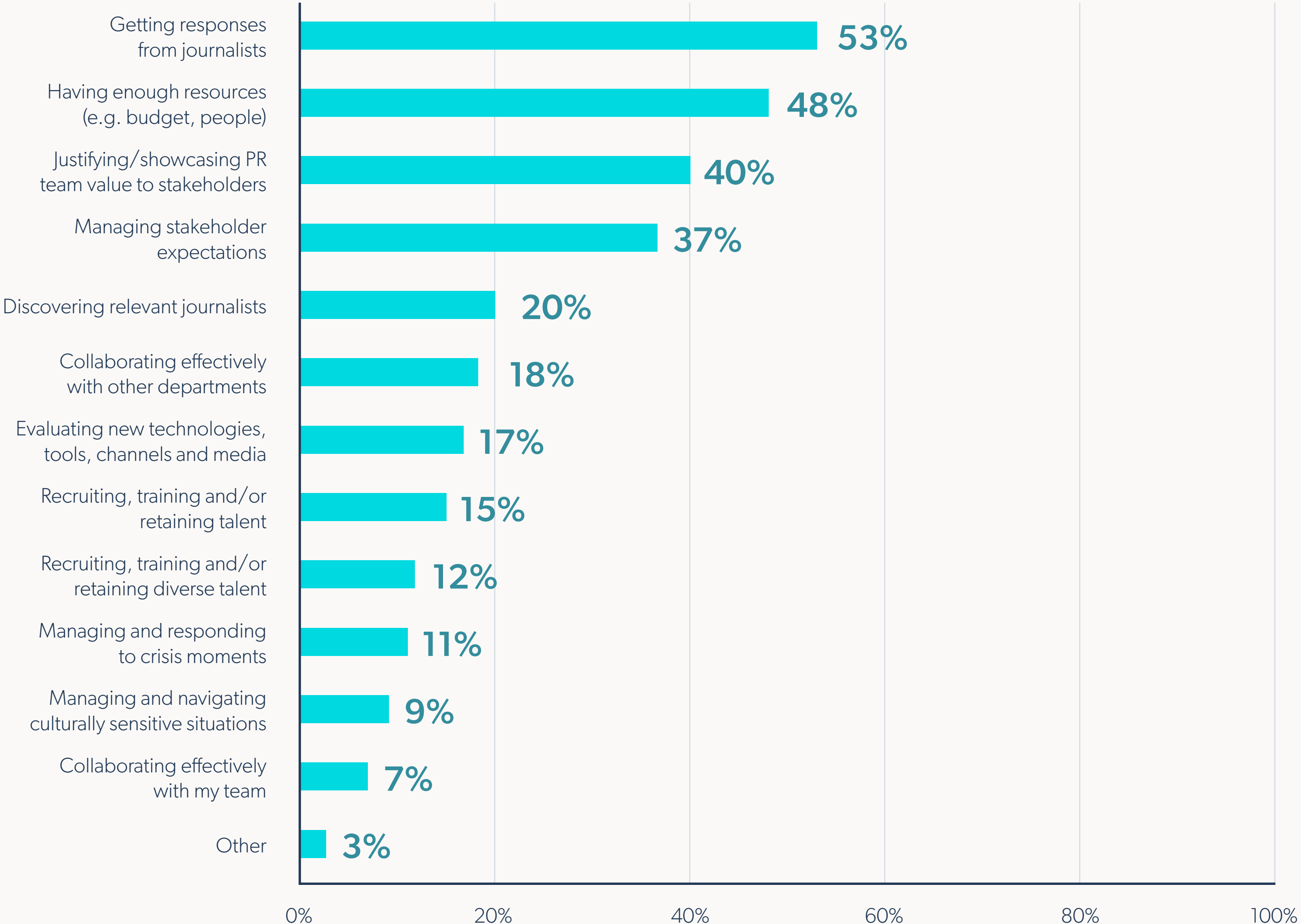
How PR pros work: challenges and priorities

The top concern for PR pros is getting journalists to respond

This issue is ranked higher by people at agencies (59%) as opposed to brands (46%). Brands however are more concerned about having enough resources (55%) than their agency counterparts (42%).

[Explore more brand/agency comparisons with our interactive charts.](#)

Choose the top three PR/communications challenges your company faces today



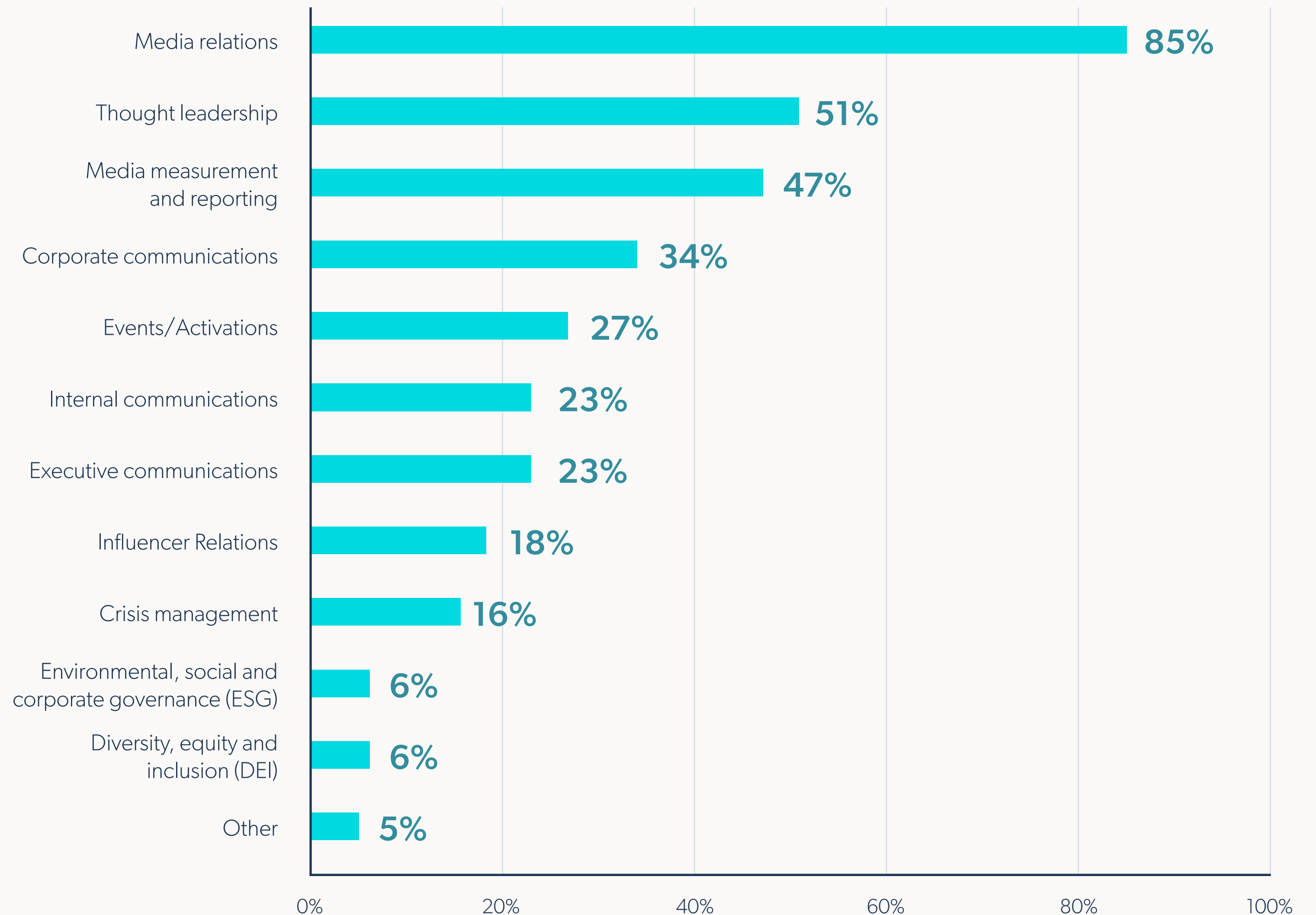
Media relations dominates PR pros' time, but secondary focuses varies

Thought leadership is more of a focus for agencies (57%) than brands (47%). Agencies are also more focused on media relations (89%) compared to brands (83%).

About half of respondents at brands cite corporate communications as an essential function of their jobs, while agencies mention it in less than one third of responses.

[Explore more brand/agency comparisons with our interactive charts.](#)

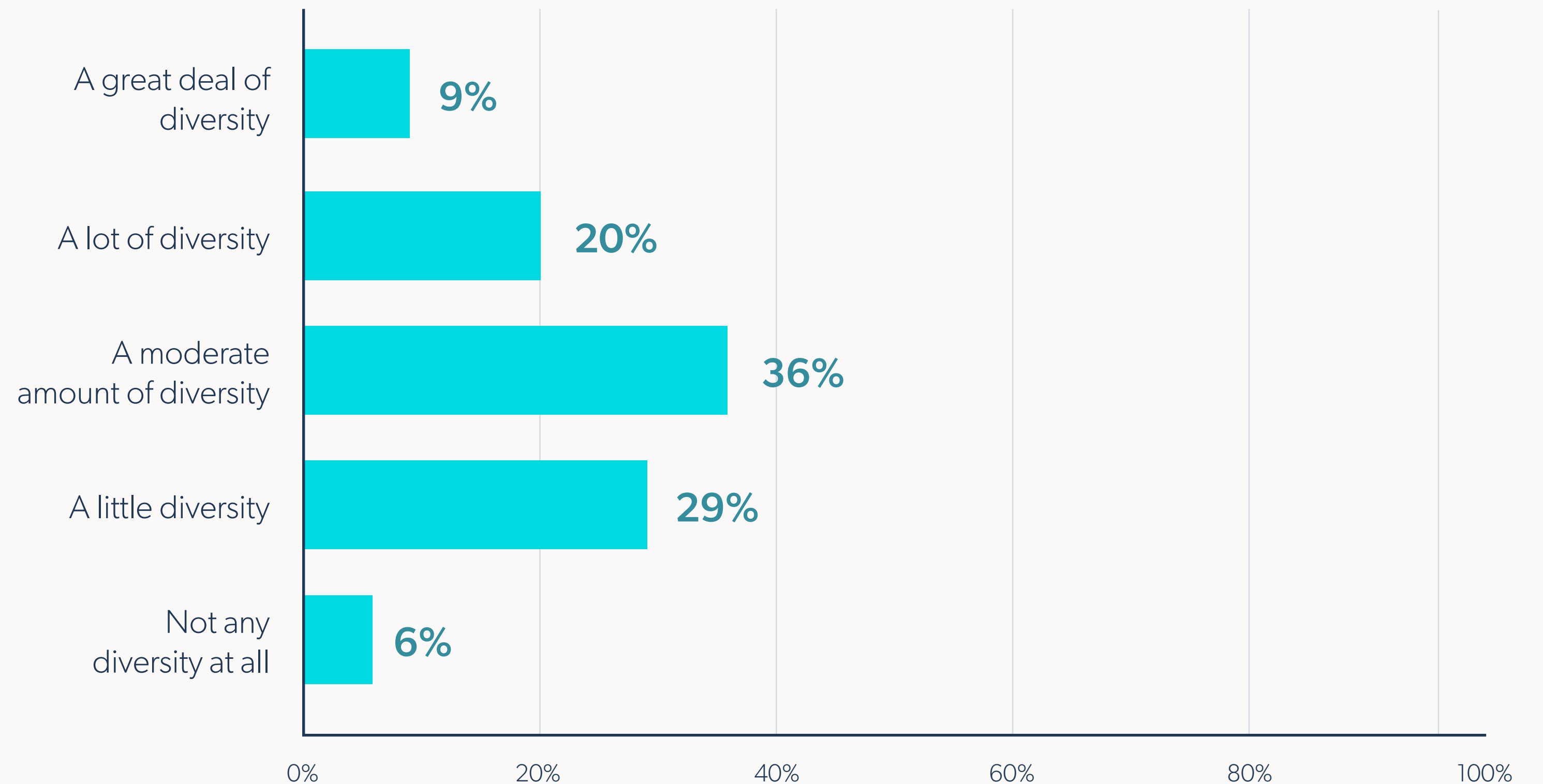
Which of these functions constitutes at least 25 percent of your job as a PR professional? (select up to 4)



About one third of PR pros say their workplace has little to no diversity

About a quarter of respondents who work at brands say they have a lot of diversity compared to just **17%** at agencies.

In your opinion, how much diversity does your workplace have?

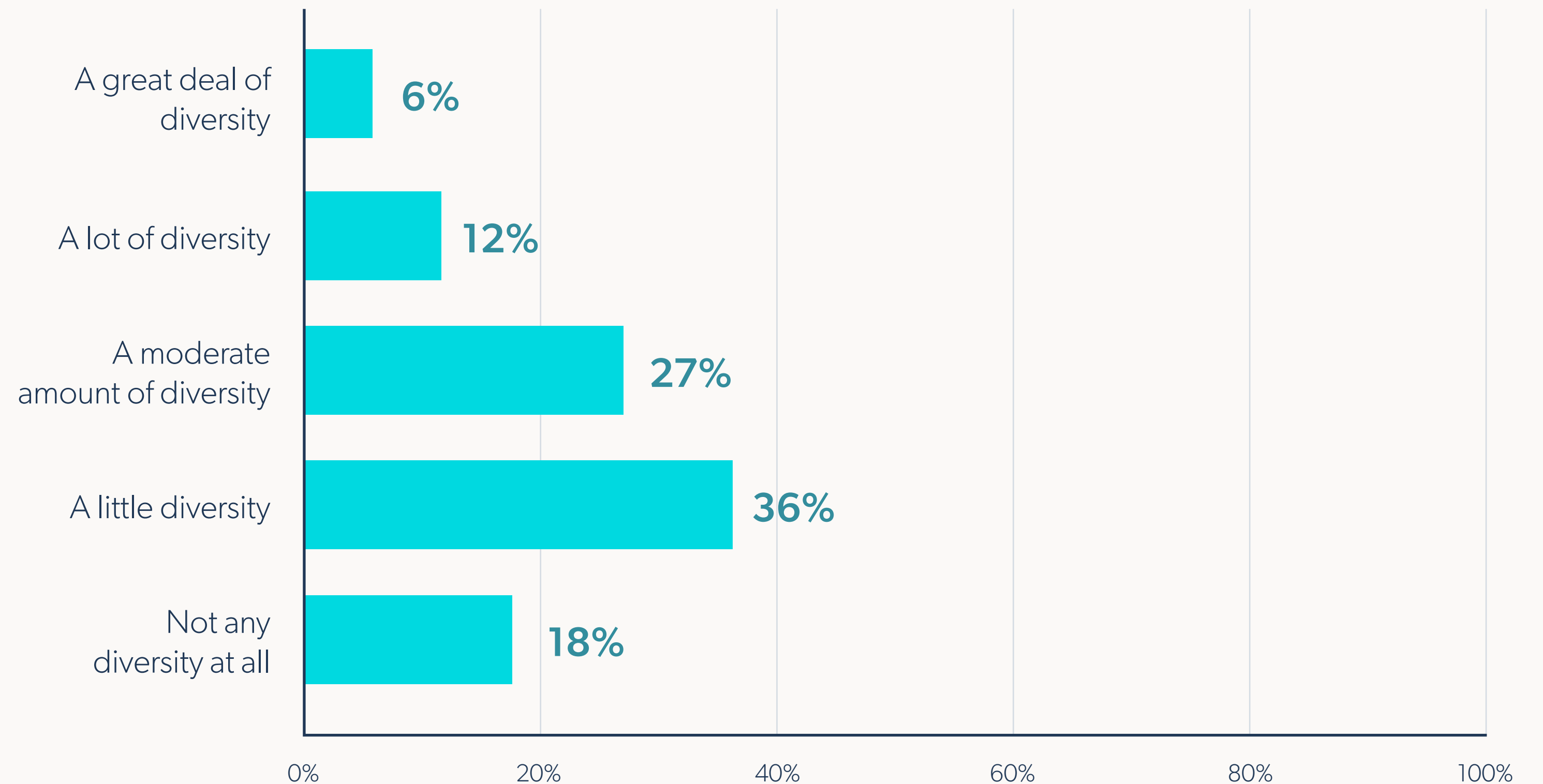


There is a diversity issue in leadership roles

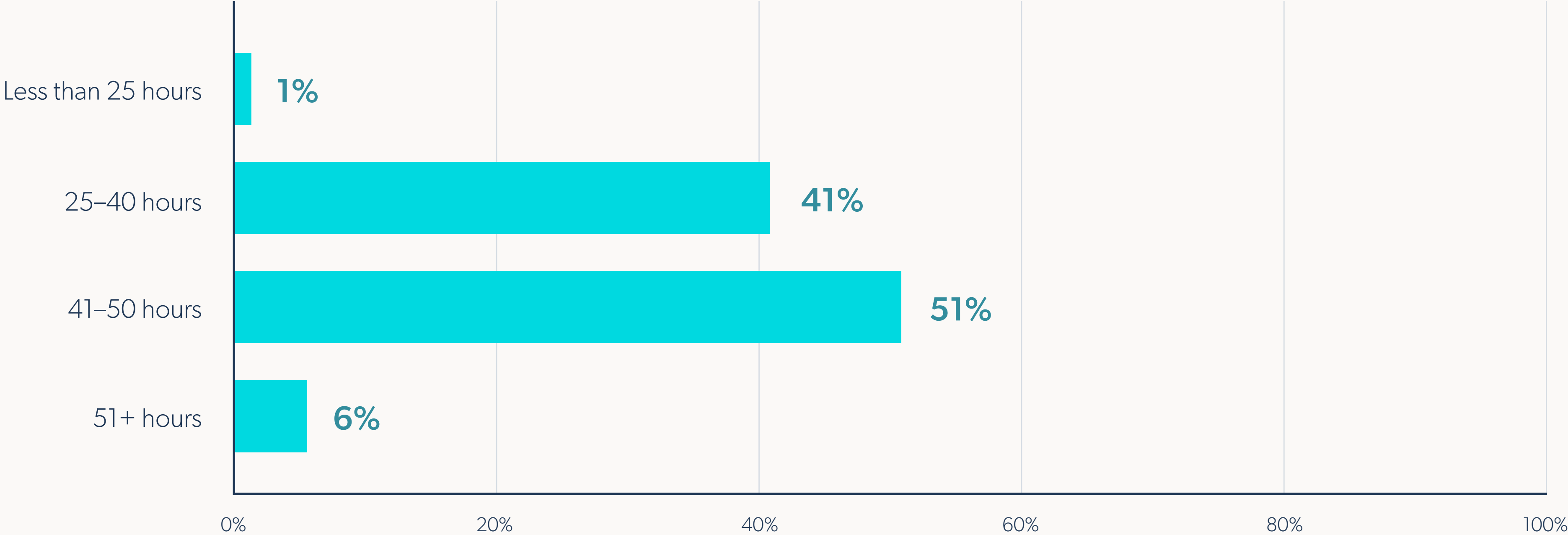
More than half of PR pros say there is little to no diversity on their leadership team.

About one in five people working at agencies say there is no diversity at all, compared to about one in ten people at brands saying the same thing.

In your opinion, how much diversity does your leadership team have?



Over the last week, about how many hours did you work? This includes: meetings, outreach, writing and responding to messages, planning, researching.

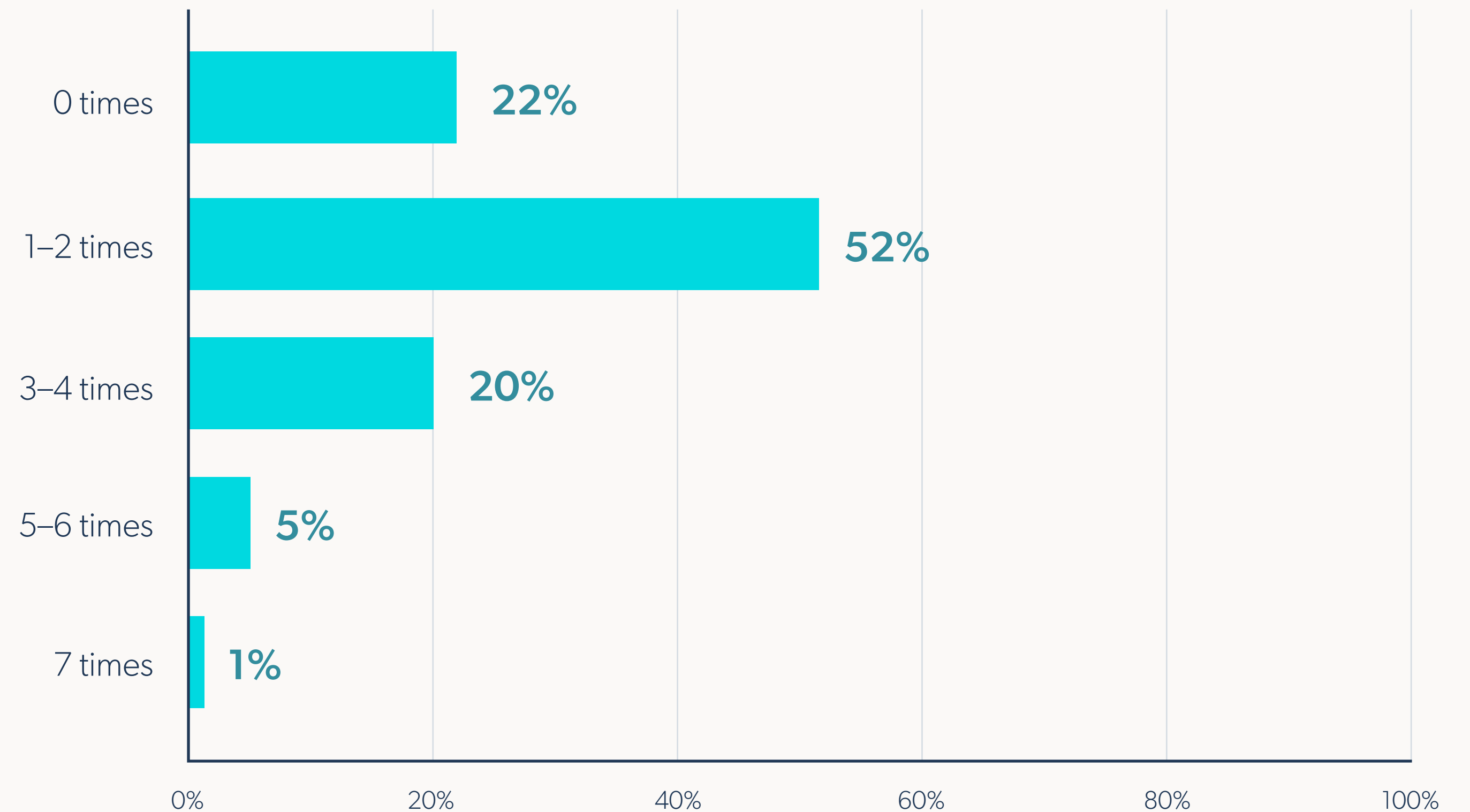


After-hours work is the norm

Most PR pros work after hours at least **one day per week**. PR pros at companies with only one employee are much more likely to report working after hours three to four times per week.

C-suite employees are **more likely** to report working after hours three to seven days a week, while coordinator-level employees reported working zero the most often of any group.

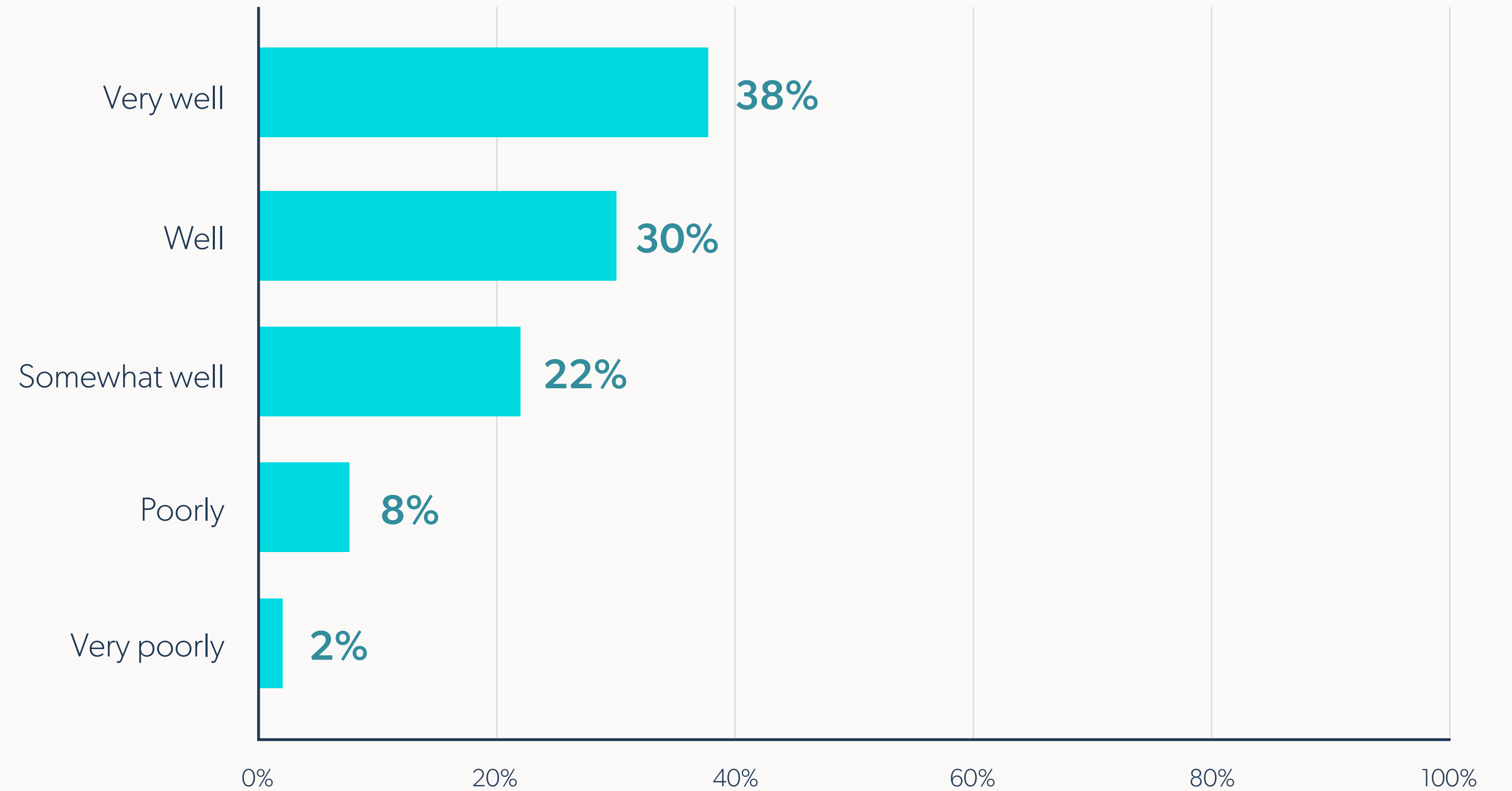
Over the last week, how many times have you had to work after hours, like late nights, early mornings or on weekends?



Most PR pros feel like leadership understands what they do

90% say leadership understands their work at least somewhat well.

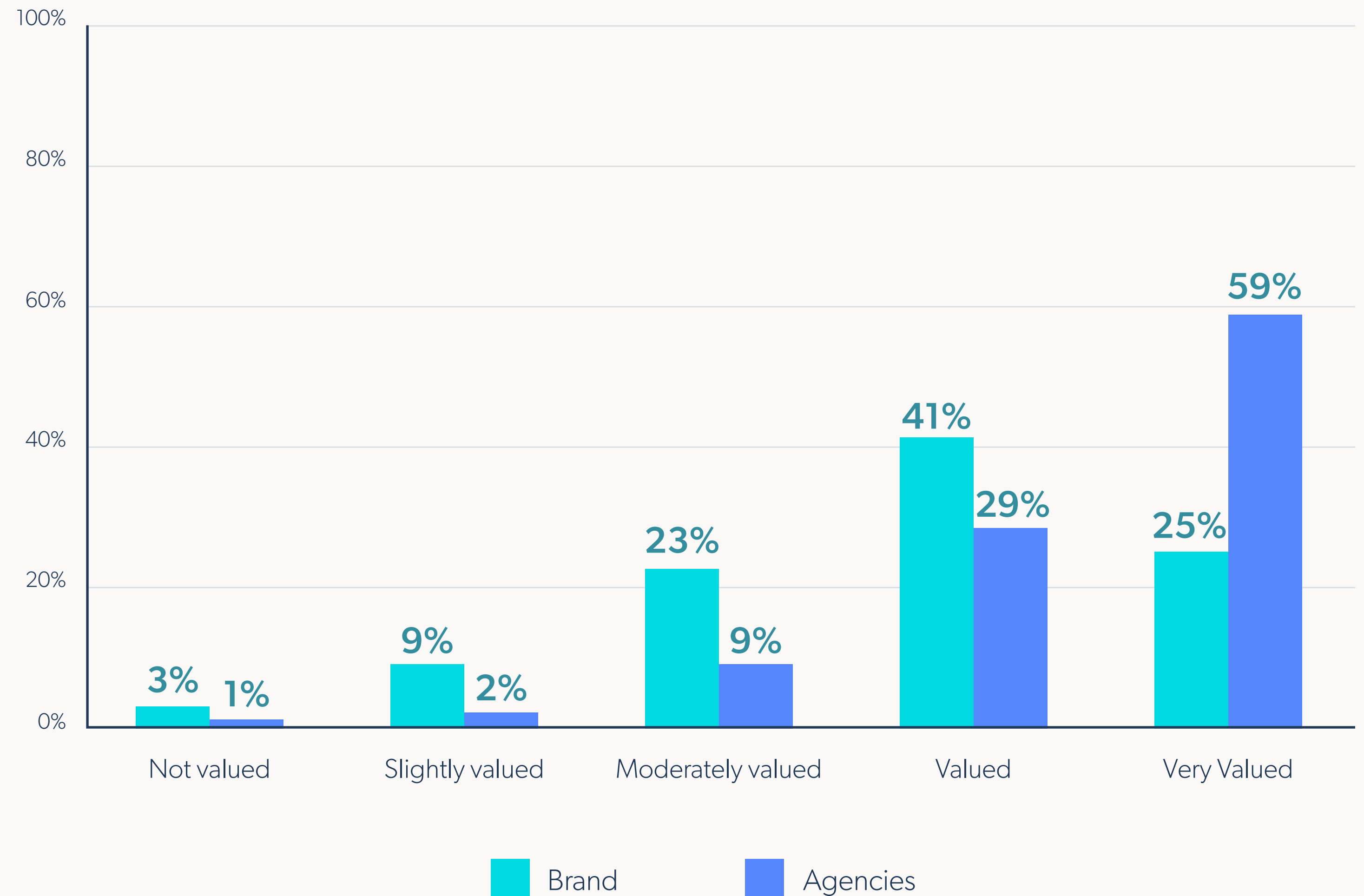
How well does company leadership understand your work?



Most PR pros feel valued by their company's leadership

59% of employees at agencies say they feel very valued while at brands only 25% said the same thing.

How valued do you feel the PR/Communications function is by your company's leadership?



Producing measurable results is the best way to increase PR's value to stakeholders

But agencies and brands differ on other techniques.

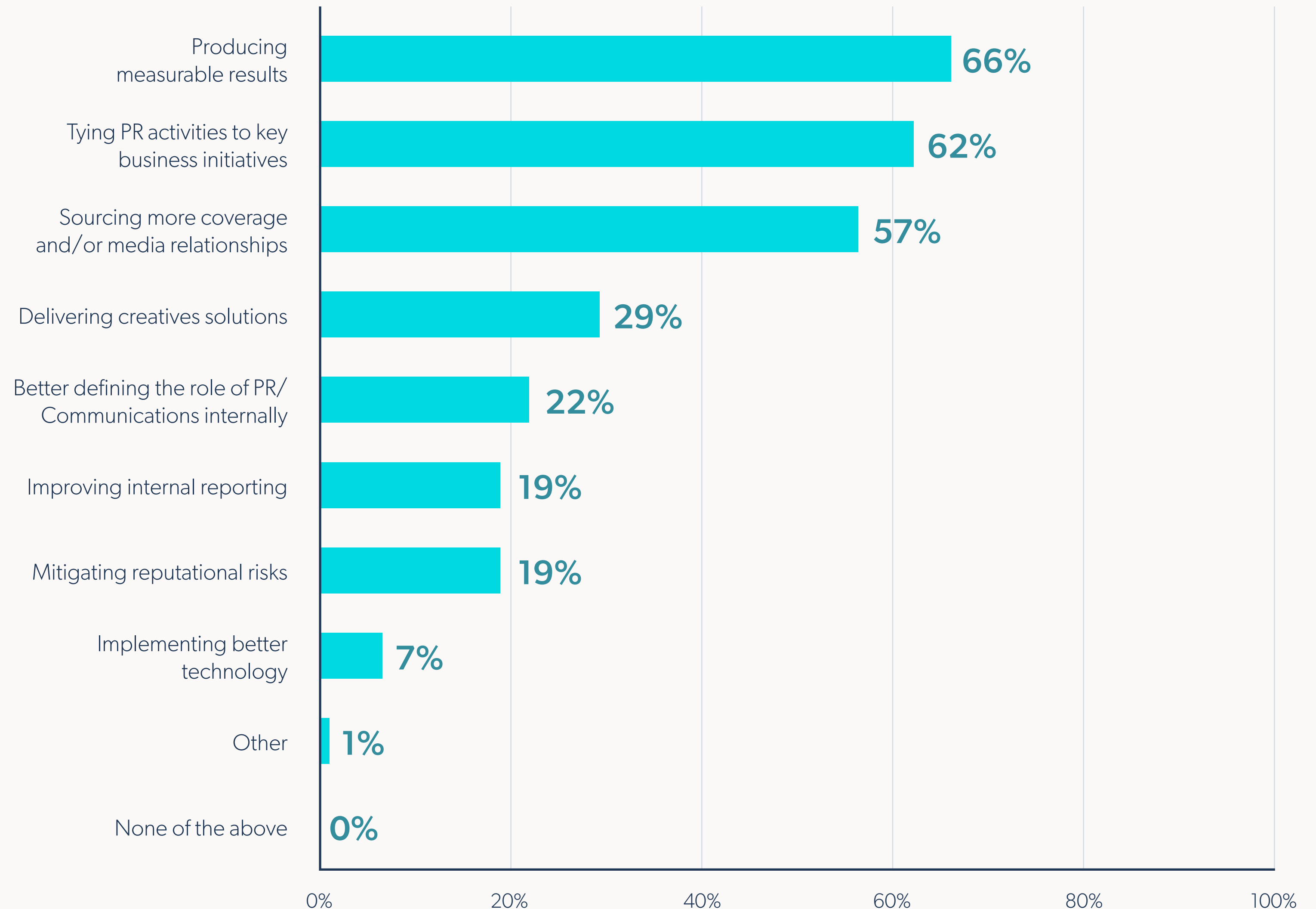
70% of PR pros at brands say tying PR activities to business initiatives increases value compared to **60%** at agencies.

Employees at brands also cite mitigating reputational risk and improving internal reporting in **24%** of responses.

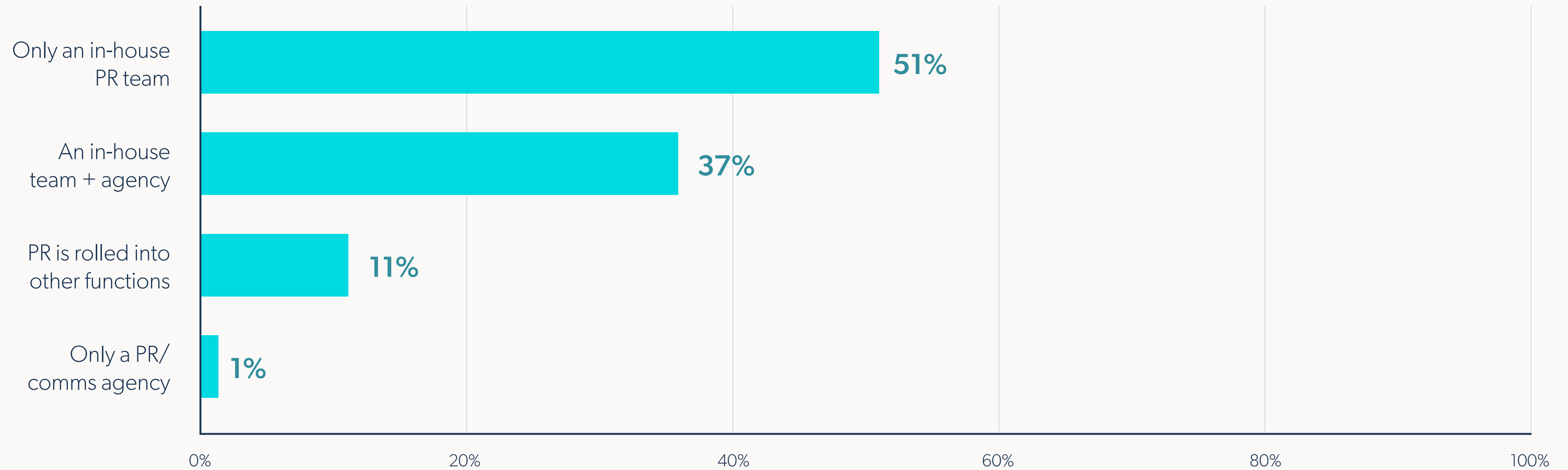
Agencies on the other hand see more value in delivering creative solutions (**31%**) and sourcing more coverage (**62%**).

[See more brand/agency comparisons in our interactive chart.](#)

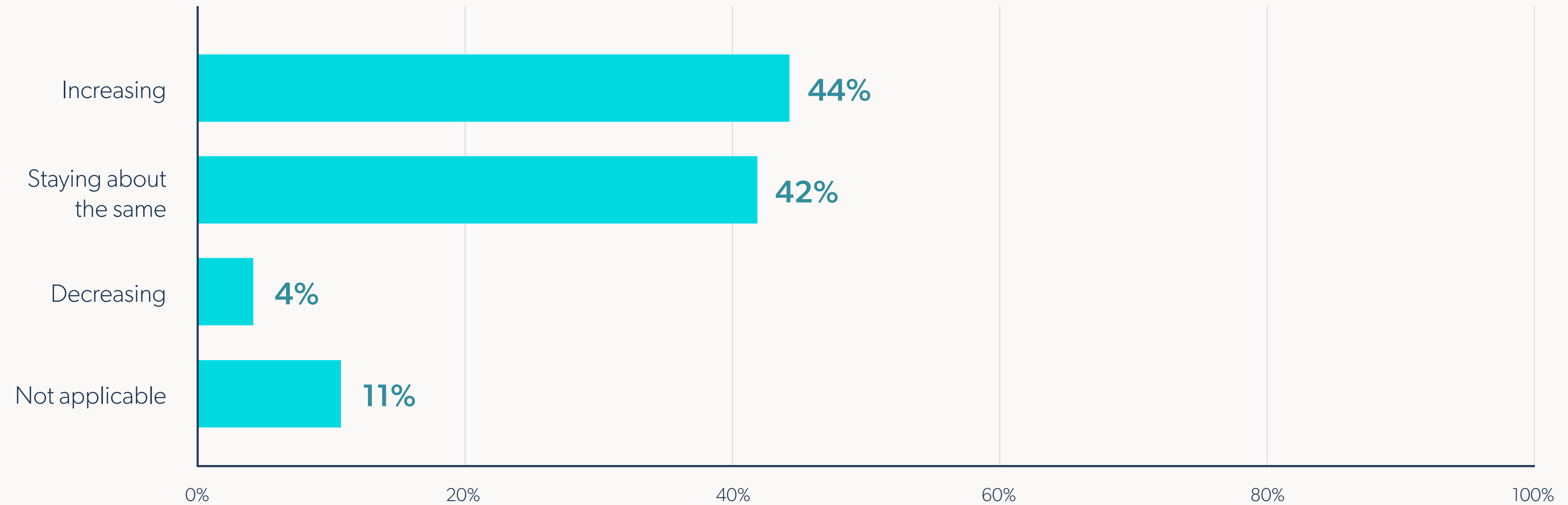
Which of the following helps increase the value of PR among key stakeholders in your or the client's company? (select the top 3)



My organization's PR is managed by:



Is the amount of time your team spends on internal communications:

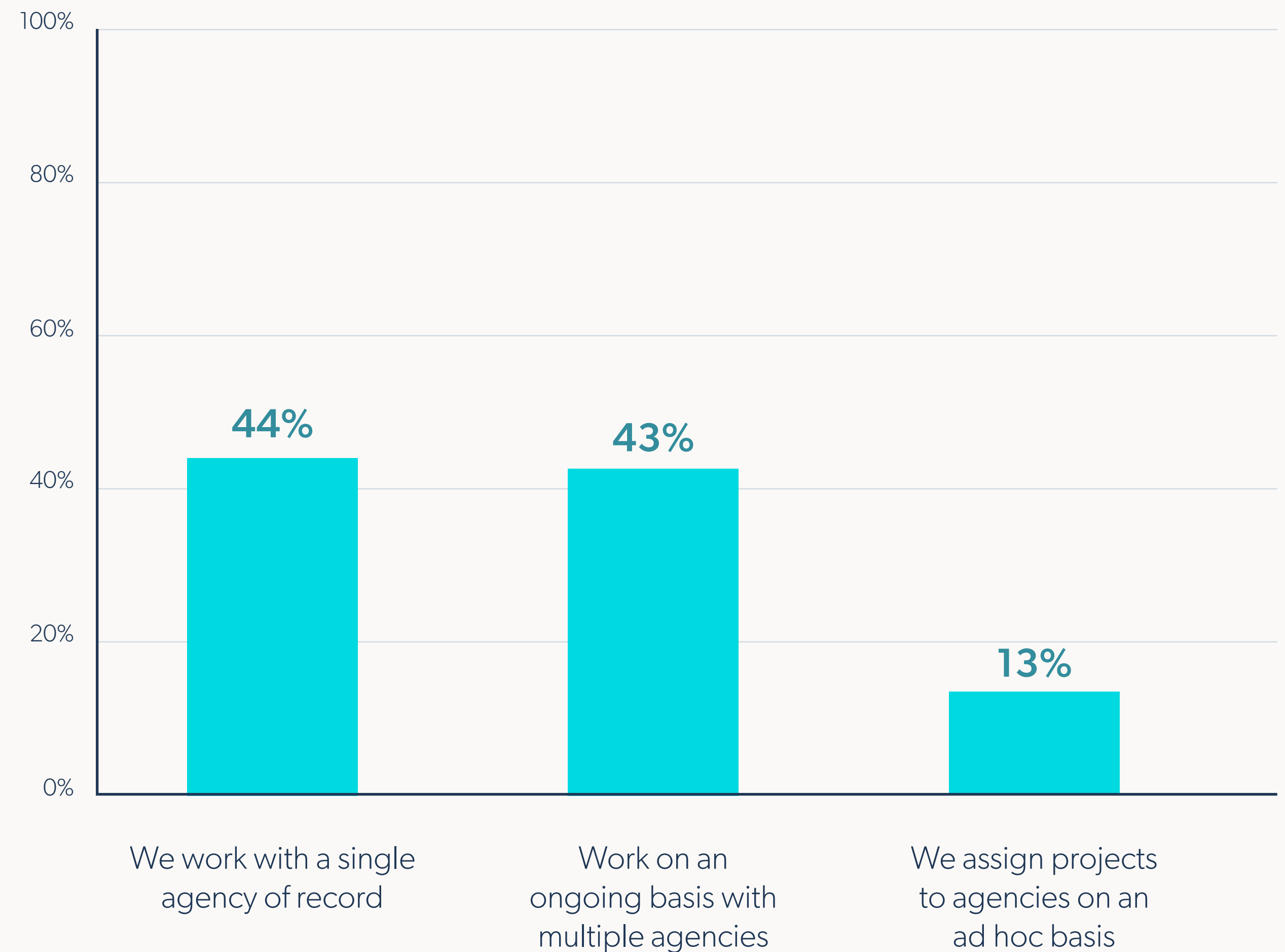


Brands are evenly split between using one or multiple agencies

Only a small number of brands report using agencies in on an ad-hoc basis.

44% of brands say they work with a single agency, and **43%** say they work with two or three. Only about **10%** report working with four or more agencies.

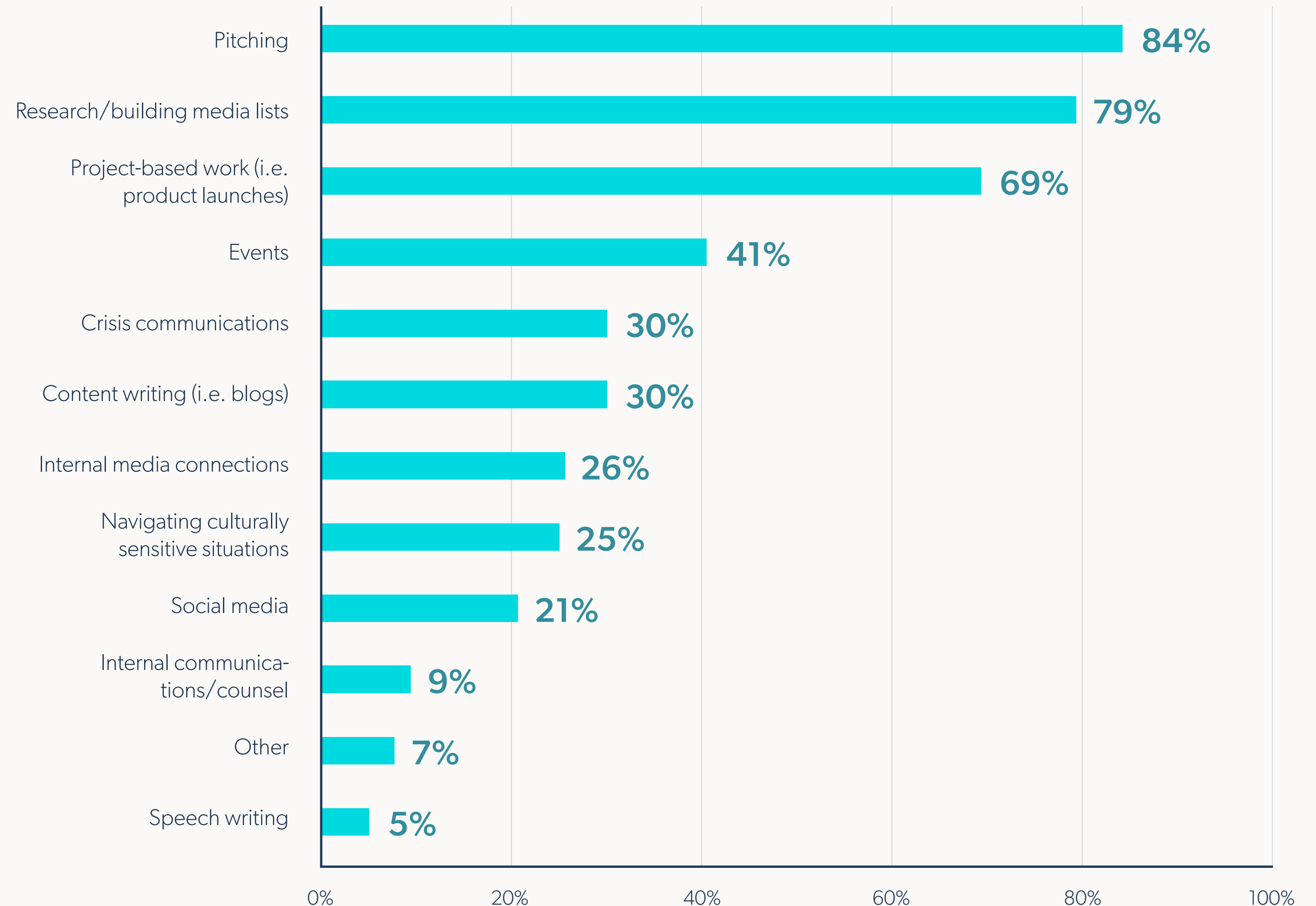
How do you work with agencies?



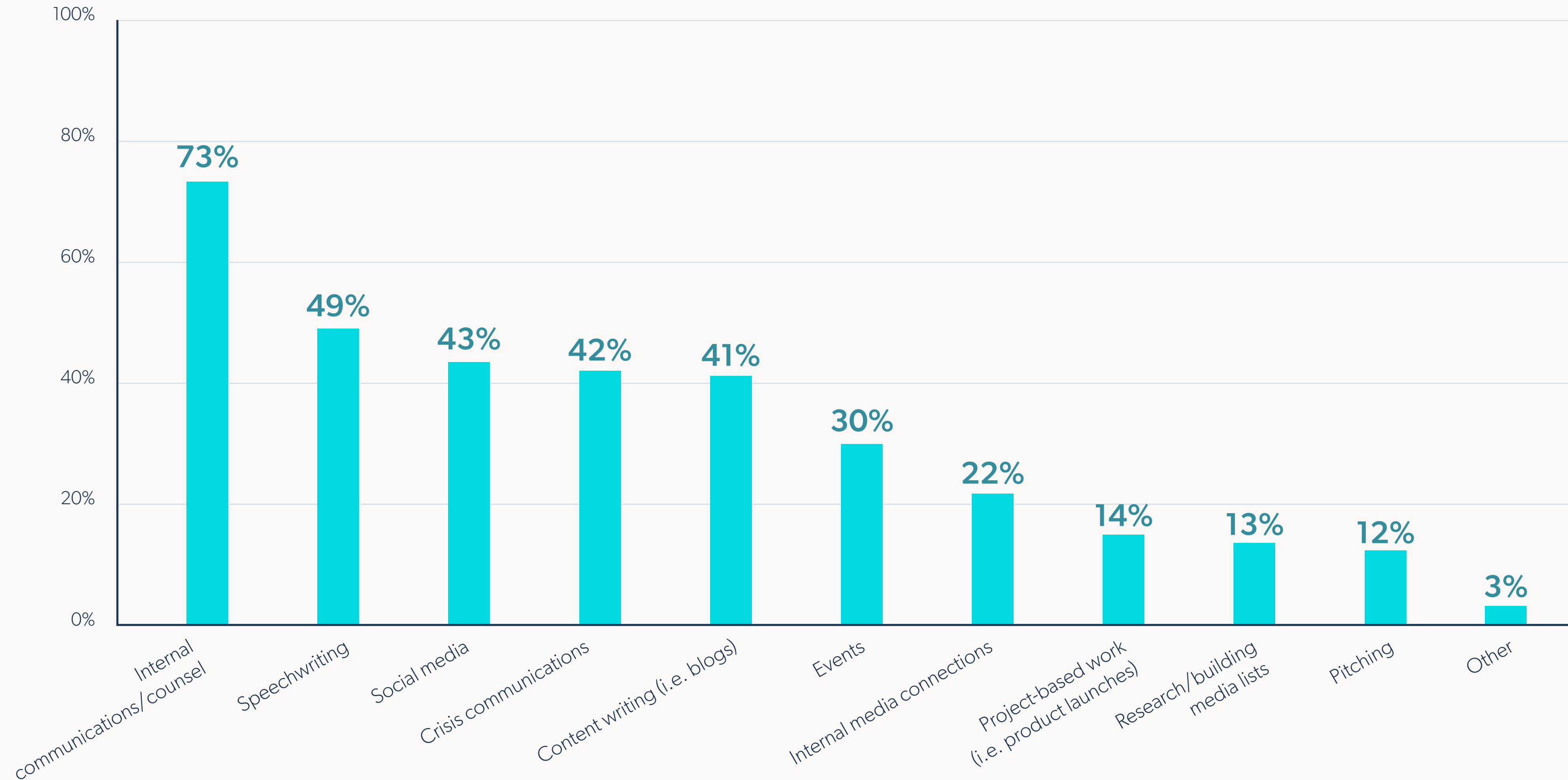
Brands rely on agencies for an average of about 4 types of work

Pitching, building media lists, and project based work around things like product launches are the most common work outsourced to agencies.

What types of work do you rely on PR agencies for? (select all that apply)



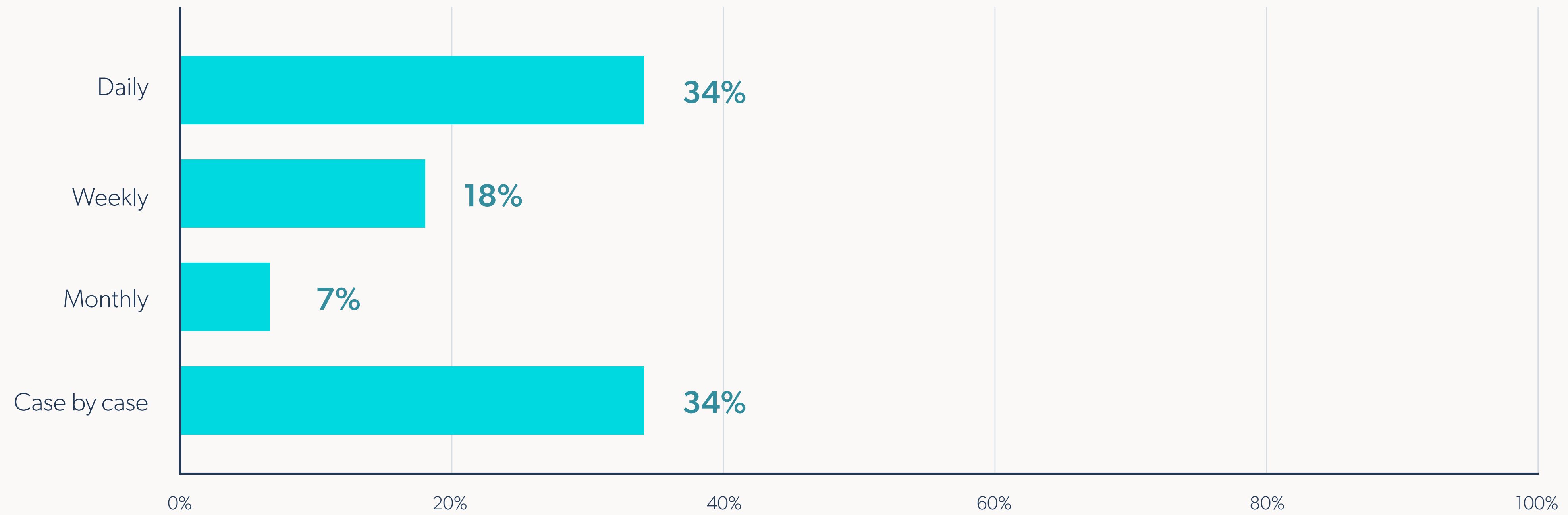
Which types of work would you be very unlikely to outsource to a PR agency? (select all that apply)



2

Tech and tools

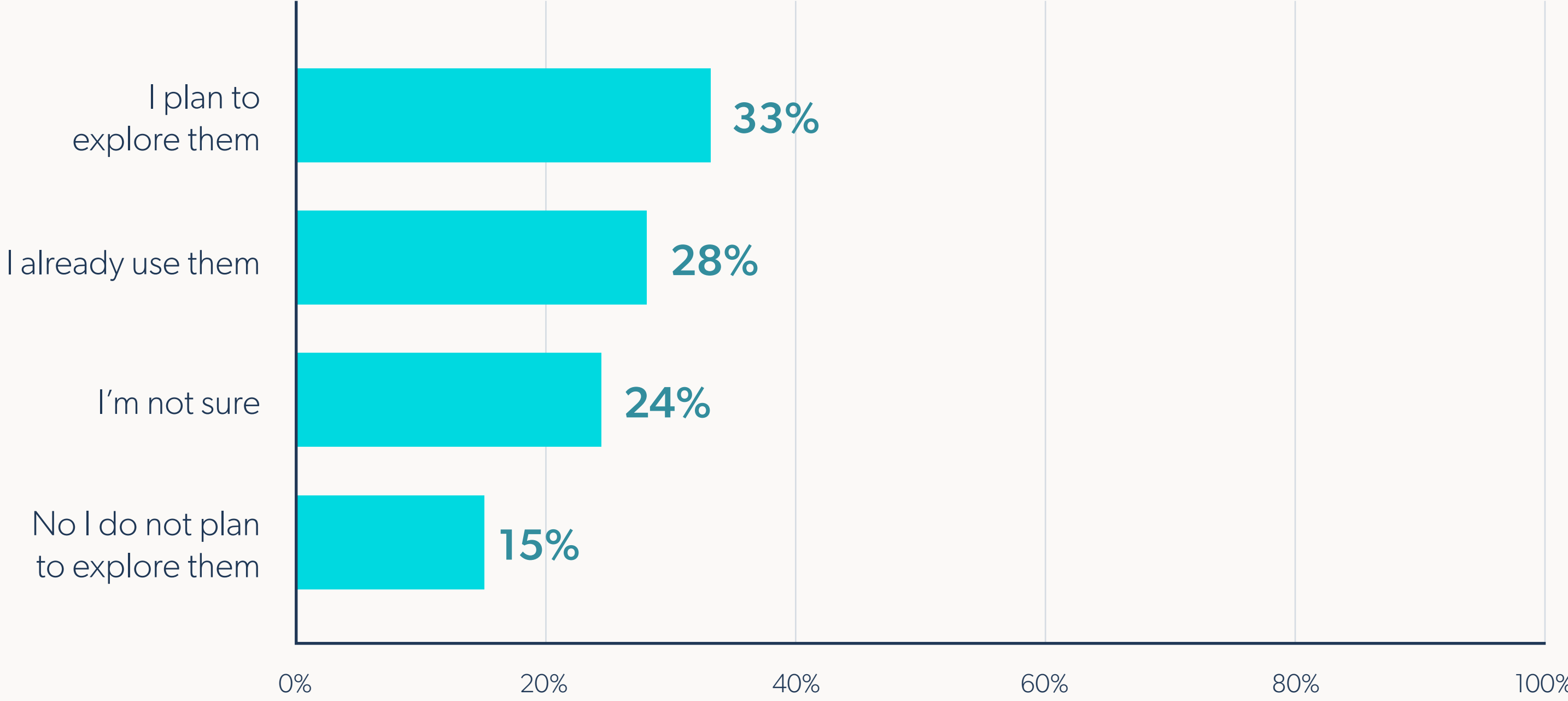
How often does your team use social listening tools?



About 61% of PR pros say they currently use generative AI or plan to explore it

Find out more in our [State of AI in PR](#) report.

Do you plan to explore generative AI, like ChatGPT or DALL-E, in your workflow?

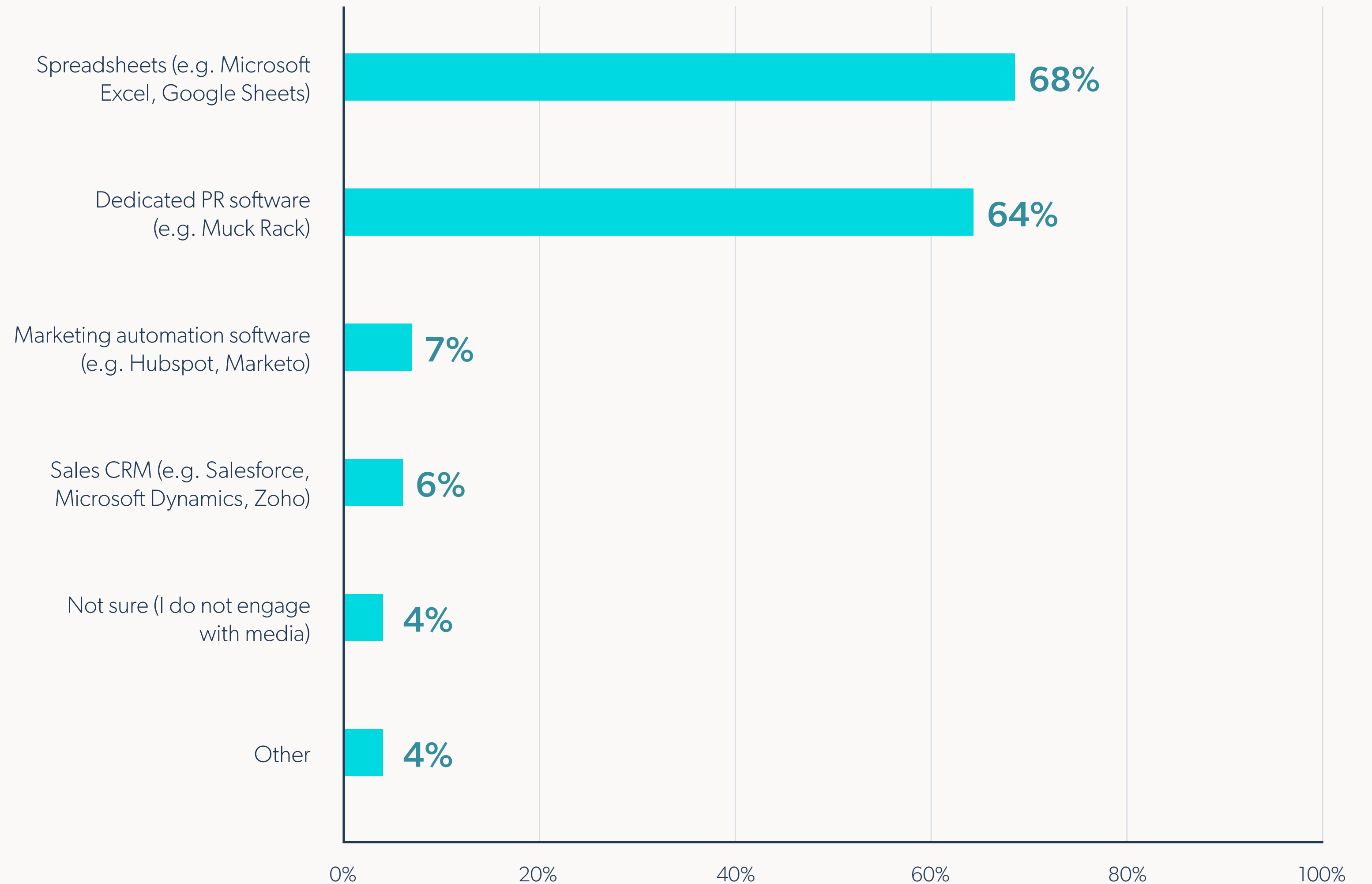


Many PR pros store their lists in more than one place

Spreadsheets and dedicated PR software are the most common places to store media lists.

People at agencies prefer spreadsheets (**75%**) more than those at brands (**63%**).

Where do you and your team store media lists? (select all that apply)



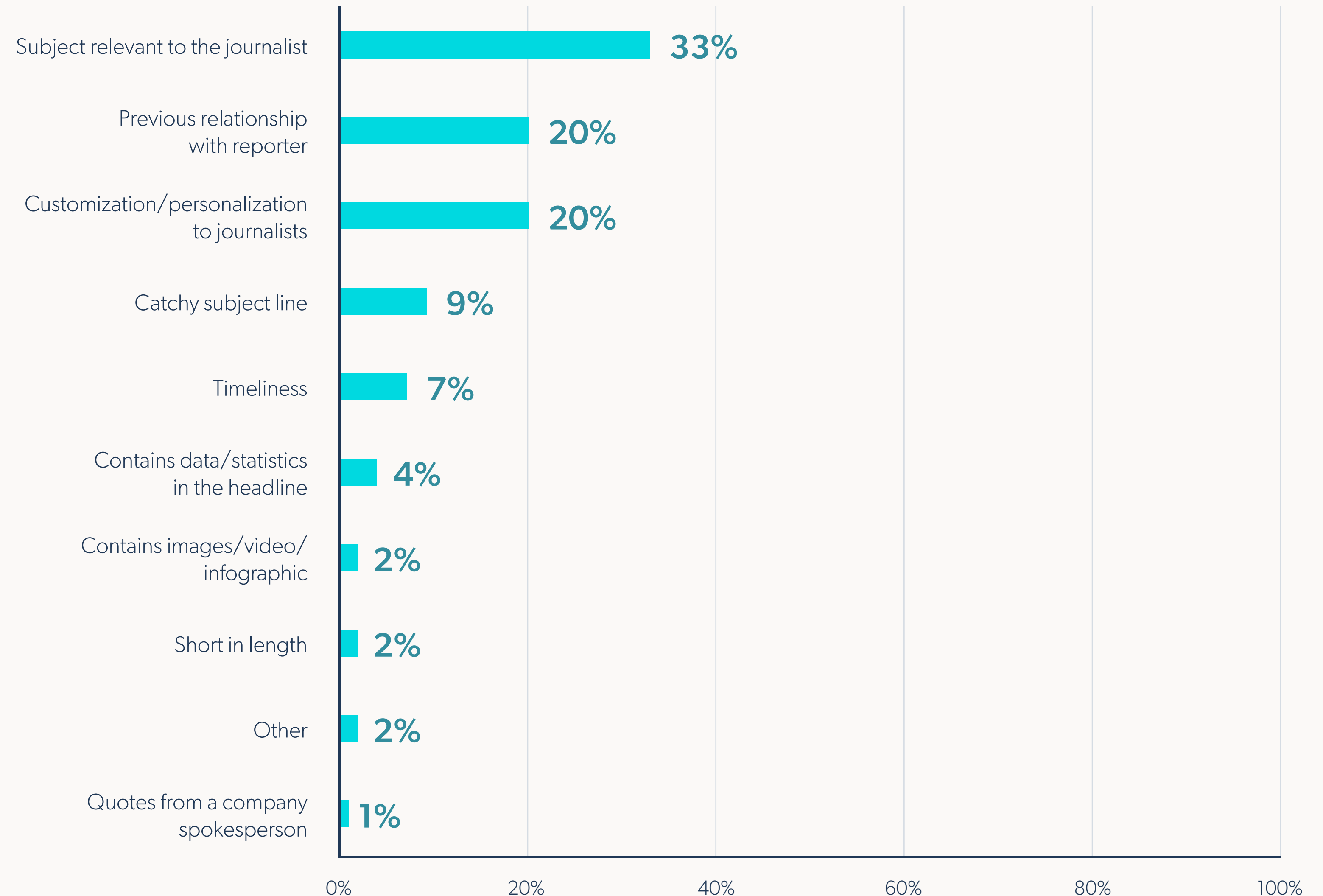
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Connecting with journalists

Subject matter relevance is the most important component for securing coverage

Quotes from a company spokesperson, being short in length and the “other” category fill out of the **least important** components.

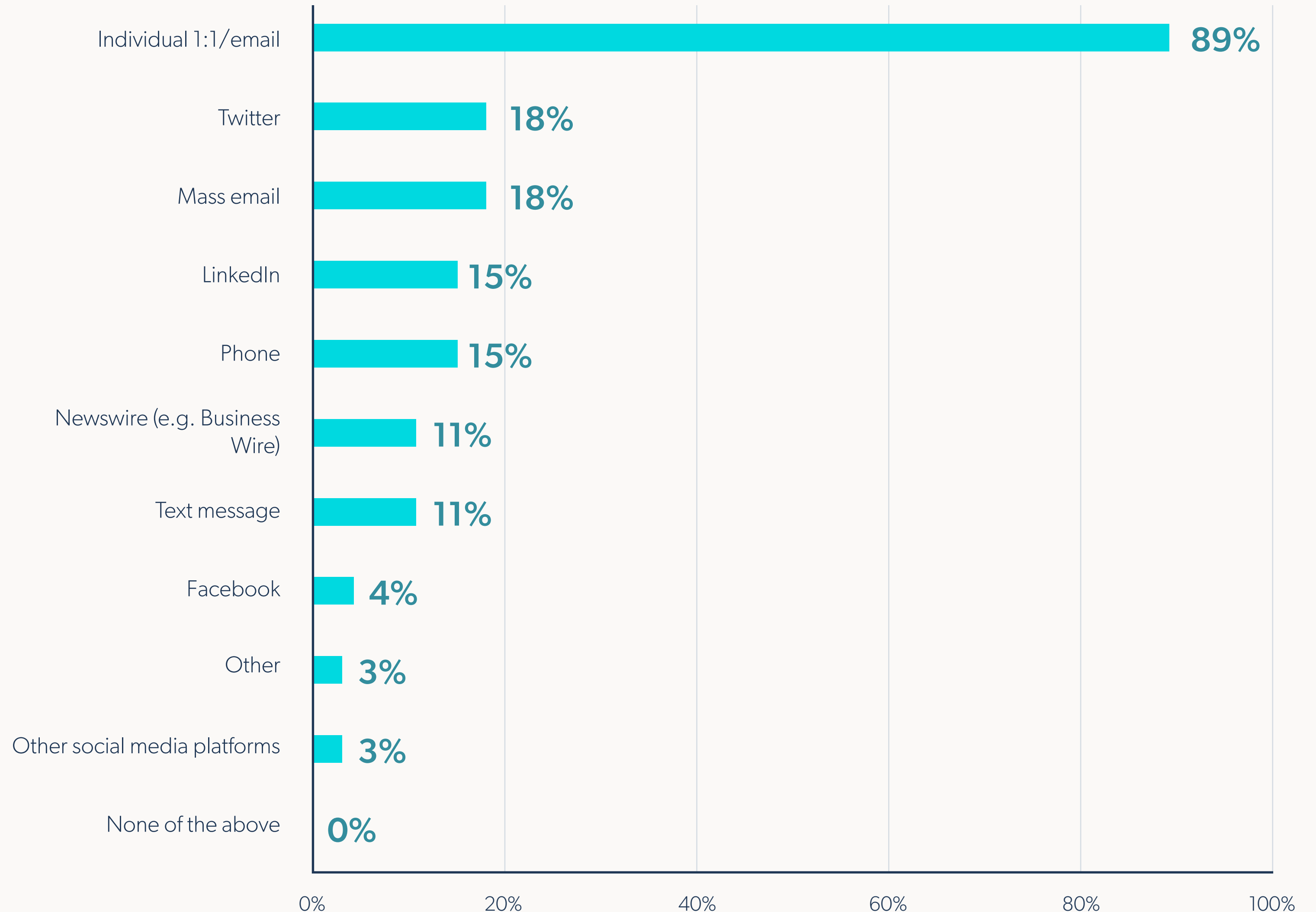
Which of the following components do you believe is the most important in securing coverage with a pitch?



Twitter loses its appeal as a pitching channel

Compared to last year, Twitter is cited **10%** less often as an effective way to pitch journalists. Phone calls similarly dropped out of favor losing **9%** since last year.

Which of the following channels do you find to be the most effective for pitching journalists? (select all that apply)



PR pros are pitching more than four types of media

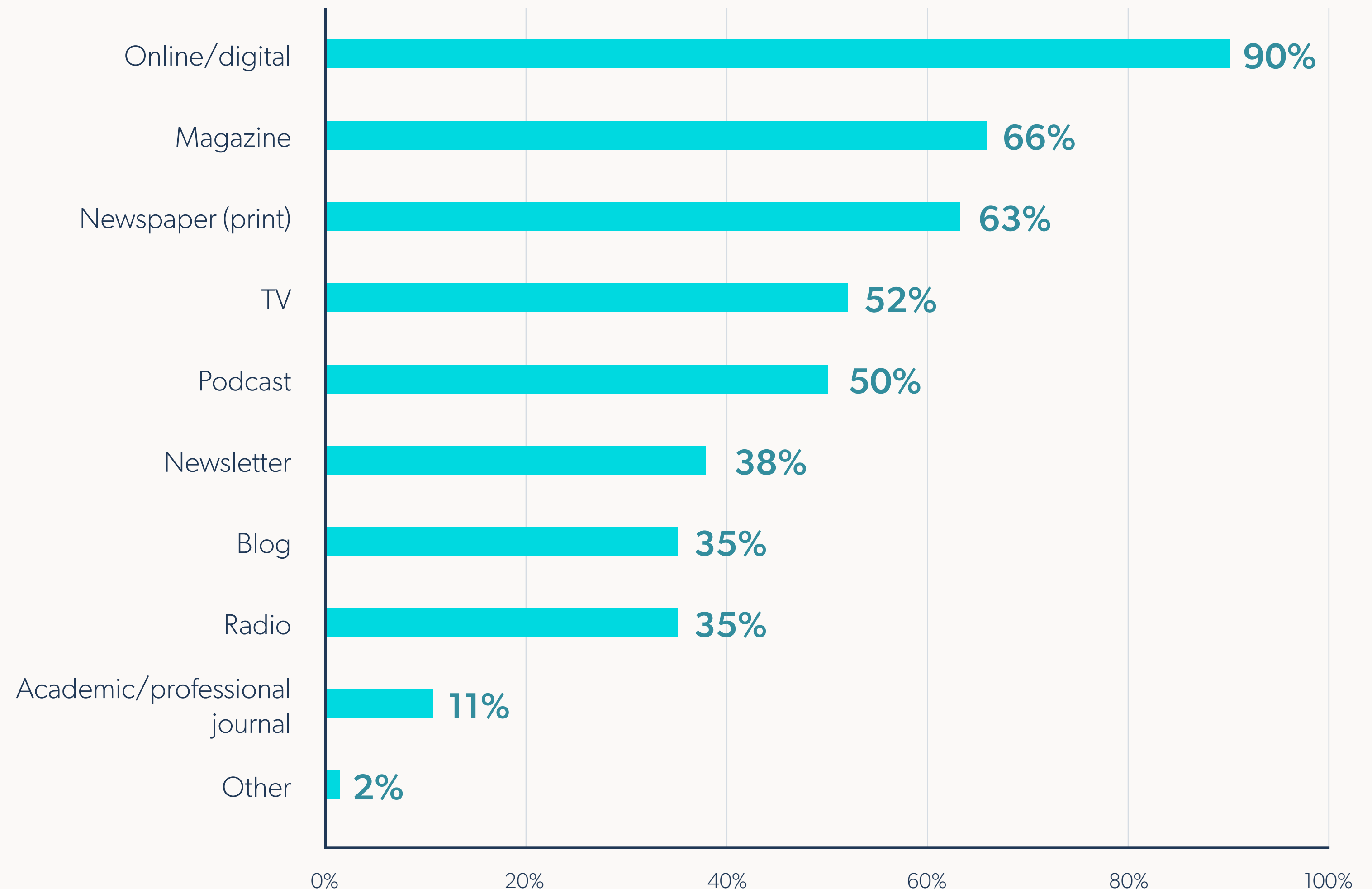
Online/digital dominates the ranking. Now nine out of ten PR pros commonly pitch online/digital, a **14%** increase from last year.

This year magazines took the second place spot after jumping **10%** while newspaper pitching stayed the same.

Agencies seem to take a broader approach to pitching than brands. Agencies are more likely to say they pitch magazines (**61%**), podcasts (**59%**), TV (**57%**), newsletters (**45%**), and radio (**37%**).

Generally speaking, PR pros monitor the same media they pitch.

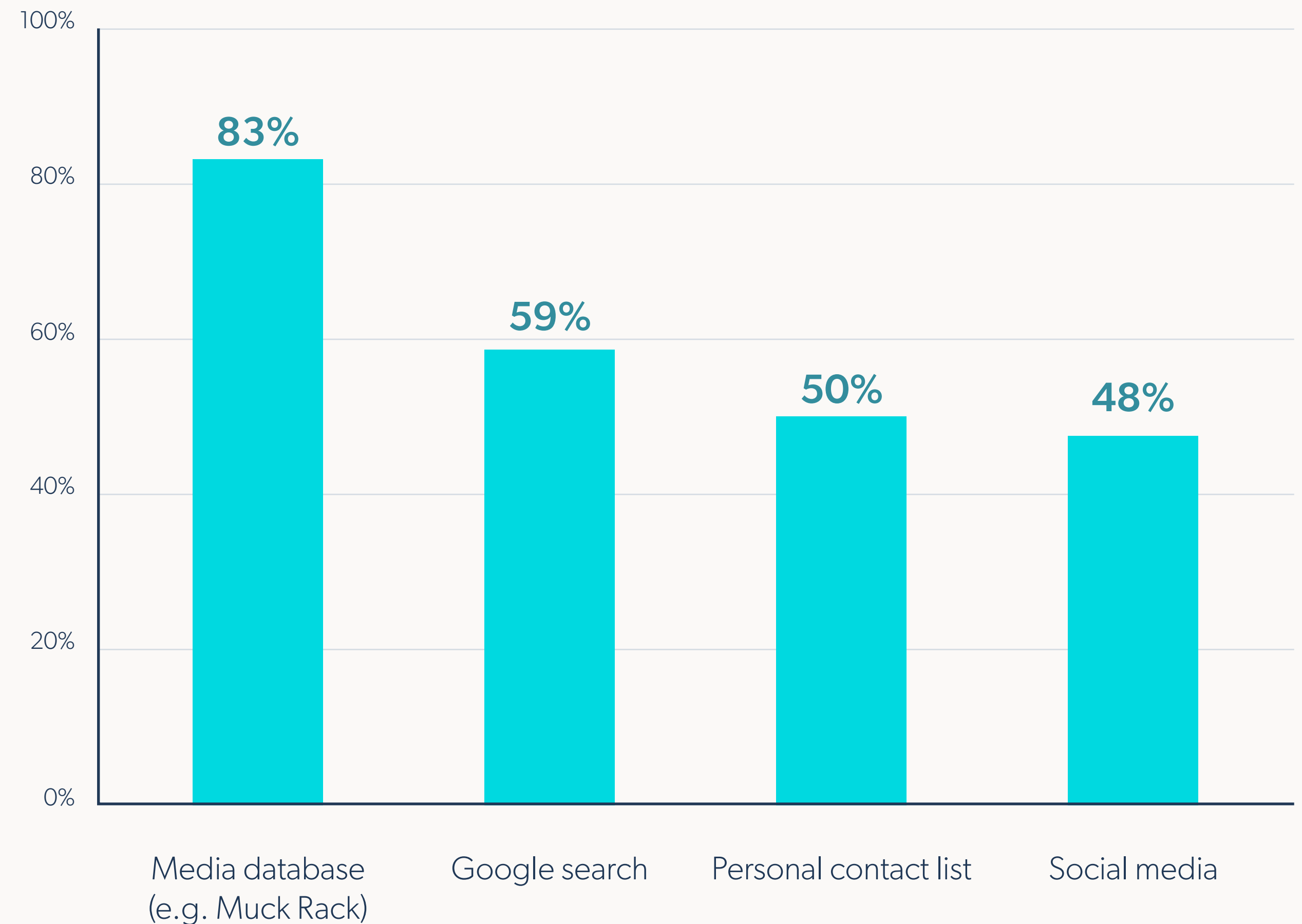
Which types of media do you commonly pitch? (select all that apply)



PR pros rely on multiple methods to find the right journalists

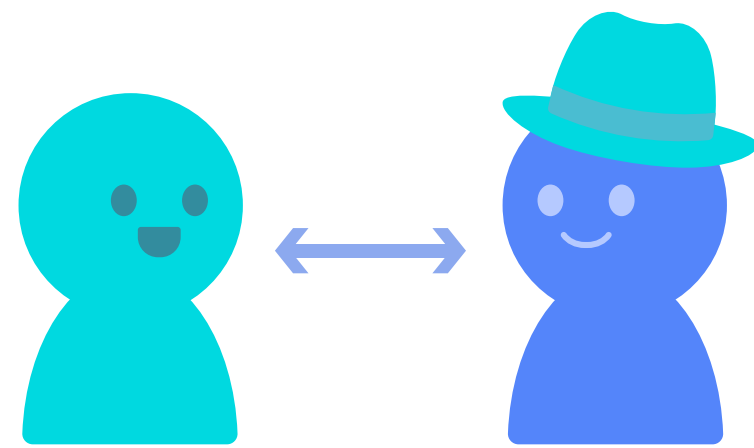
The share of respondents who use media databases increased by **10%** since last year as personal contact lists lost **10%**.

How do you find the right journalist to pitch? (select all that apply)

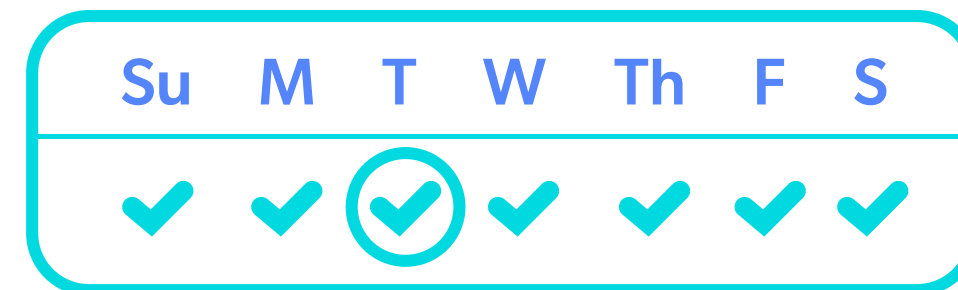


HOW TO PITCH

According to a survey of 1,000+ PR professionals



Almost **90%** prefer to pitch via 1:1 emails



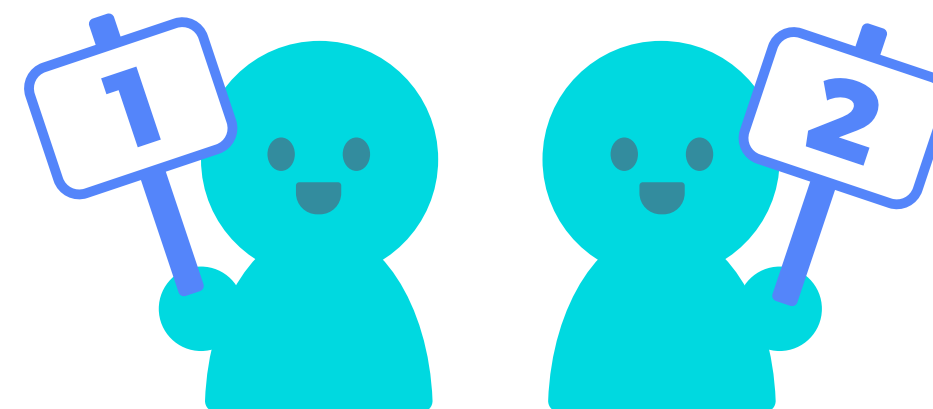
53% prefer to pitch on Tuesday



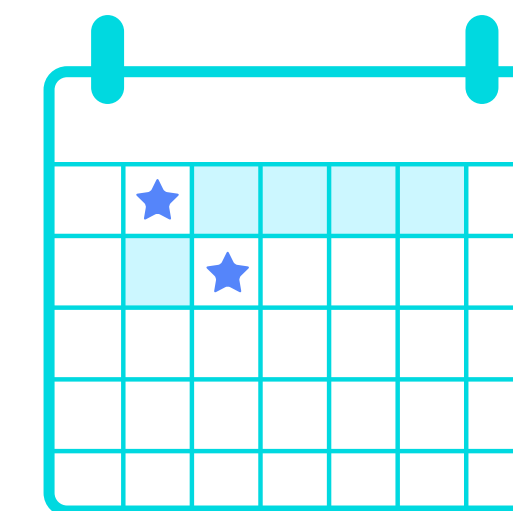
81% prefer to pitch before noon



92% keep their pitches under 300 words



PR pros are split when it comes to follow-ups: **42%** say one is acceptable, **47%** say two



54% send their first follow up 3–6 days later

4

Social media usage

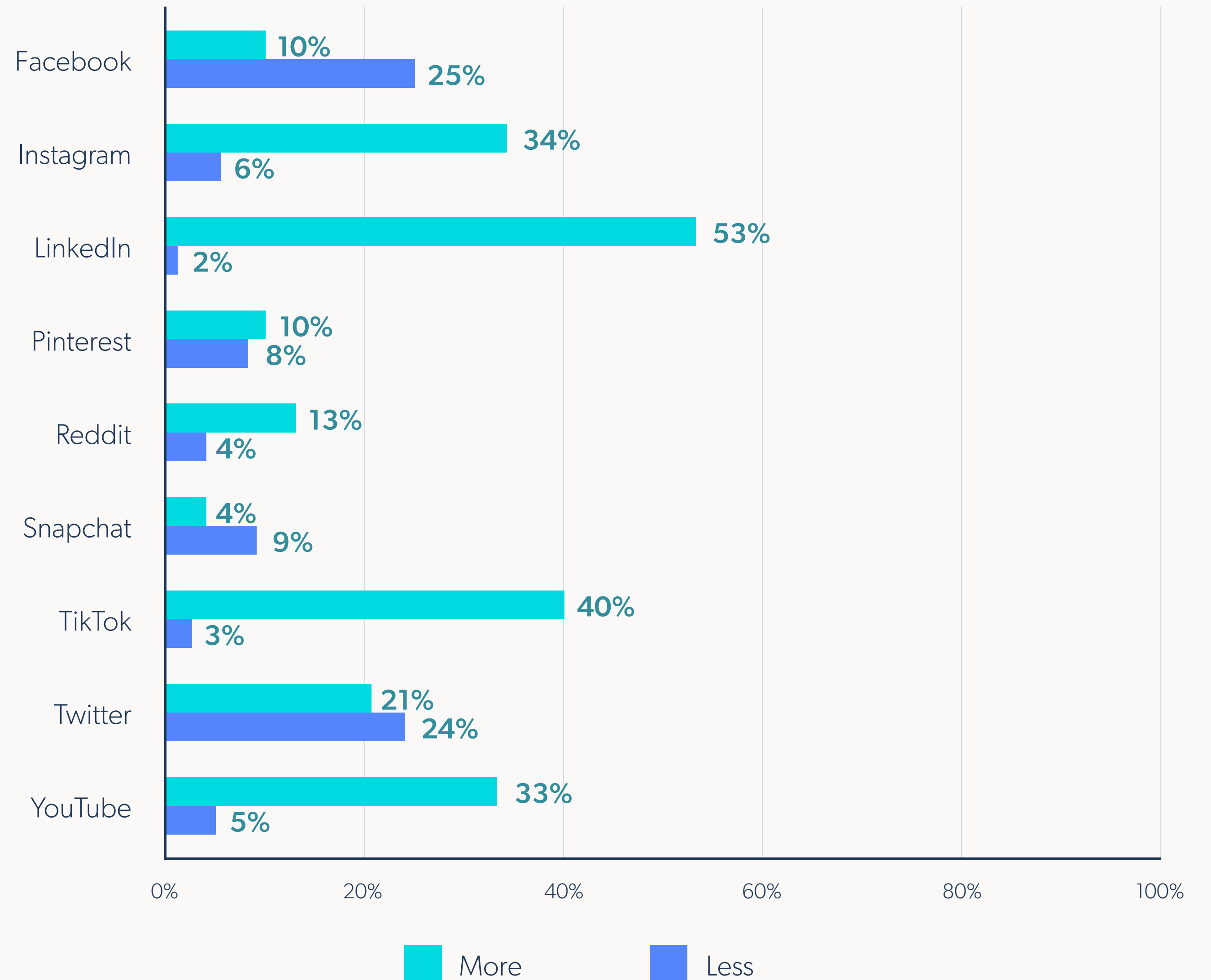
PR pros plan to spend more time on LinkedIn and TikTok

Facebook looks like it will become less relevant this year. It's the only social network where more people say they'll use it less rather than more.

Brands are leaning more into LinkedIn with **59%** saying they'll use the platform more this year compared to **51%** of agencies. YouTube is also more popular among brands with **43%** saying they'll use it more compared to **27%** of agencies.

[Explore more brand/agency comparisons with our interactive charts.](#)

For each of the following social platforms, please select whether you plan to use it more, less or the same as you have in previous years.



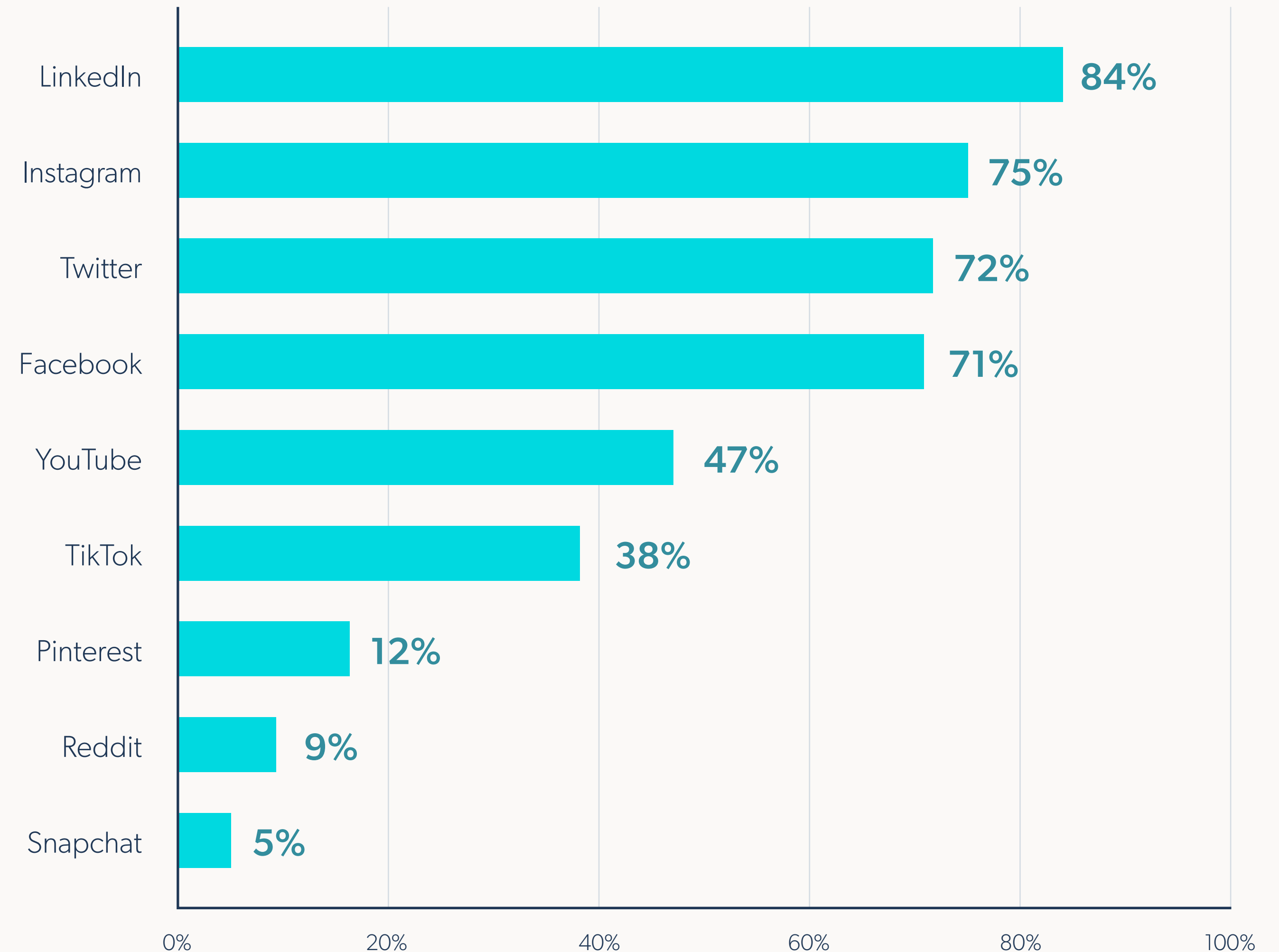
LinkedIn is the new top social network for comms strategies

Twitter, which held the top spot last year, dropped 5% while LinkedIn jumped up **11%**.

Instagram saw an even larger bump from last year, growing **17%** and pushing Twitter into third place. TikTok increased quite a bit compared to last year. It grew **12%**.

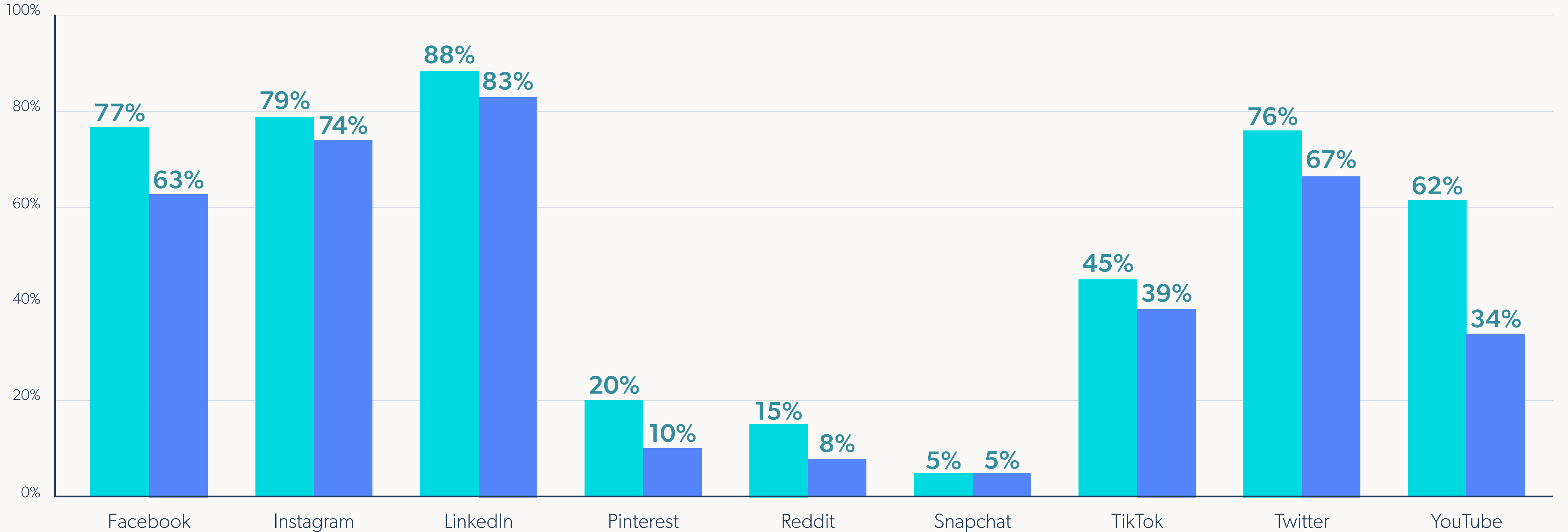
While agencies take a broader approach on the media they pitch, brands diversify their social media strategy. Brands are more likely to lean on Facebook (**77%**) versus agencies (**63%**). They're also more likely to use Twitter (**76%**), YouTube (**62%**), Pinterest (**20%**), and Reddit (**15%**) more often than agencies.

Which of the following social networks are part of your company's social media and communications strategy? (select all that apply)



Which of the following social networks are part of your company's social media and communications strategy? (select all that apply)

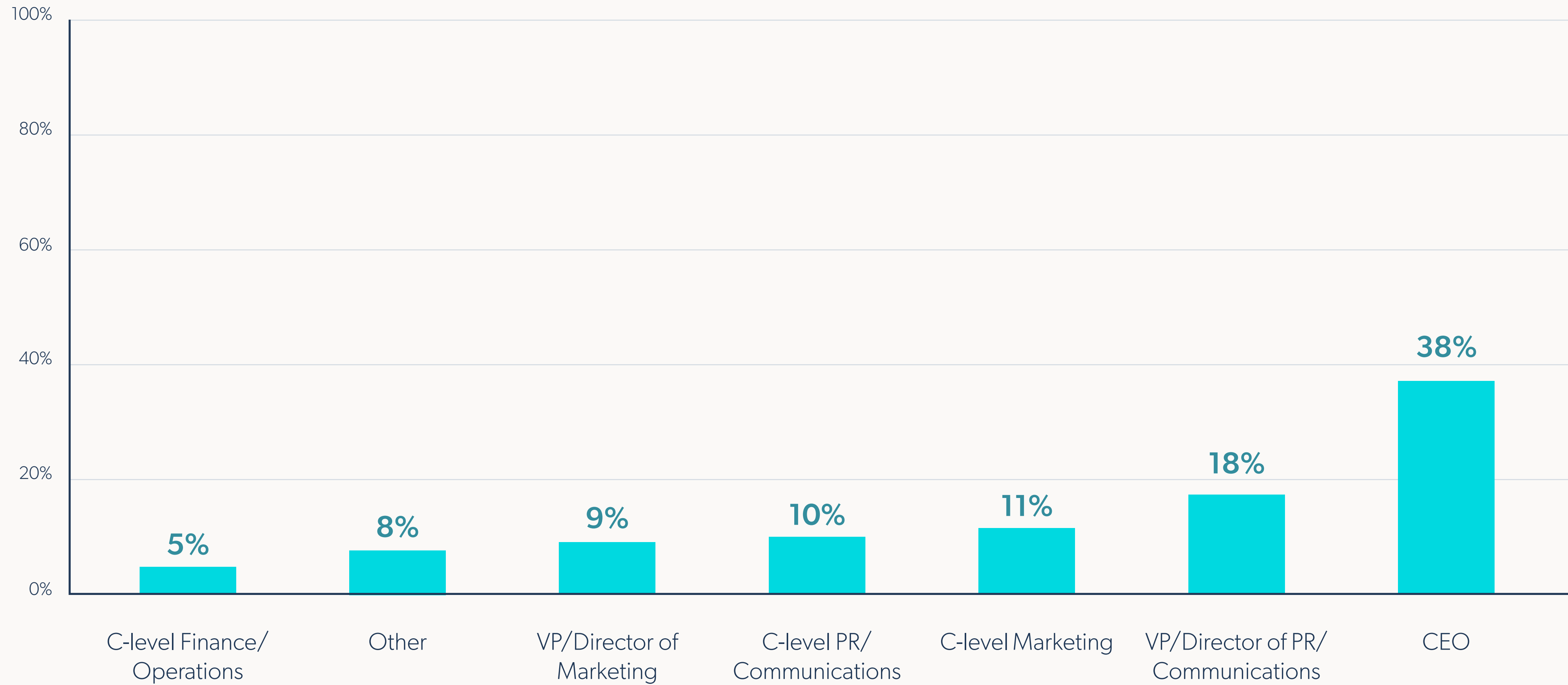
Brand Agencies



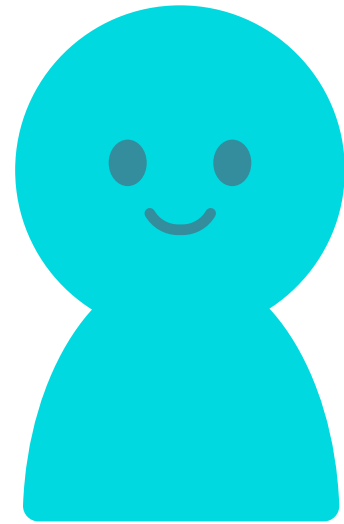
5

**Budgets, salaries
and more**

Who is your company's decision-maker for spending on PR and earned media efforts?

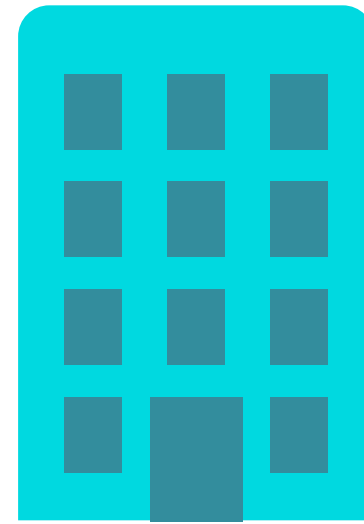


Salaries in PR*



The average salary
for PR pros is

\$85,000



The average salary
at an agency is

\$80,000



The average salary
at a brand is

\$100,000

**Only U.S. data*

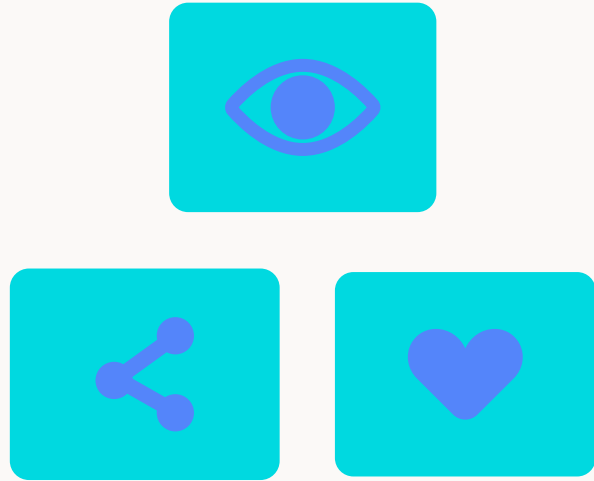
6

Measuring success

What are the most useful metrics to measure PR success?



1 Number of stories placed



2 Reach/ impressions



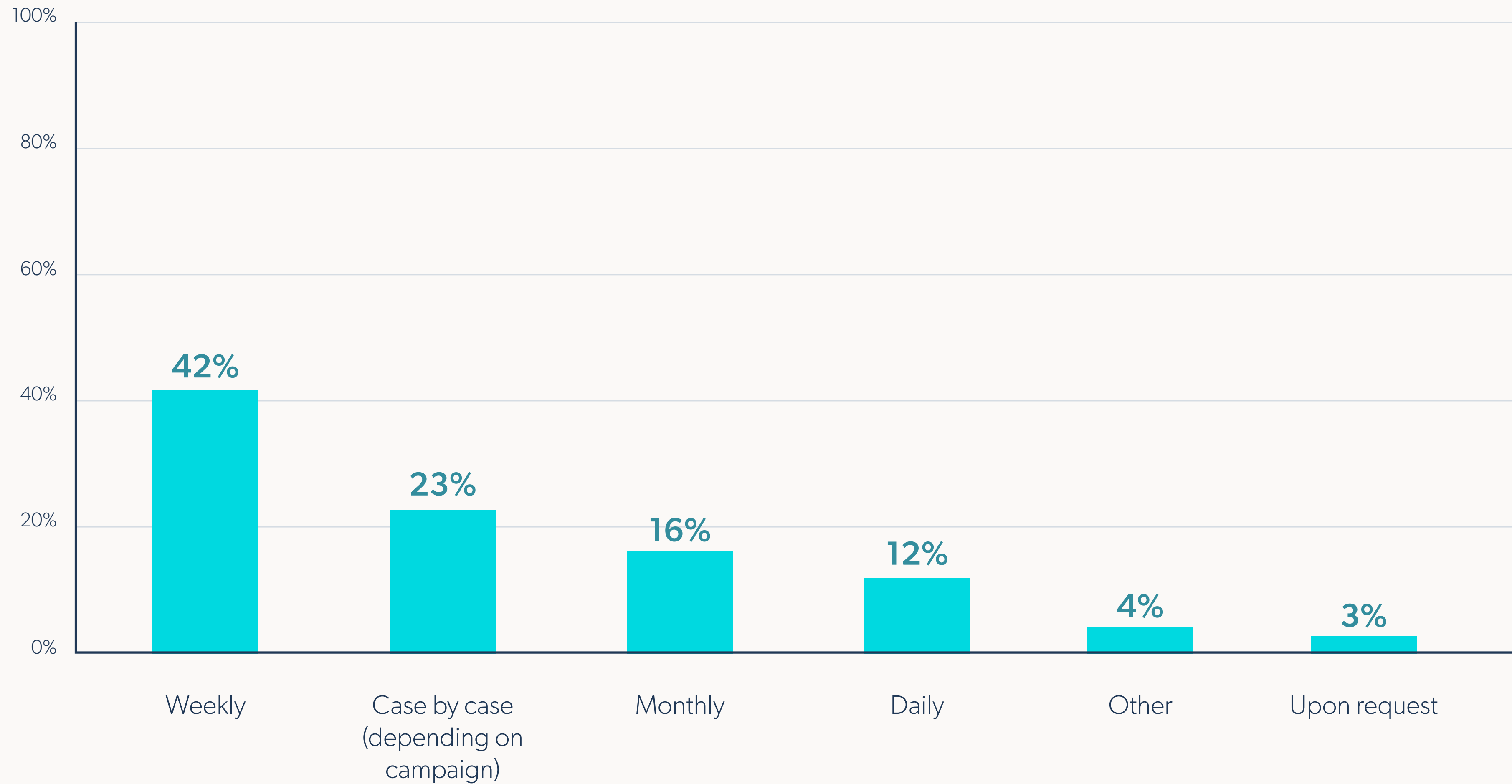
3 Key message pull-through



4 Website impact

Agencies were more likely to rank number of stories placed highly, while brands ranked revenue impact as number 1 more often.

How often is your (or your client's) executive team briefed on PR and communications activities?



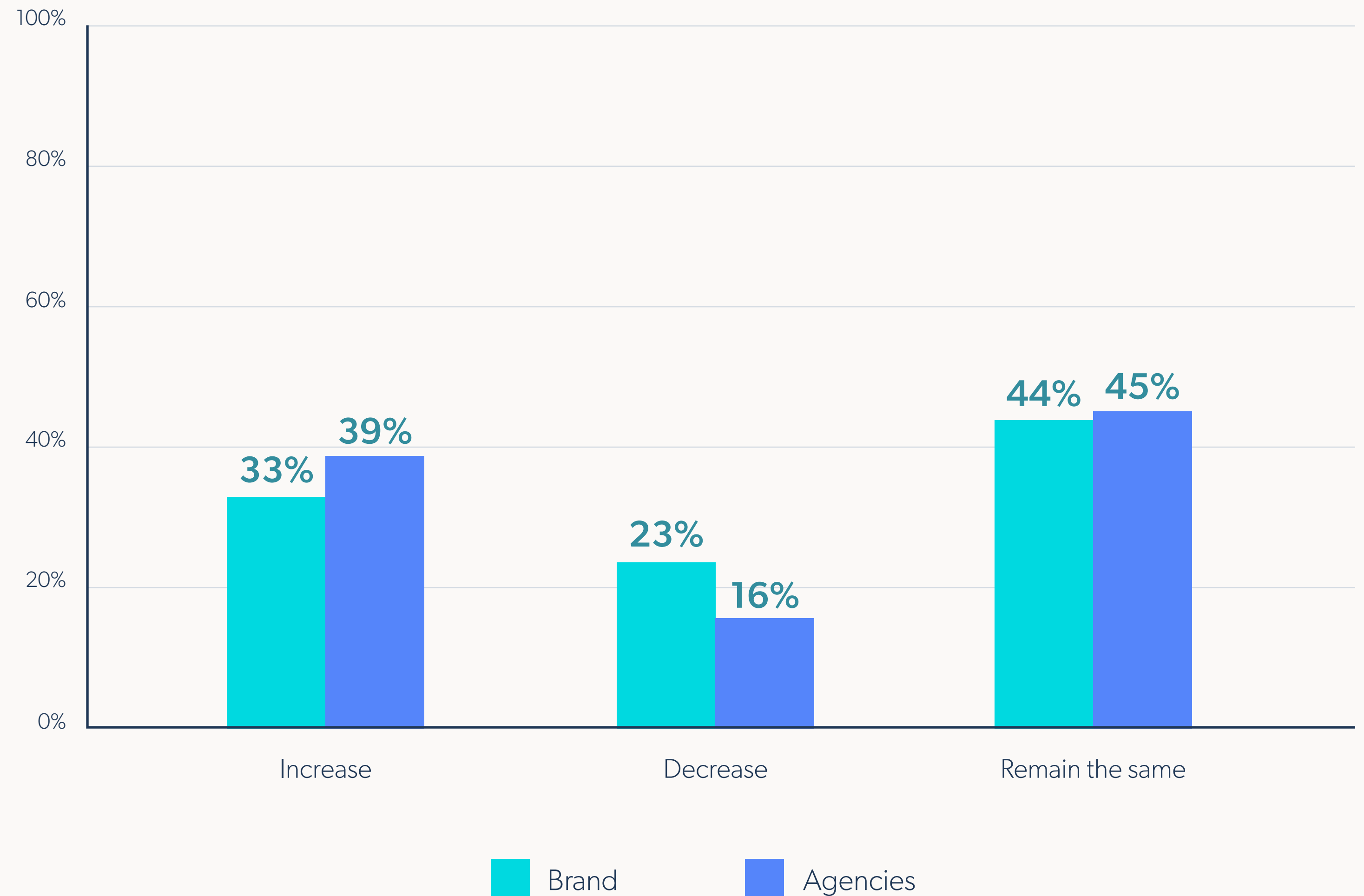
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The future of PR

Budgets will largely stay the same next year

Although brands are a **little more likely** to say their budgets will likely decrease.

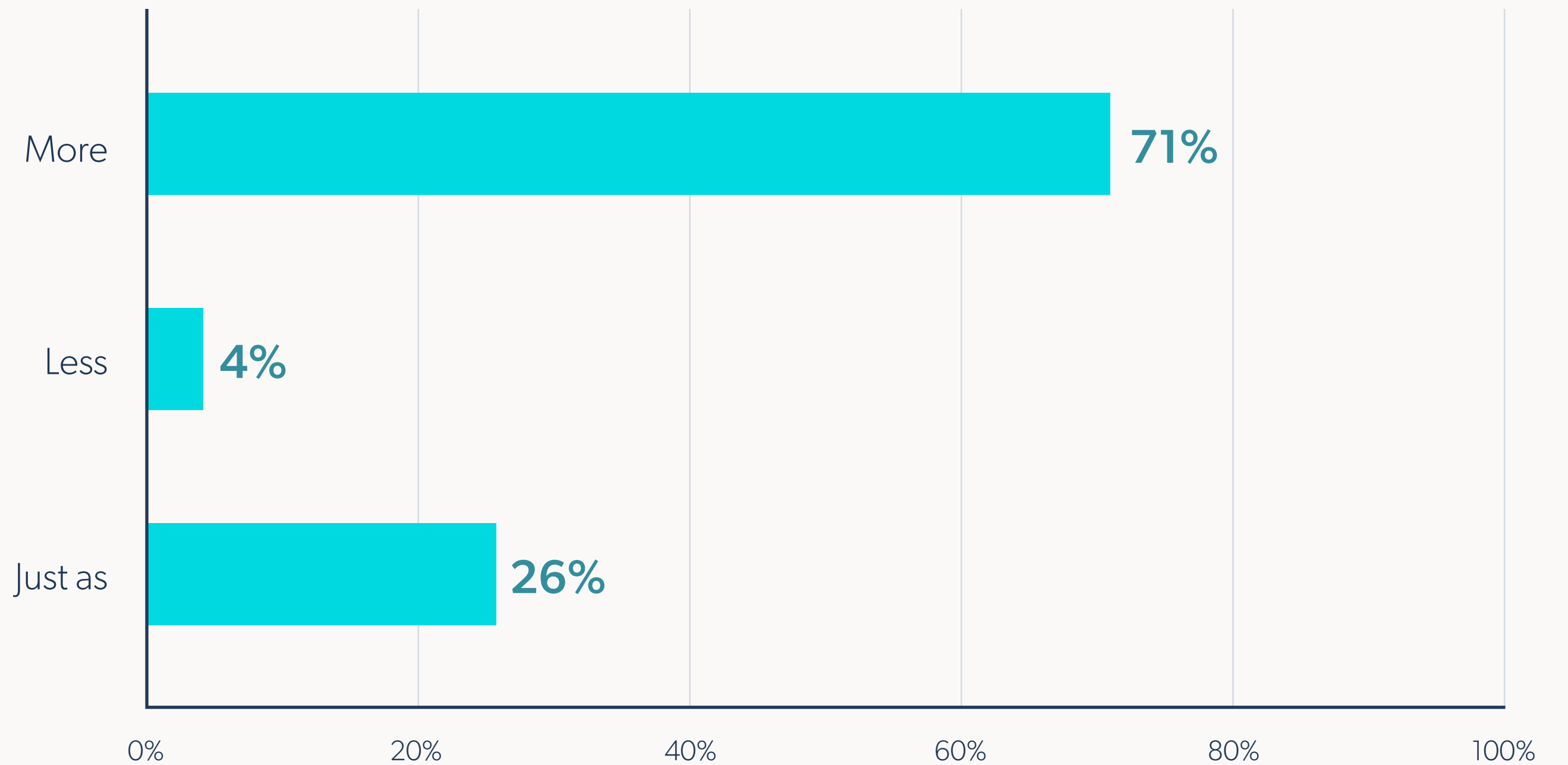
Over the next year, my company/client's budget for PR/communications most likely will:



PR and marketing will continue to grow closer

Although the trend may be leveling out. This year, **6%** fewer PR pros said the relationship will be more important in the next 5 years.

PR's relationship with Marketing will be ___ important in the next 5 years



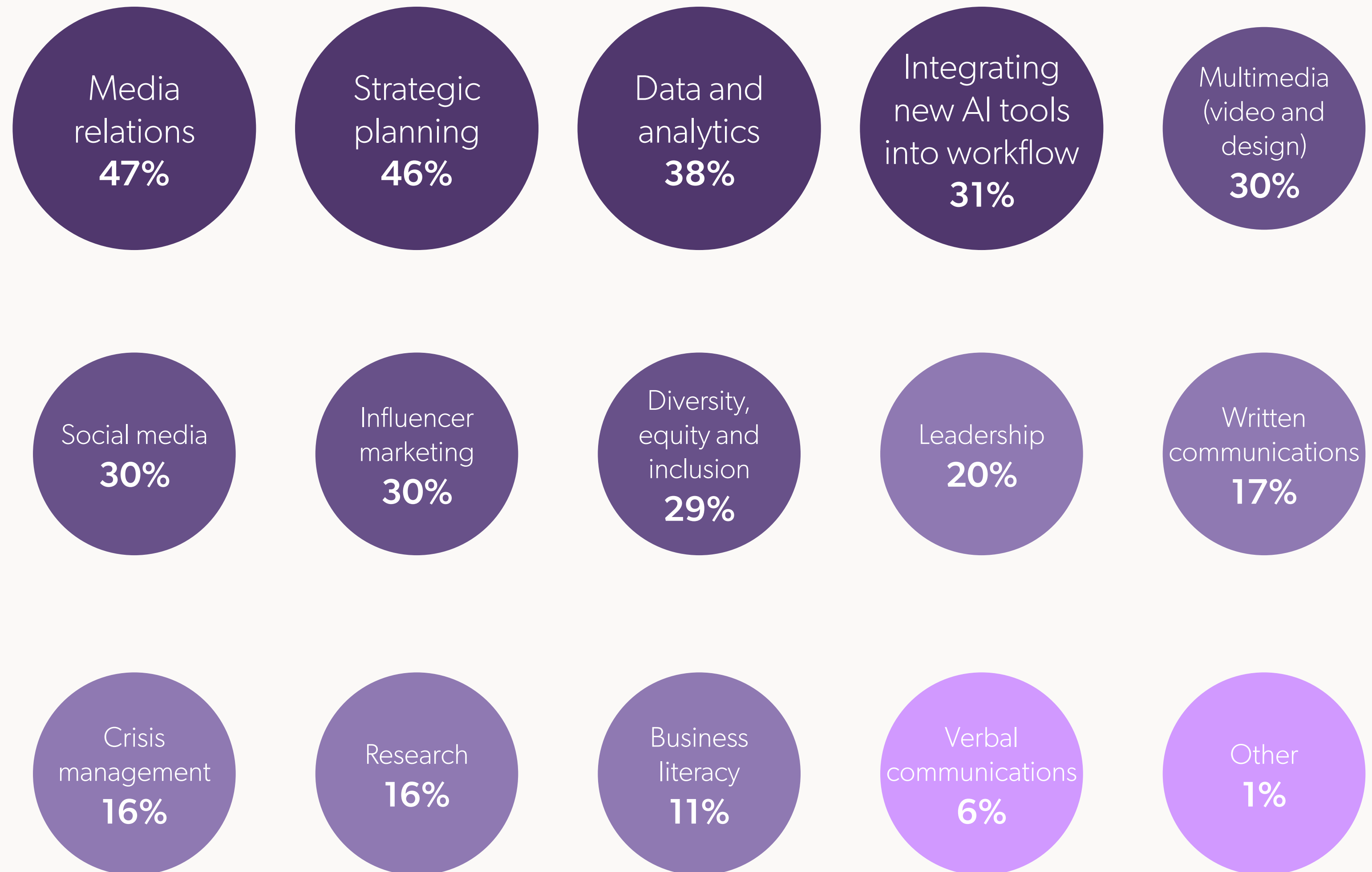
AI bursts into the top five skills companies need to focus on in the next five years

Brands are putting more of a focus on data and analytics. PR pros at brands cite this skill in **nearly half** of responses, compared to around **a third** of responses from agencies.

AI is roughly tied for fourth place with multimedia skills, social media, influencer marketing, and DEI.

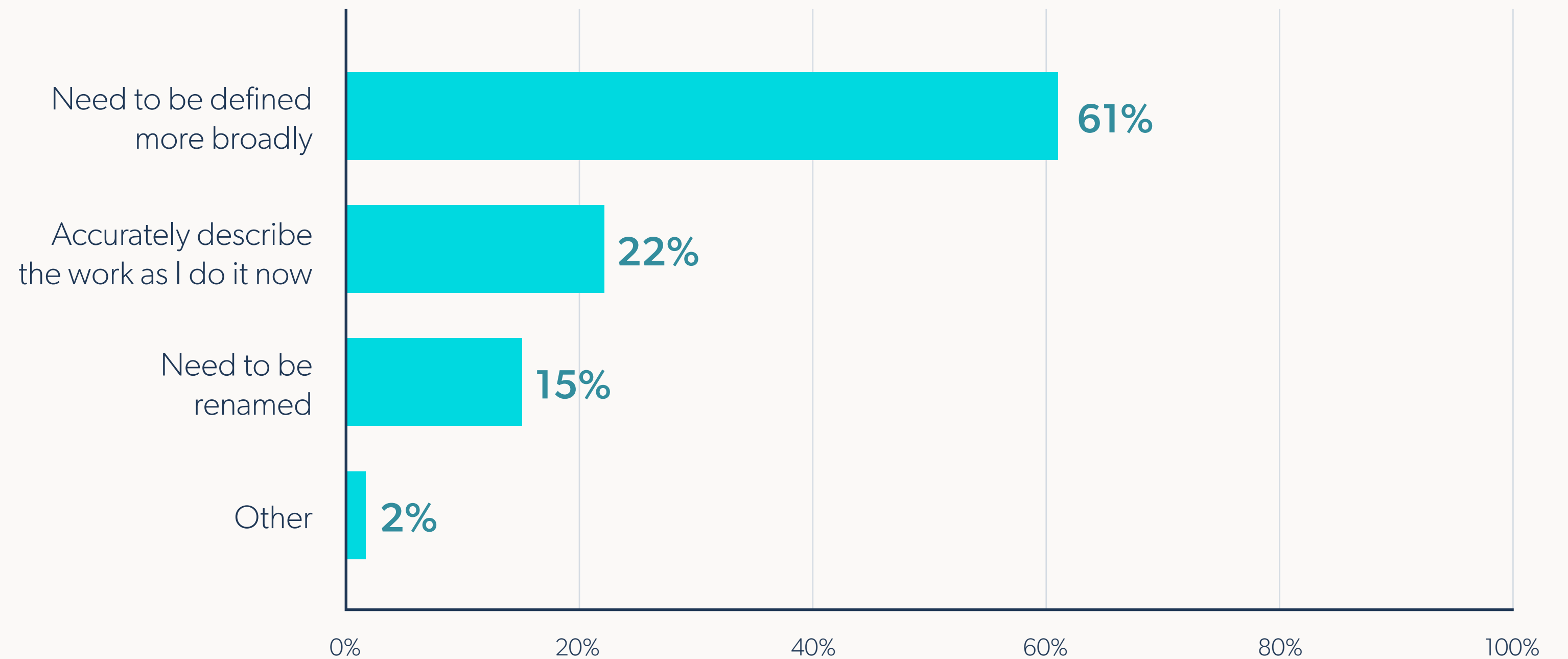
Find out more in our [State of AI in PR](#) report.

Which skills will your company need to focus on in the next 5 years to be successful? (select up to 4)



More than half of PR pros think the term “public relations” needs to be defined more broadly

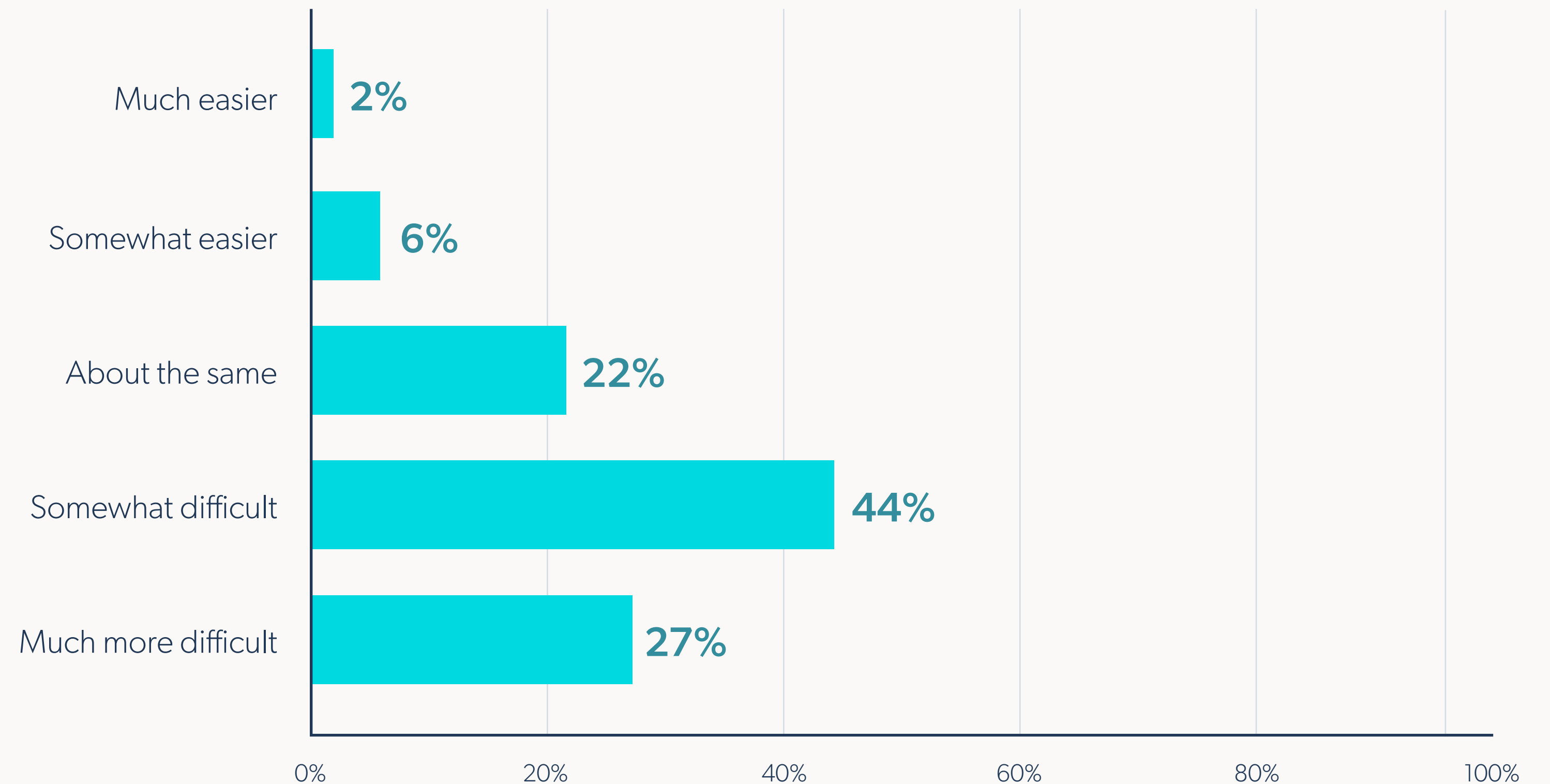
In 5 years, the term “public relations” will...



Earned media is expected to become more difficult to secure

71% of PR pros think it will be somewhat or much more difficult to secure earned media over the next five years.

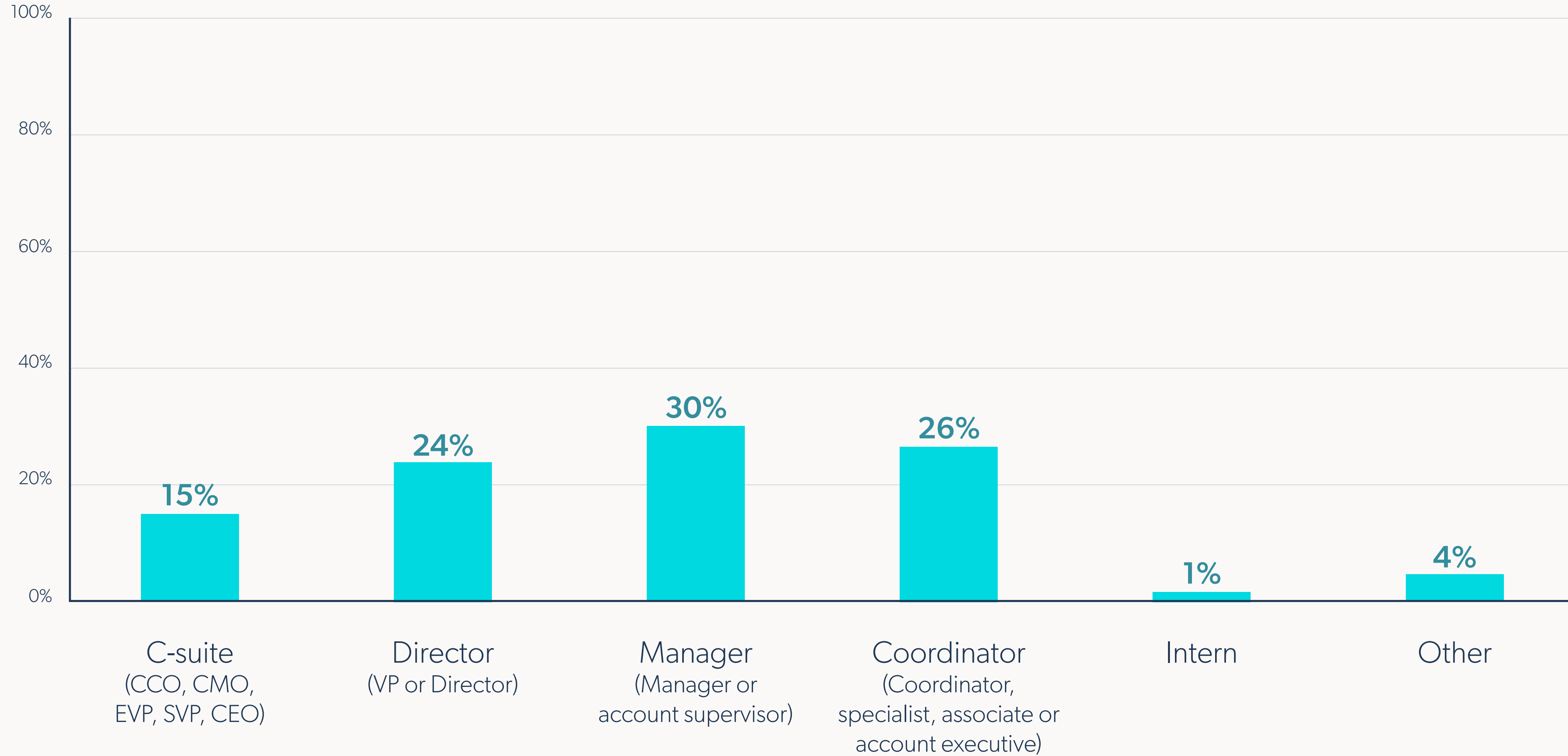
Over the next five years, how do you think securing earned media will change?



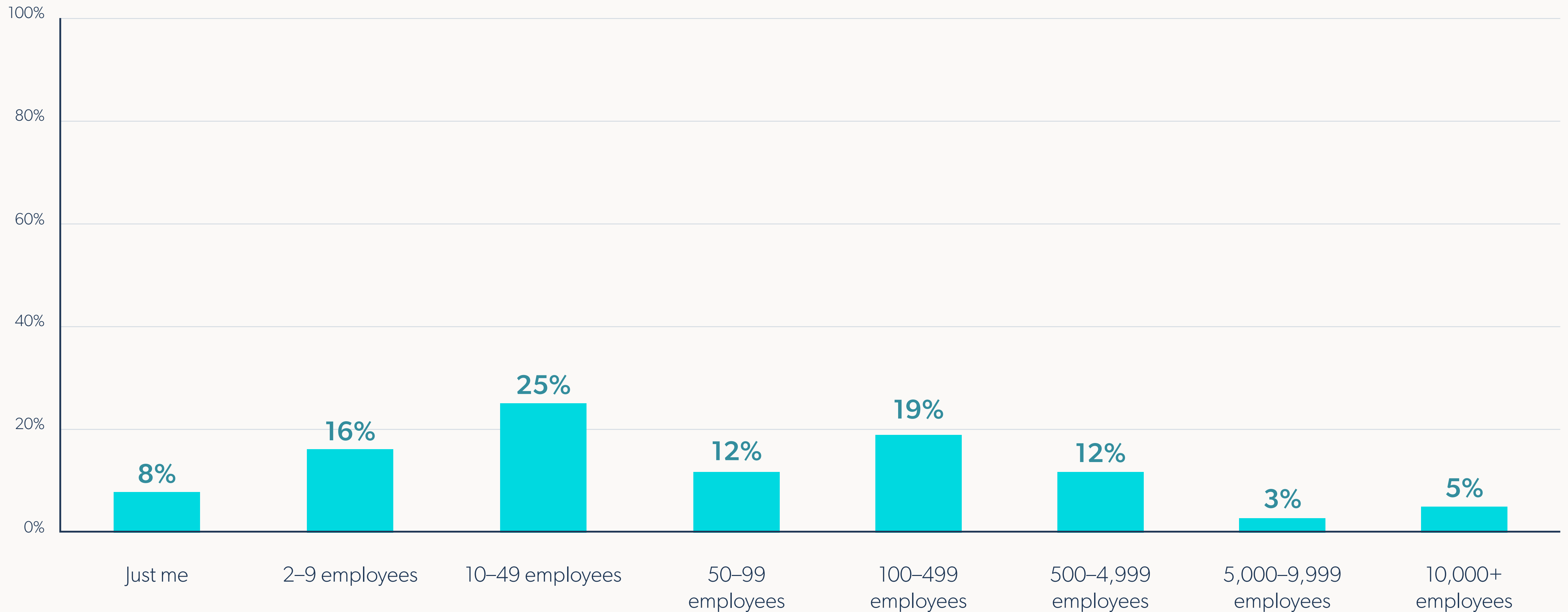
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Audience breakdown

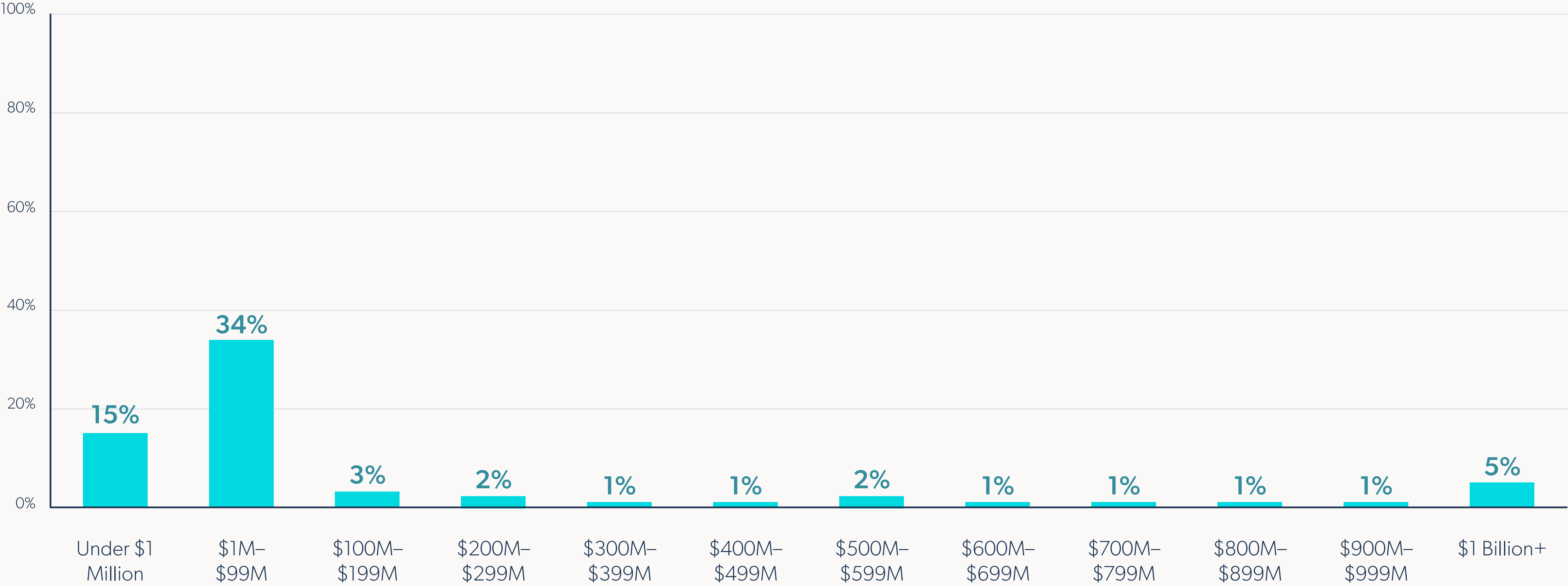
What best describes your level in your company?



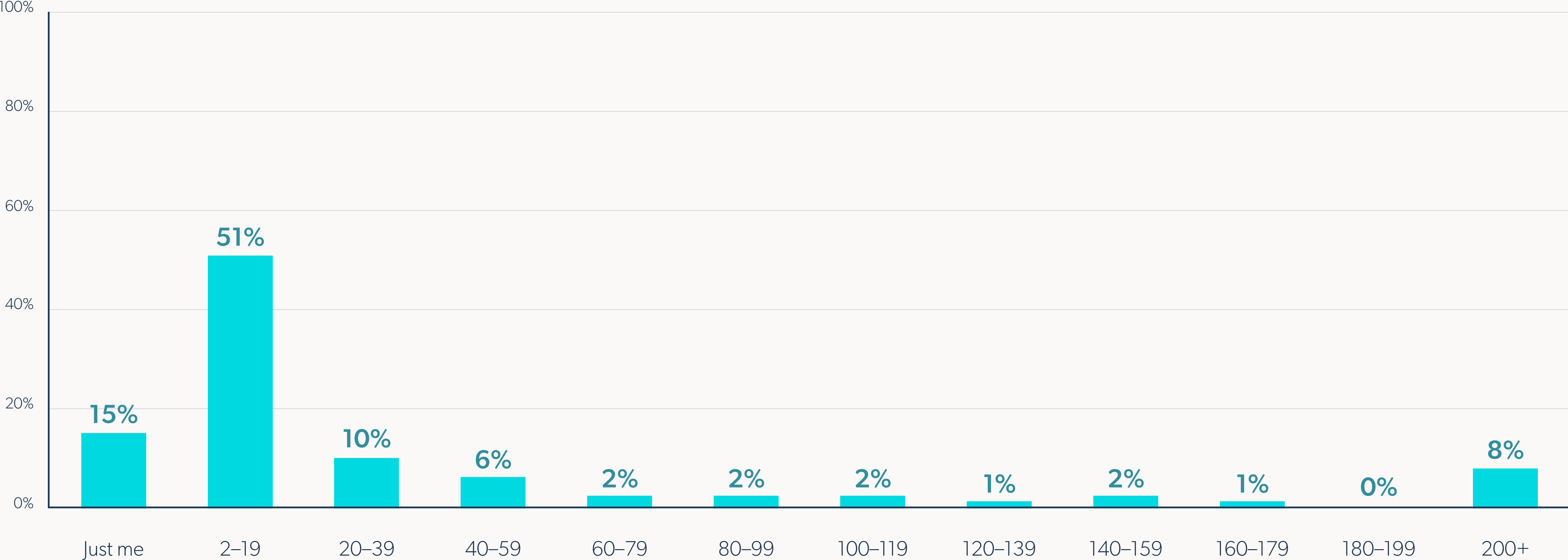
How many full-time employees work at your company?



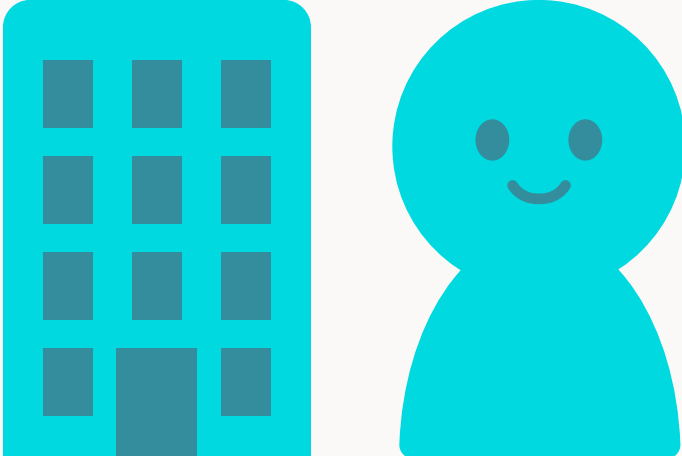
What best describes your company's average annual revenue? (all answers in USD)



How large is your entire company's PR/communications team?

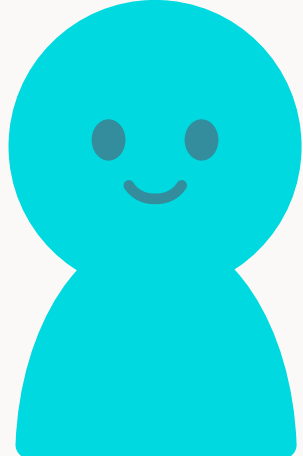


The primary audience my organization/clients sell to are:



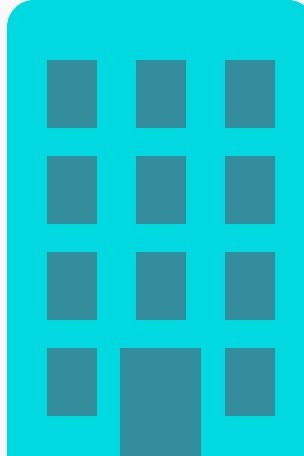
40%

Both (B2C and B2B)



30%

Business to
consumer (B2C)



27%

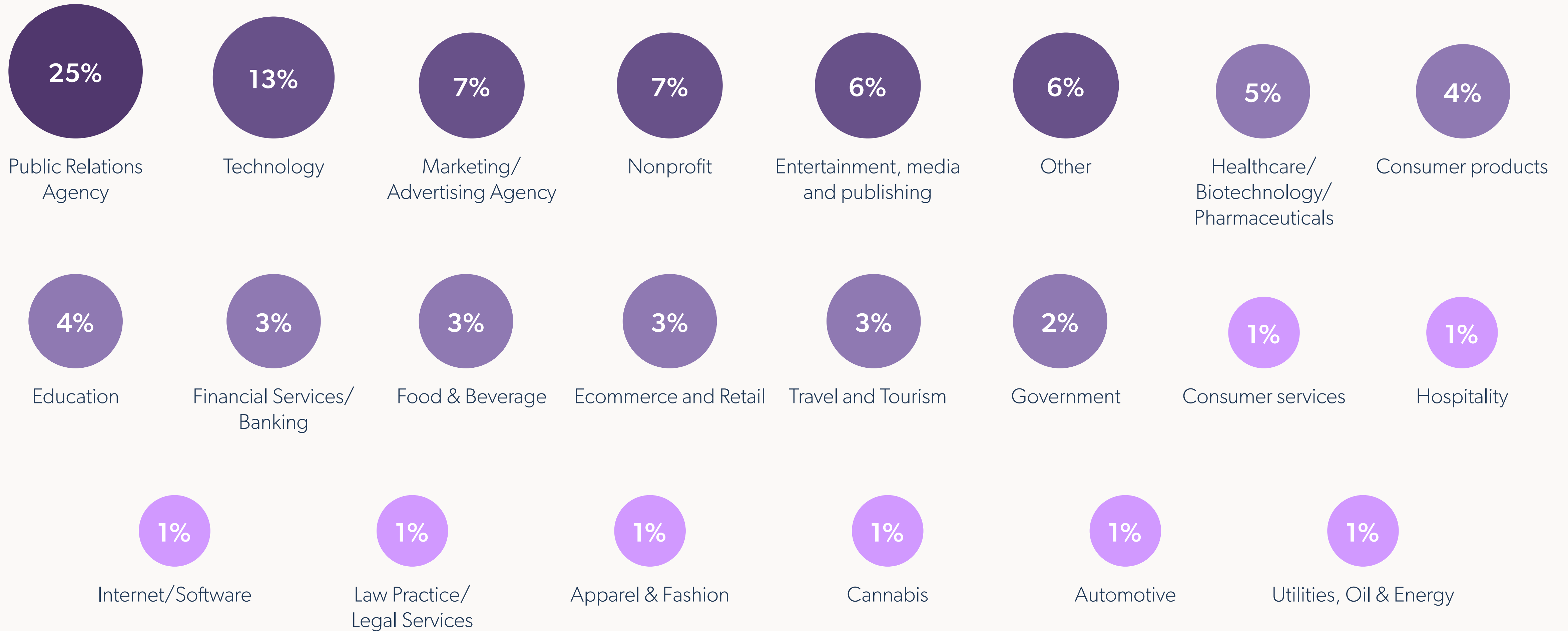
Business to
business (B2B)



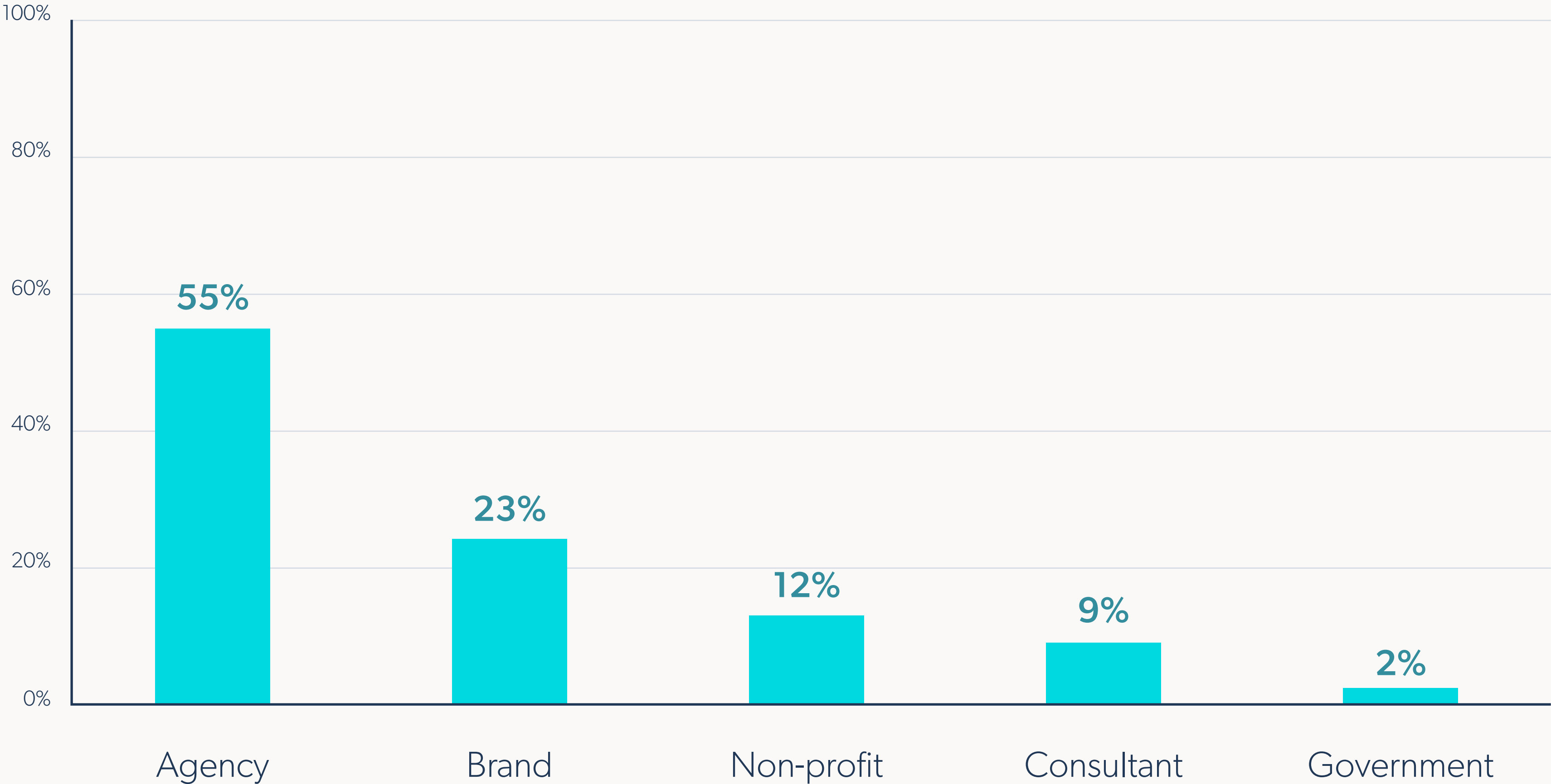
3%

Other

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



Which of the following best describes where you work? (select only one)



MUCK RACK

Thank you!

Muck Rack's Public Relations Management (PRM) platform enables PR teams to find the right journalists for their stories, send customized pitches, build meaningful relationships with the media, monitor news and quantify their impact.

[Learn more](#)

<https://muckrack.com>