



CONTENT MARKETING



SPOTLIGHT REPORT

OVERVIEW

Content marketing continues to be one of the hottest marketing topics. B2B marketers are increasingly using content marketing tactics to better engage B2B buyers and educate, inform, entertain and guide them along their customer journey. But what's behind the buzz and growing popularity of content marketing?

The B2B Technology Marketing Community on LinkedIn conducted a comprehensive B2B Content Marketing Survey to better understand the current state of content marketing and to identify key challenges as well as best practices.

Welcome to the 2016 edition of the B2B Content Marketing Report!

This new report is based on over 600 survey responses from B2B marketing professionals to better understand the current state of content marketing and to identify new trends and key challenges as well as best practices.

Many thanks to our sponsors: BrightTALK™ | emedia | IO Integration | Censhare | Mountain Top Data | Spiceworks | Create Your Next Customer.

Many thanks to everyone who participated in this survey!

We hope you will enjoy this report.

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CONTENT MARKETING SPOTLIGHT REPORT

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KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

1

Lead generation continues to remain the top goal for content marketing as it was in our last two surveys. However, this year, brand awareness takes second place moving up and switching spots with customer acquisition.

2

There has been a large increase in the number of companies that have a content marketing strategy in place compared to our last survey. While this is good news, many companies still struggle to create an effective content marketing program.

3

Case studies take the top spot as the most effective content marketing tactic and format. As for other tactics, blogging is a close second. Surprisingly, the number of marketers who mentioned social media as an effective marketing tactic drops by almost half since our last survey.

4

The most mentioned content marketing challenge continues to be enough time and resources to create content. This year, the challenge of measuring content effectiveness moves up from fourth to the second biggest challenge followed by producing truly engaging content to serve the needs of marketing programs.

5

LinkedIn again tops the list of the most effective social media platforms to deliver content and engage audiences. This year, YouTube moves to second and Twitter moves down a rank to third as compared to our last survey.



CONTENT MARKETING GOALS AND MEASUREMENT

CONTENT MARKETING GOALS

Lead generation remains the top goal for content marketing as it was in our last two surveys (55 percent). Brand awareness take second place this year at 38 percent; moving up and switching spots with customer acquisition, our last survey's second most mentioned goal, which is now third at 37 percent. Thought leadership moves down a notch to the fourth most mentioned goal (33 percent).

Q: What are your top three goals for content marketing?

TIP

Task content marketing to have goals that support each other. Lead generation is easier to measure; however, building brand through content marketing is also important to drive the business forward. The reality is that if you are not reaching buyers in the very early stages of their research with your brand, you are not going to make the short list.

55%
**LEAD
GENERATION**



38%
**BRAND
AWARENESS**



37%
**CUSTOMER
ACQUISITION**



33%
**THOUGHT LEADERSHIP
/ MARKET EDUCATION**

Engagement 28% | Lead nurturing 26% | Website traffic 24% | Customer loyalty/Retention 24% | Revenue 22% | Social media engagement 11% | Product launch support 6% | Other 2%

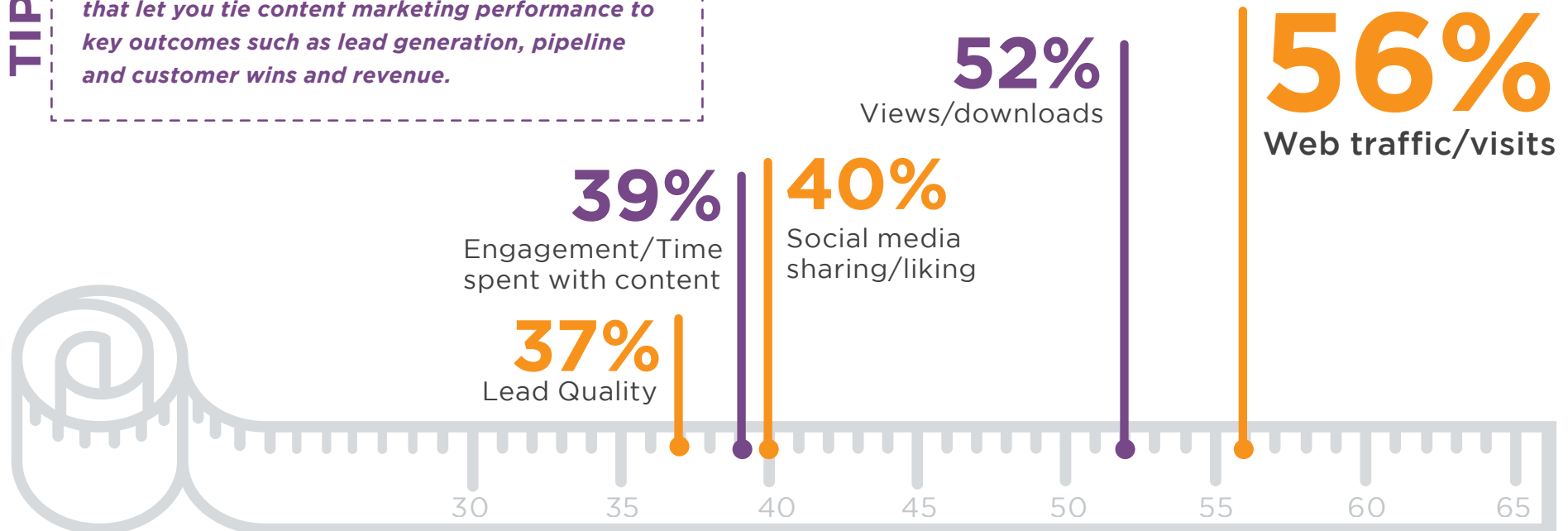
MEASURING CONTENT MARKETING SUCCESS

Given that most companies use content marketing for lead generation, it is surprising that lead quality (37 percent), lead quantity (35 percent) and sales opportunities (33 percent) are not top choices for measuring content marketing success. Instead, web traffic and visits (56 percent) remain the primary measures for content marketing success. Views and downloads are in second place (52 percent). Interesting to note, social media sharing jumps two spots, from our last survey, to the third metric (40 percent) with four percent more respondents using this data to measure success.

Q: What metrics do you use to measure content marketing success?

TIP

While web metrics are easy to track, build systems that let you tie content marketing performance to key outcomes such as lead generation, pipeline and customer wins and revenue.

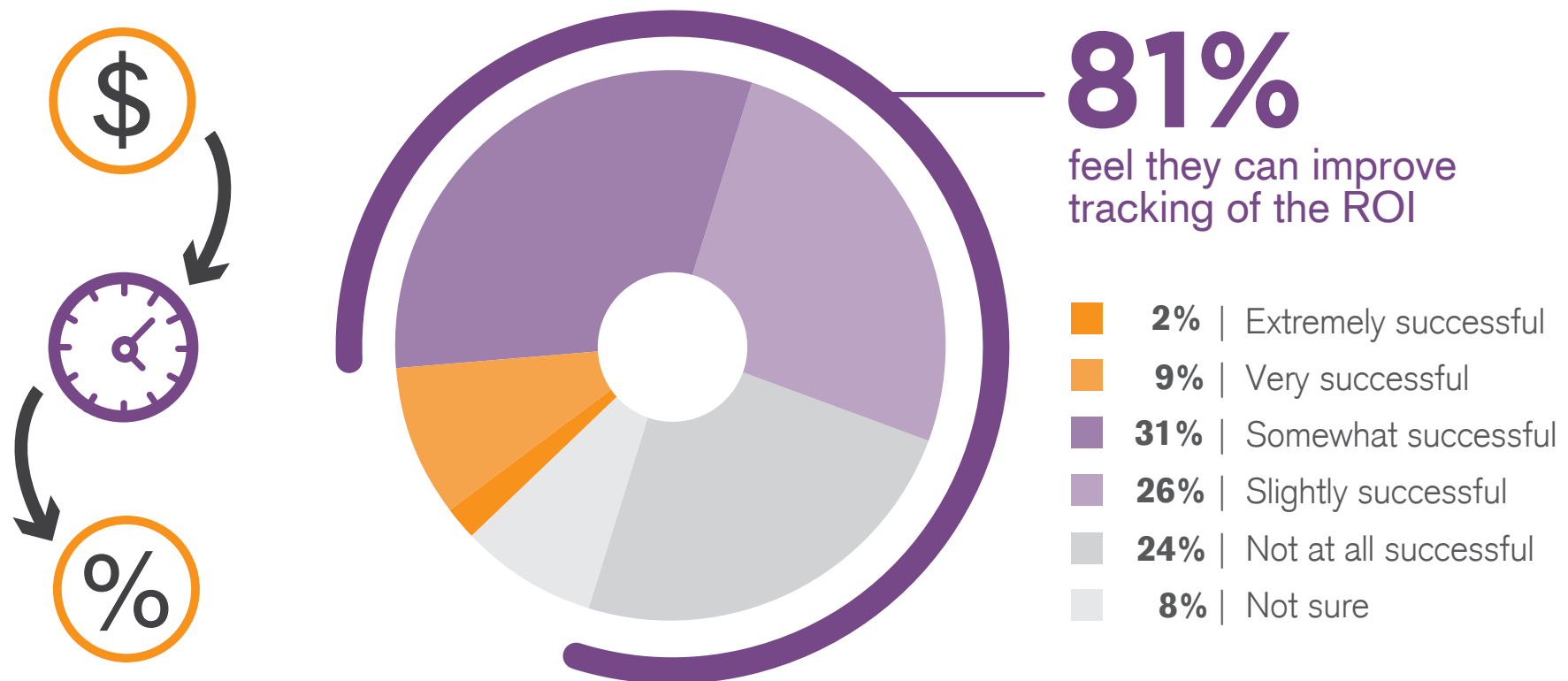


Lead Quantity 35% | Opportunities 33% | Customer feedback 32% | Revenue 30% | SEO/Search engine ranking 27% | Subscriber growth 26% | Inbound links 17% | Share of conversation 13% | We don't measure 7% | Other 1%

TRACKING THE ROI OF CONTENT MARKETING

Most companies (81 percent) feel they have room to improve when tracking the ROI of content marketing with only 11 percent of the respondents saying they are extremely successful (2 percent) or very successful (9 percent).

Q: How successful is your organization at tracking the ROI of content marketing?





CONTENT CHALLENGES AND STRATEGY

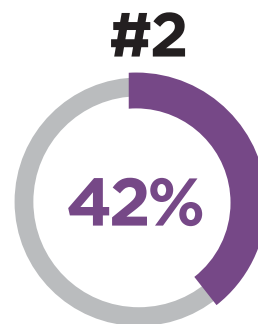
CONTENT MARKETING CHALLENGES

Having enough time and bandwidth to create fresh content continues to be the number one challenge for content marketers (46 percent). This year, the challenge of measuring content effectiveness moves up from fourth to the second biggest challenge (42 percent) followed by producing truly engaging content to serve the needs of marketing programs (41 percent). Producing enough content (39 percent) moves down from second to fourth place.

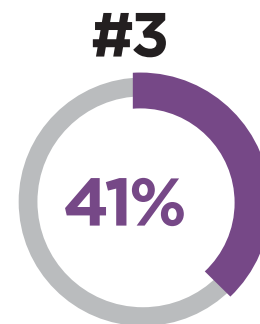
Q: What are your biggest content marketing challenges?



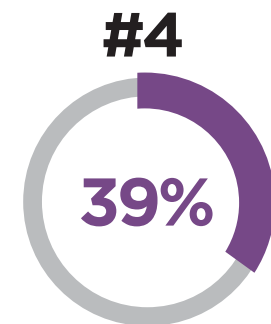
Lack of time/Bandwidth
to create content



Measuring content
effectiveness



Producing truly
engaging content



Producing enough
content variety/Volume

TIP

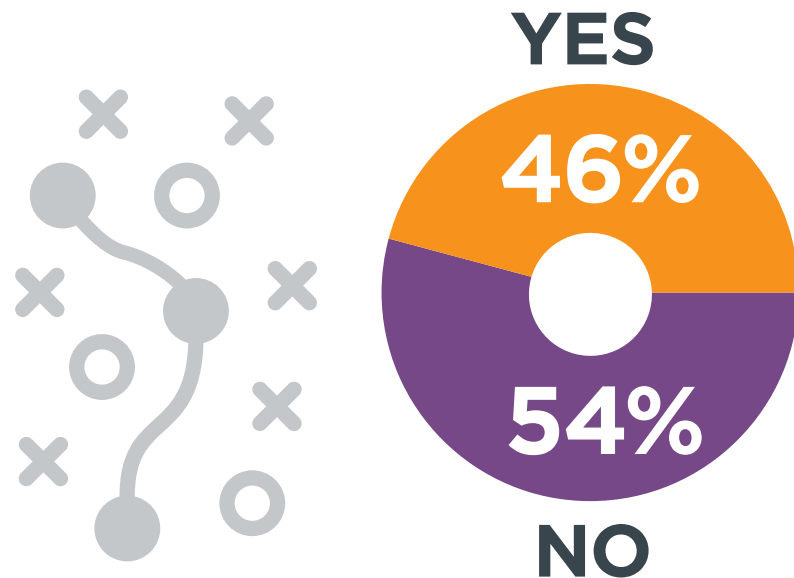
As marketing focus shifts from quantity to quality, make sure to establish data-driven systems to measure the effectiveness of your content marketing programs.

Getting content delivered to the right audiences 32% | Lack of budget to produce content 31% | Developing consistent content strategy 30% | Talent to produce content 30% | Creating buyer and segmentspecific content 22% | Having sales share content in a trackable manner 21% | Integrating content marketing into our current workflows and technologies 20% | Lack of process and integration across marketing 20% | Finding right balance between free and gated content 17% | Inability to deliver the right content at the right moment on any device 14% | Getting executive buyin 13% | Poor content quality 11% | Finding domain experts 10% | Localizing content for international markets 9% | Other 9%

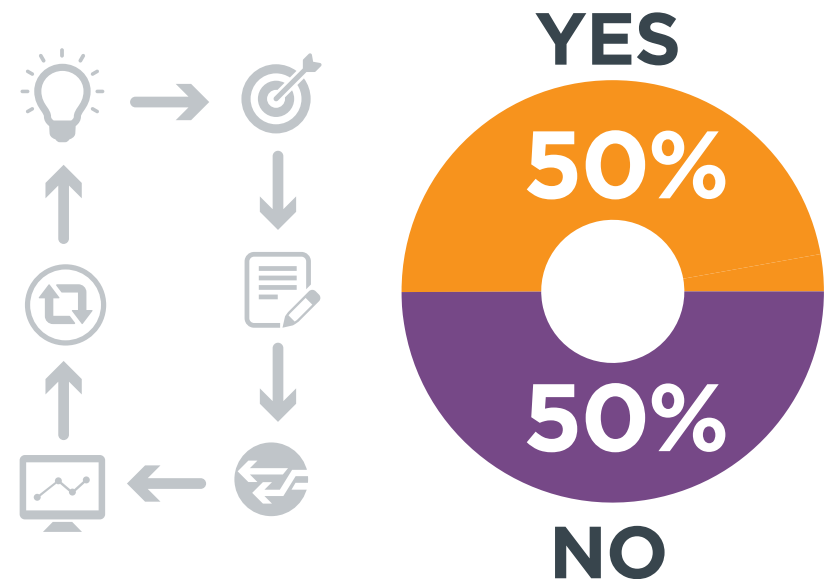
CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY

There is a pretty even split between those that have a documented content marketing strategy (46 percent) and those that do not (54 percent). When it comes to using data to guide the content marketing strategy, it is evenly split between those companies that use a data-driven content marketing strategy (50 percent) and those that do not (50 percent).

Q: Do you have a documented content marketing strategy?



Q: Do you have a data driven content marketing strategy?





CONTENT CREATION AND PROMOTION

RESPONSIBLE FOR CONTENT MARKETING

In companies with over 100 employees, corporate marketing is responsible for content marketing (61 percent), followed by product marketing (43 percent) and PR/Communications teams with 43 percent. While content marketing and content strategy are related, it should be noted that in some companies, one department could set the strategic goals and messaging, while another team executes content marketing tactics.

Q: Who is responsible for content marketing at your company?

TIP

Leverage various departments in your business to quickly scale content. Make sure to have a single department or person responsible for the final sign-off to avoid conflict or a disjointed experience.

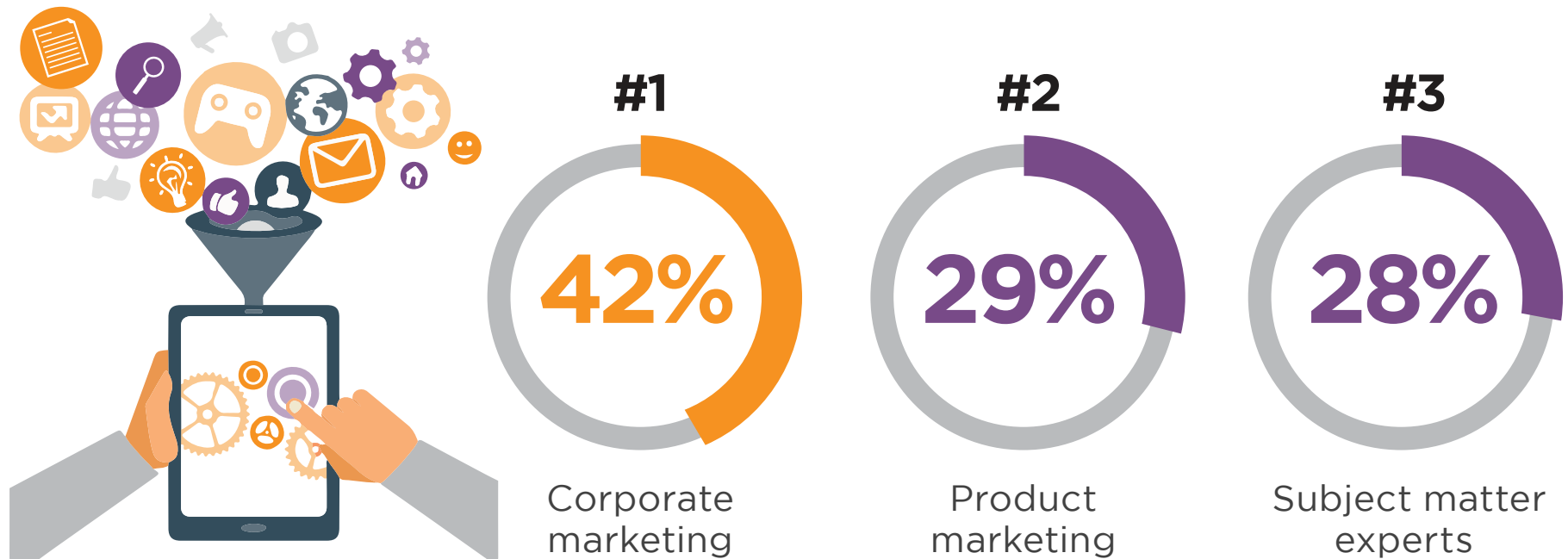


Subject matter experts 15% | Demand generation 12% | Field marketing 10% | Product management 7% | Sales 4% | CEO/President/Owner 2% | Other (please specify) 10%

CONTENT CREATORS

Virtually unchanged from our last survey, corporate marketing is still the number one creator of content (42 percent), followed by product marketing (29 percent) and subject matter experts (28 percent). Only 20 percent of respondents have a dedicated content marketing team.

Q: Who creates content at your company?

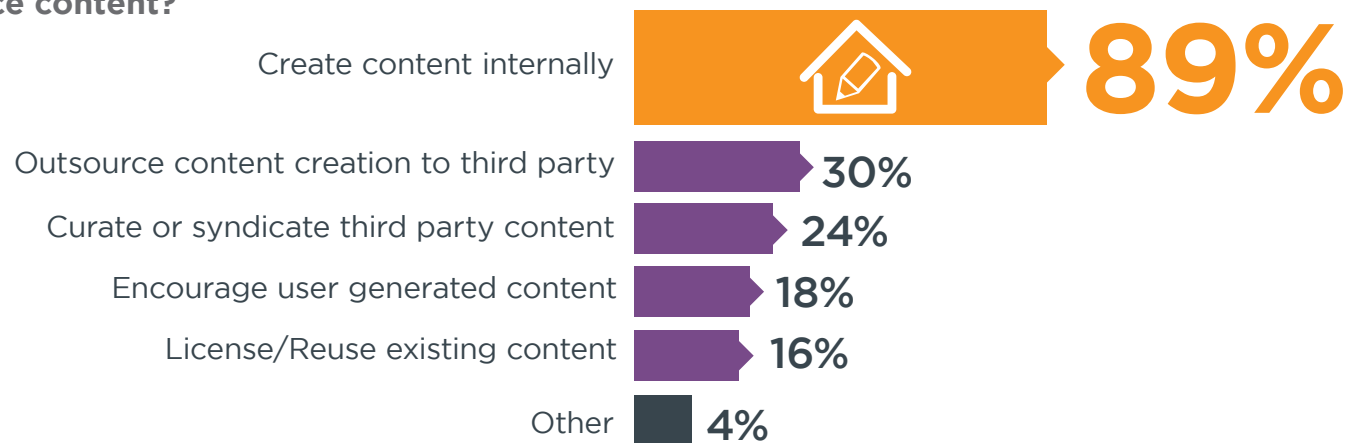


CEO/President/Owner 27% | PR/Communications 25% | Dedicated content team 20% | External agency/Consultant 17% | Sales 12% | Product management 12% | Field marketing 10% | Demand generation 7% | Nobody 2% | Other/Not sure 8%

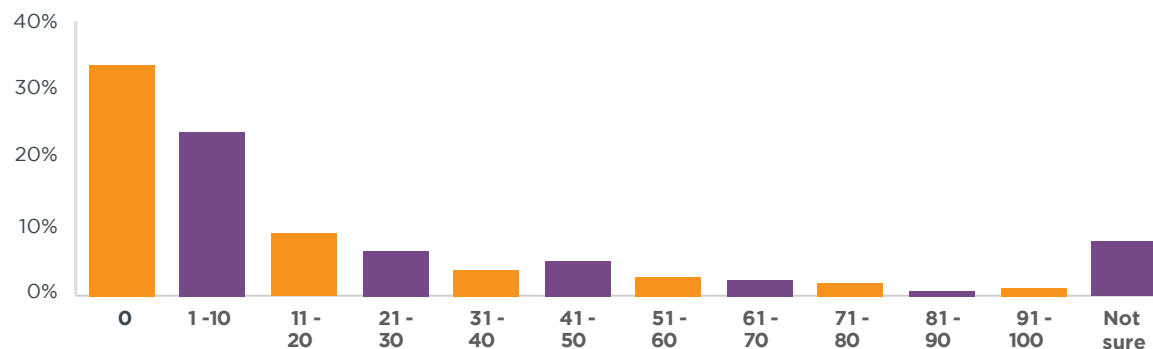
CONTENT SOURCES

The vast majority of companies (89 percent) source content internally. Thirty percent of companies outsource content and 24 percent of content is curated or syndicated from a third party. While growing in importance, user generated content is still a small percentage (18 percent) of how companies source marketing content. In terms of content that is outsourced, most companies outsource 10 percent or less of their content.

Q: How do you source content?



Q: What percentage of content creation do you outsource?



TIP

Try creating strategic partnerships with companies who have similar but not competing audiences so you can cross-promote content. Co-hosting webinars, or co-creating guides can help grow your database as well as ease your bandwidth requirements.

OUTSOURCED MARKETING TACTICS

It is no surprise that the most production-intensive content formats, such as videos, are the most frequently outsourced content. Blogging (21 percent) and videos (18 percent) leap frog analyst and research reports (16 percent) to the number one and two spots on the list.

Q: What content marketing tactics do you routinely outsource?



We don't outsource any 15% | Online articles 15% | White papers 12% | Social media 12% | eBooks 12% | Advertorials 11% | Press releases 11% | Customer testimonials 9% | eNewsletters 9% | Webinars/Webcasts 8% | Polling/Research 7% | Microsites 7% | In-person events 5% | Mobile content 5% | Licensed/Syndicated content 4% | Print magazines 4% | Slideware/Presentations 4% | Branded apps 3% | Online reviews 3% | Interactive content (quizzes, product selectors, business case generators) 3% | Podcasts 3% | Visual content (cartoons, memes) 3% | Product demos 3% | Printed books 3% | Virtual tradeshows/Online events 2% | Games 2% | Other 6%

MOST OUTSOURCED ACTIVITIES

The activities that consume the most time and require the most domain expertise are typically the most outsourced ones. The two most outsourced activities are video production (33 percent) and writing (28 percent) followed by design of content assets (24 percent). Conversely, planning and strategy setting are rarely outsourced (7 percent).

Q: What content marketing activities do you outsource?



Content Distribution/Syndication 12% | Content Planning & Strategy 7% | Performance Measurement & Analytics 7% | Buyer Persona Creation 4% | Other 3%

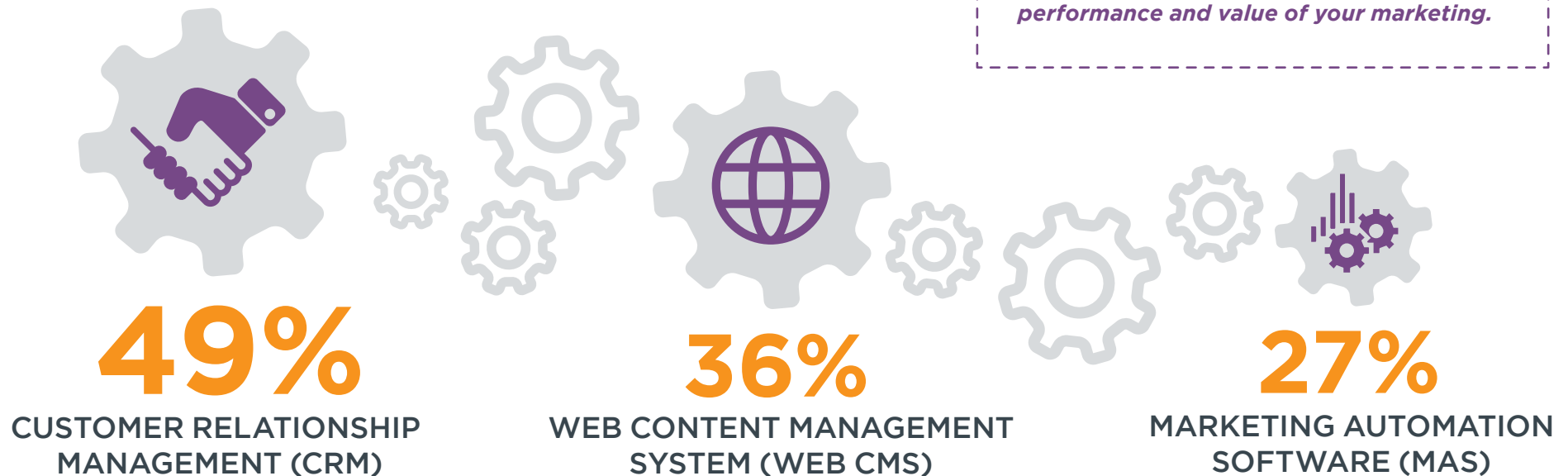
MARKETING TECHNOLOGIES

Companies are using customer relationship management systems (49 percent), web content management (36 percent) and marketing automation software (27 percent) to create, approve and deliver content. Surprisingly 26 percent of companies are not using any technologies for these activities.

Q: What marketing technologies do you currently use to automate content creation, approval, and delivery?

TIP

Use marketing automation technologies to help you implement manual tasks, collect important data and intelligence about your content, and to enhance the overall performance and value of your marketing.

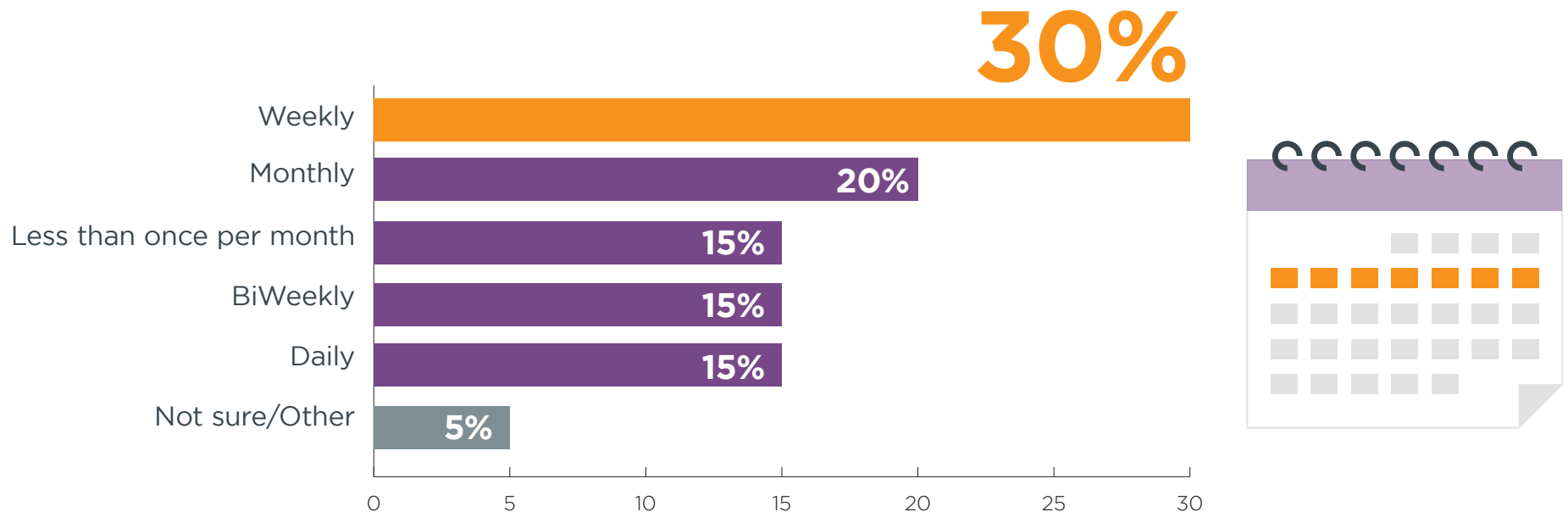


None 16% | Content Marketing Platform 16% | Issue, Project Tracking, Collaboration and Approval Platform 11% | Digital Asset Management (DAM) 7% | Customer Experience Management (CXM) 6% | Marketing Resource Management (MRM) 4% | Enterprise Communication Management (ECM) 4% | Other 3%

PUBLICATION FREQUENCY

This year, content marketers are publishing more frequently. Most companies are putting out new content on a weekly (30 percent) instead of monthly basis (20 percent). Only 15 percent of companies publish daily.

Q: How often does your organization publish new content?



CONTENT PROMOTION

Social media (82 percent), company websites (79 percent) and email campaigns (74 percent) are the top channels for promoting new content to the market. Paid advertising (30 percent) is the least likely choice for promoting content.

Q: How do you promote content?

TIP

Promotion is extremely important to generate more interactions, especially for teams who are limited on content bandwidth. Best practice indicates you should spend about 20 percent of your time creating content and 80 percent promoting it.

82%
SOCIAL MEDIA



79%

COMPANY
WEBSITE



74%

EMAIL
CAMPAIGNS



45%

SEO/ORGANIC
SEARCH



30%

PAID
ADVERTISING



CONTENT TARGETING

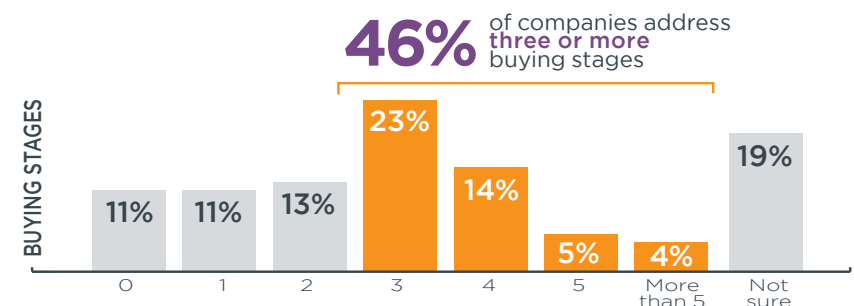
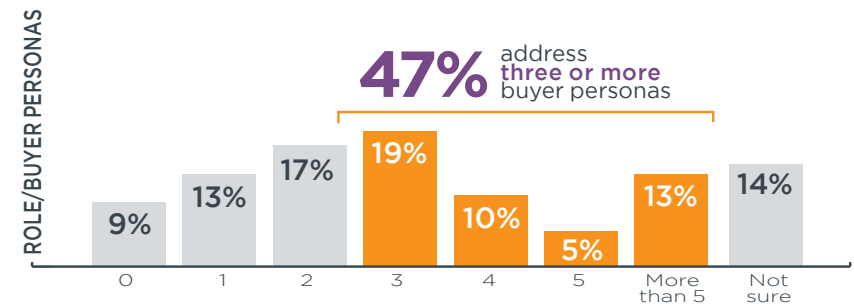
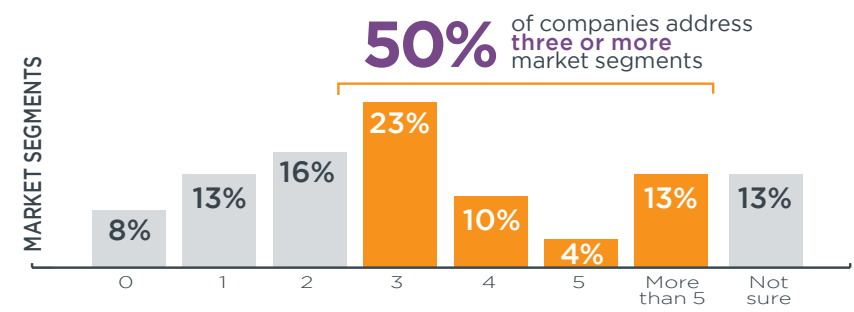
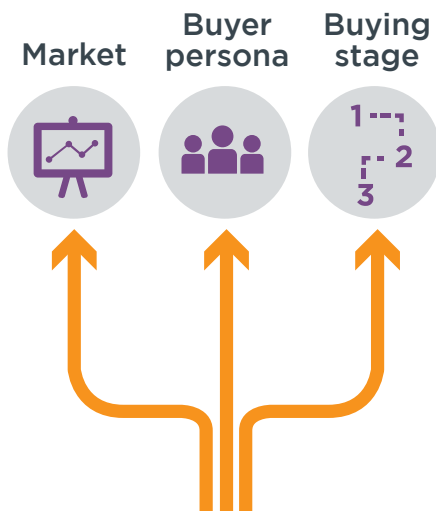
CONTENT TARGETING

The three most common ways that companies segment their content include segmentation by market, buyer persona and buying stage. Fifty percent of companies create content for three or more market segments, and 47 percent support more than three buyer personas. Forty-six percent of companies create content supporting three or more buying stages in their market activities.

Q: How many separate segments, personas, and buying stages do you support with dedicated content marketing assets and tactics?

TIP

When developing marketing content, consider your audience, the specific challenges they are addressing and where they are in the buying cycle.



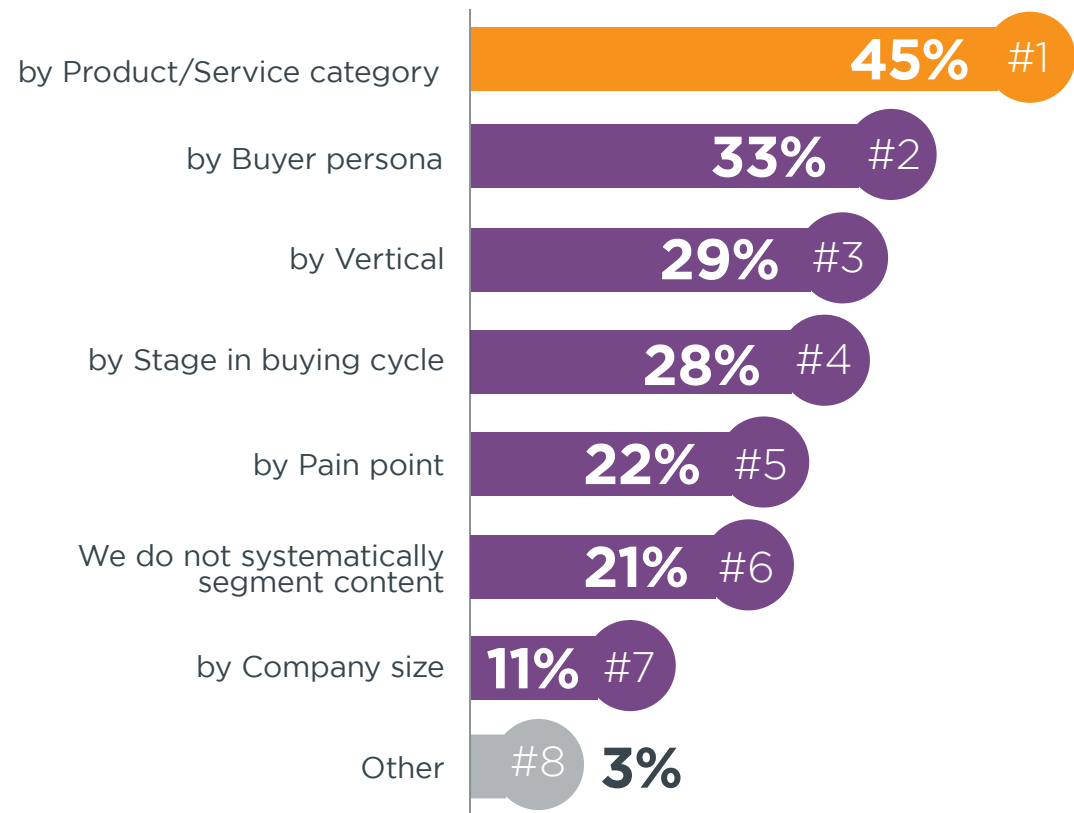
CONTENT SEGMENTATION

The most popular type of content segmentation is still by product category (45 percent). Buyer personas (33 percent) followed by vertical segmentation (29 percent) remain the second and third most popular forms of content classification. The least popular segmentation dimension is by company size, at 11 percent. Only 22 percent of marketers don't systematically segment content. This is a six percent increase over our last study.

Q: How do you segment your content?

TIP

Over 75 percent of companies target content based on one classification or another. Take the time to target your content to create more compelling communications.



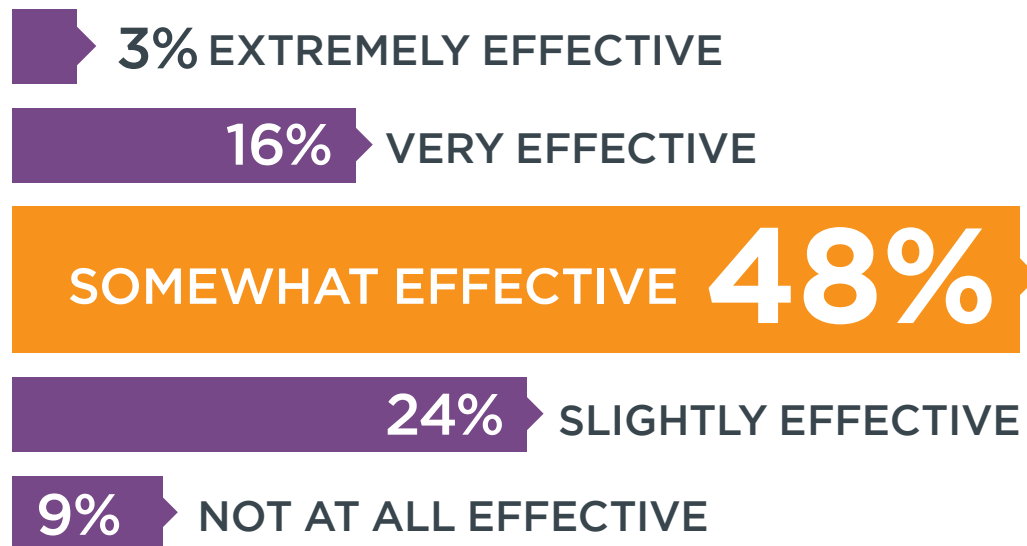


CONTENT EFFECTIVENESS

CONTENT MARKETING EFFECTIVENESS

There has been a 16 percent boost in the number of companies that have a content marketing strategy in place from our last survey (30 percent versus 46 percent this year). While this is good news, most companies still struggle to create an effective content marketing program with only 19 percent of our respondents claiming their content marketing program is very (16 percent) or extremely effective (3 percent).

Q: How would you rate the effectiveness of your content marketing?



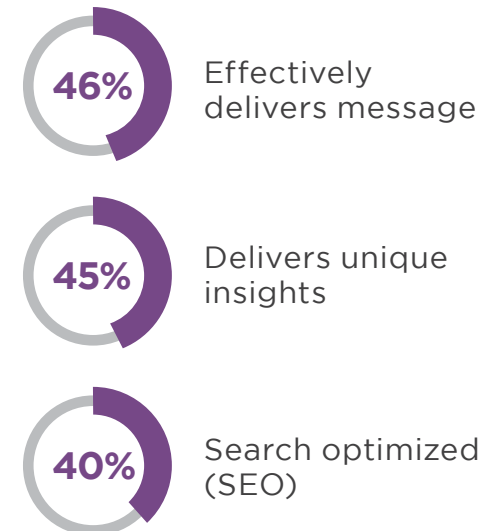
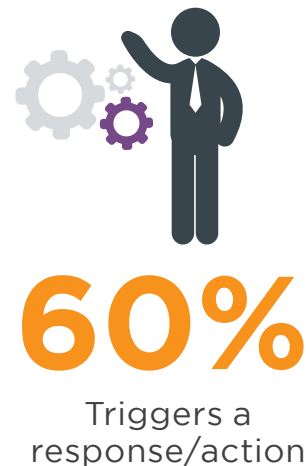
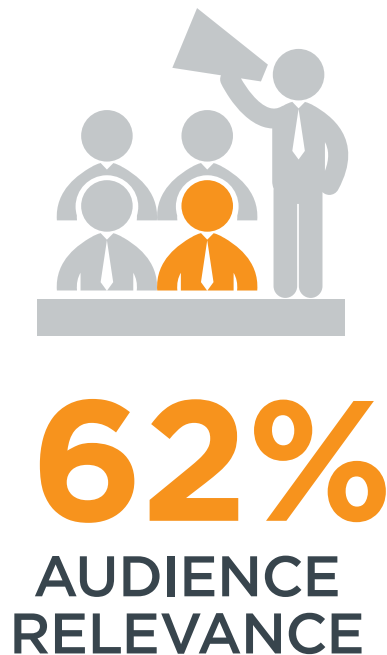
WHAT MAKES CONTENT EFFECTIVE?

Audience relevance continues to be the most important element for content marketing success (62 percent). Engaging and compelling storytelling (60 percent) and using content that triggers a specific response (60 percent) are tied this year for second place. It's no surprise that effectively delivering your message also ranks high (46 percent), as it is critical for marketing success.

TIP

When creating content, make sure the topic is relevant, compelling, and solicits a measurable response.

Q: What do you consider the most important elements of effective content?



Originality 36% | Reusable 33% | Well edited copy 30% | Personalized content 25% | Easy to produce 19% | Low cost 16% | Other 1%

MOST EFFECTIVE CONTENT SUBJECTS

This year, case studies are also the most effective content subject (55 percent), followed by best practices (53 percent) and how-to guides (47 percent). Product features (24 percent) and competitive comparisons (17 percent) do not rank high on the list as compelling subjects to write about.

Q: What types of content subjects are most effective?

TIP

When seeking subject matter for your content marketing, create content that is relevant and helpful to your audience by providing customer success examples, best practices and how-to guides.



MOST EFFECTIVE MARKETING TACTICS

In addition to being the most effective content subject, case studies are also the most effective content marketing tactic (44 percent). Blogging moves down to a close second (42 percent). Surprisingly, the number of marketers who mentioned social media as an effective marketing tactic drops significantly from 64 percent in our last survey to 36 percent this year. Games (1 percent), branded apps (2 percent), podcasts (5 percent) and advertorials (6 percent) are at the bottom of the list in terms of content marketing tactics considered effective by marketers.

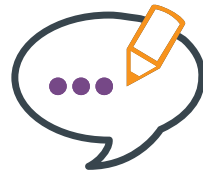
Q: What content marketing tactics are most effective for you?

TIP

When creating content, use customer testimonials and case studies to drive the effectiveness of your content marketing strategy. However, remember to map appropriate content to the buying stage. A prospect who has never engaged with your brand might be discouraged if the first piece of content is a case study.



44%
CASE STUDY



42%
BLOGGING



36%
SOCIAL MEDIA



35%
CUSTOMER TESTIMONIALS

Inperson events 34% | White papers 30% | Webinars/Webcasts 29% | Videos 27% | Online articles 25% | Infographics 23% | Analyst/Research reports 21% | eNewsletters 20% | Press releases 19% | eBooks 17% | Product demos 14% | Slideware/Presentations 14% | Mobile content 10% | Polling/Research 8% | Online reviews 8% | Microsites 8% | Interactive content 7% | Advertorials 6% | We don't use any 5% | Podcasts 5% | Visual content (cartoons, memes) 5% | Print magazines 5% | Virtual tradeshows/Online events 3% | Licensed/Syndicated content 3% | Printed books 3% | Branded apps 2% | Games 1%

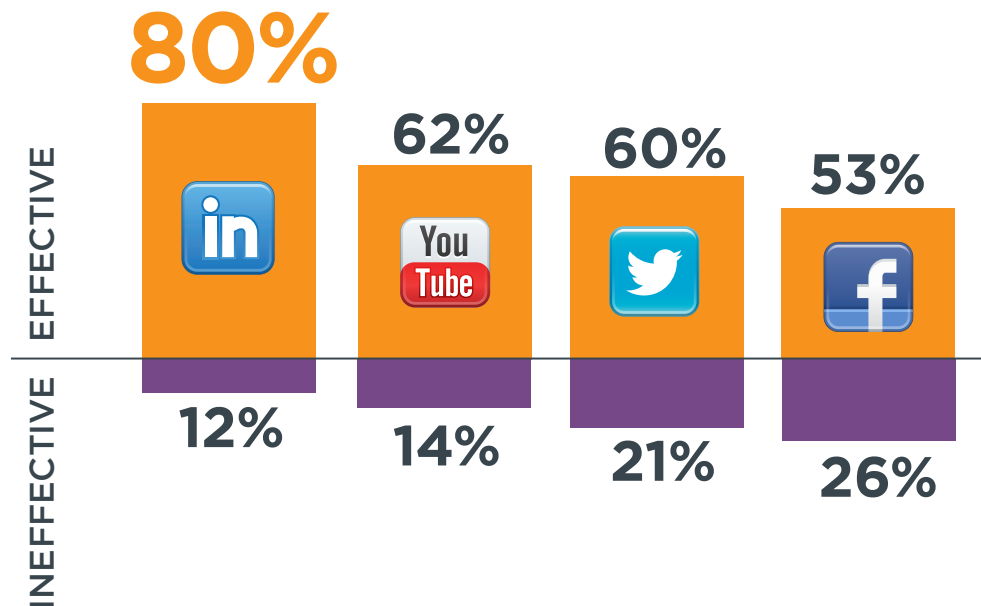
SOCIAL MEDIA EFFECTIVENESS

LinkedIn again tops the list of the most effective social media platforms to deliver content and engage audiences (80 percent). This year, YouTube moves to second (62 percent) and Twitter moves down a rank to third (60 percent) as compared to our last survey. Facebook (53 percent) and SlideShare (29 percent) stand out as moderately effective social platforms. Instagram (22 percent) and Google+ (19 percent) are ranked at the lower end of the effectiveness scale.

Q: How effective are the following social platforms to deliver content and engage audiences?

TIP

When developing a content marketing strategy make sure at least three social media platforms are in your communication mix.



	Effective	Ineffective	I don't use it
LinkedIn	80%	12%	8%
YouTube	62%	14%	24%
Twitter	60%	21%	19%
Facebook	53%	26%	21%
SlideShare	30%	8%	62%
Custom communities	22%	6%	72%
Instagram	21%	14%	65%
Google +	19%	33%	48%
Vimeo	18%	7%	75%
Pinterest	14%	13%	73%
Tumblr	5%	7%	88%
Quora	5%	7%	88%
Flickr	5%	10%	85%
StumbleUpon	4%	6%	90%
Vine	5%	7%	88%
Foursquare	3%	5%	92%

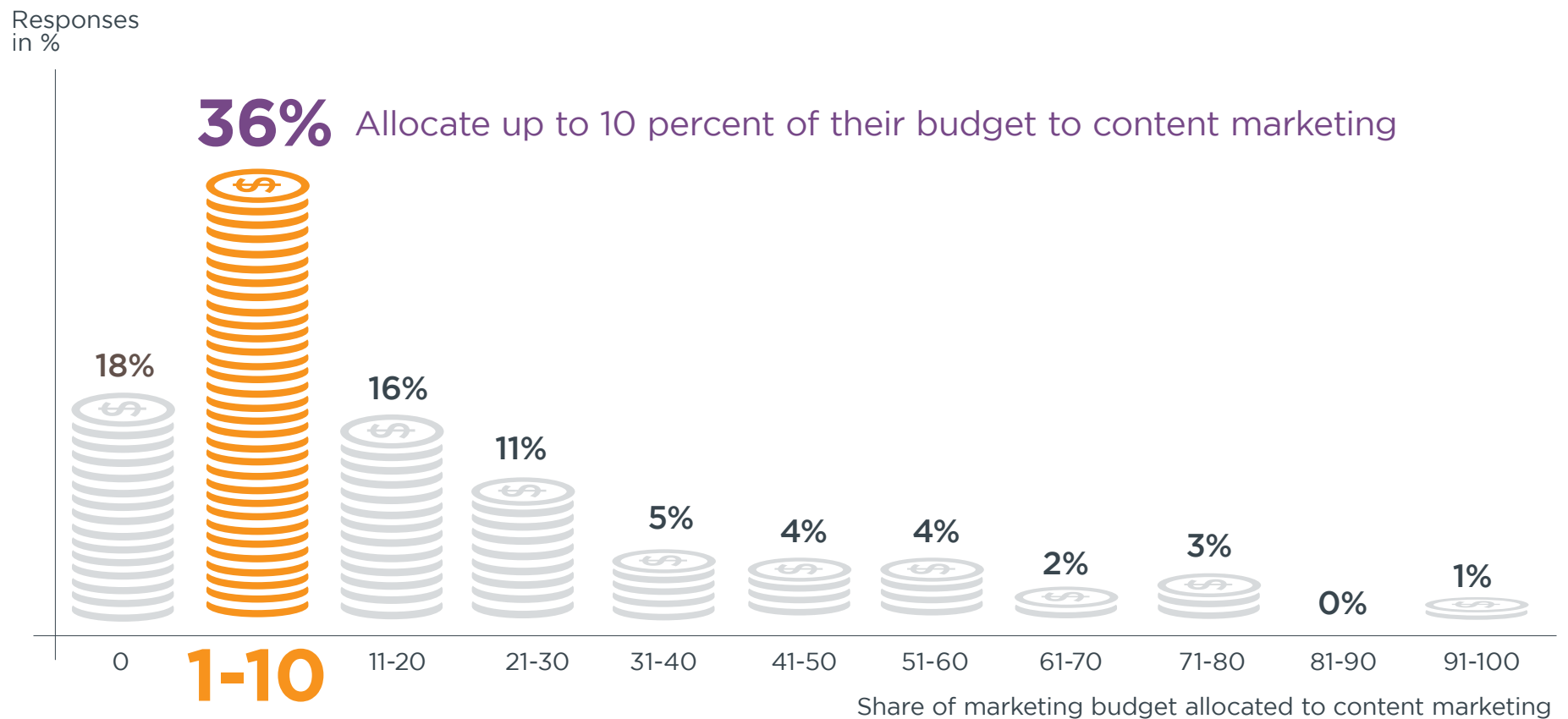


CONTENT BUDGET

CONTENT MARKETING BUDGET SHARE

Companies continue to allocate up to ten percent of their marketing budget to content marketing (excluding headcount).

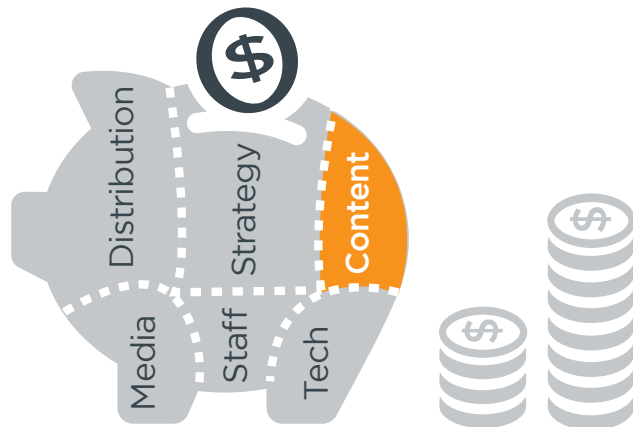
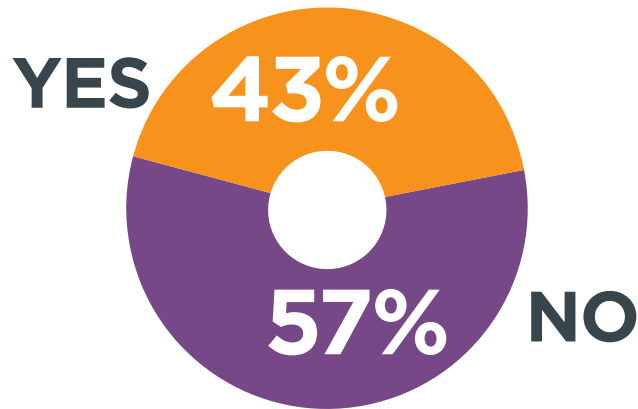
Q: What percentage of your annual marketing budget (not including staff) is allocated to content marketing?



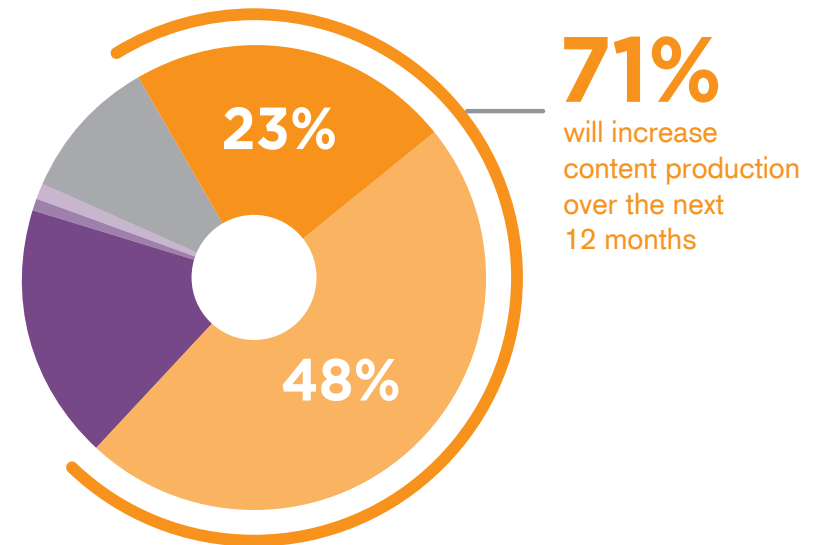
CONTENT MARKETING BUDGET

Forty-three percent of companies have a dedicated content marketing budget while 57 percent do not. Content marketing continues to be an activity that companies fund year-over-year with 71 percent of companies increasing funding for content production.

Q: Do you have a dedicated content marketing budget?



Q: How is your content production going to change over the next 12 months?

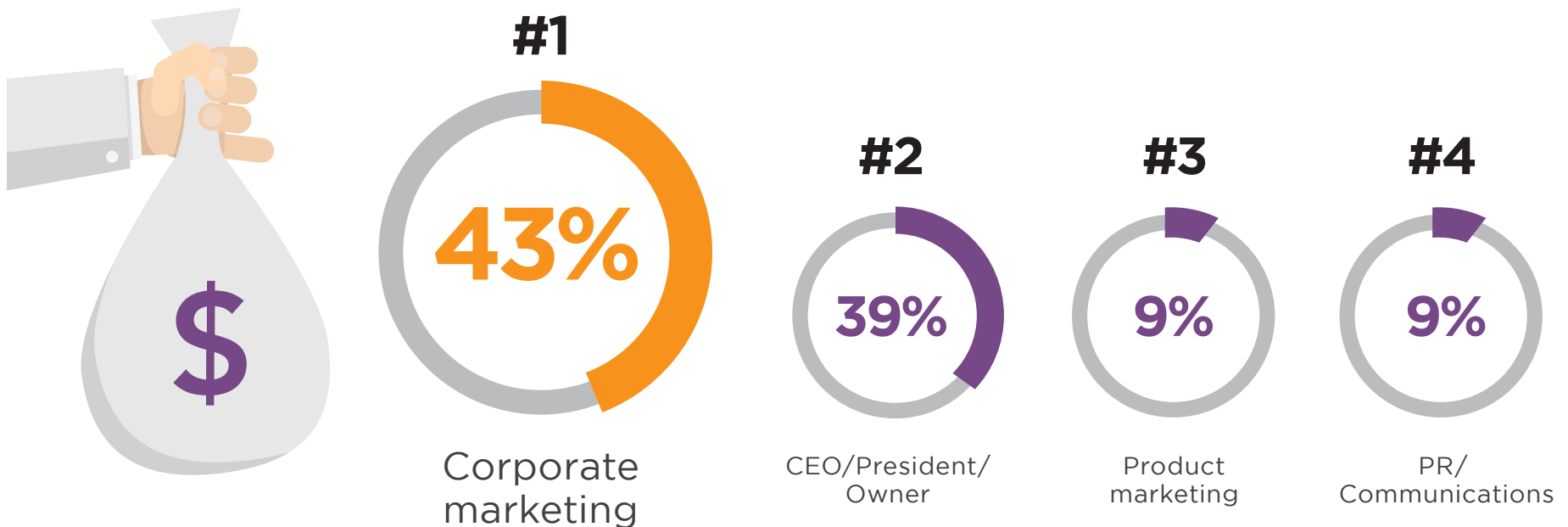


- 23% | Increases significantly
- 48% | Increases
- 18% | Same/Stays flat
- 1% | Decreases
- 0% | Decreases significantly
- 10% | Not sure

CONTENT MARKETING BUDGET OWNERS

Again this year, corporate marketing (43 percent) owns the content marketing budget, followed by the CEO/President/Owner (39 percent). Product marketing (9 percent) and PR/Communications (9 percent) are tied in a distant third place. As suspected, companies rarely outsource content marketing budget to a third party (1 percent).

Q: Who owns the content marketing budget?



Nobody 8% | Field marketing 5% | Demand generation 5% | Product management 3% | Sales 3% | Subject matter experts 2% | External agency/Consultant 1% | Other 2%



SURVEY METHODOLOGY & DEMOGRAPHICS

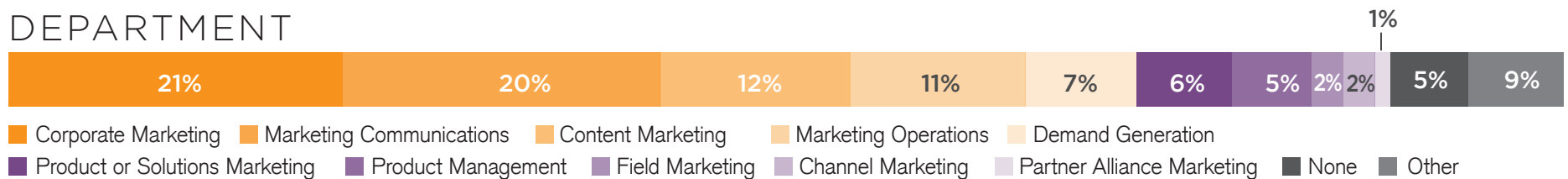
METHODOLOGY & DEMOGRAPHICS

This survey was conducted from May through July 2016 in partnership with the B2B Technology Marketing Community on LinkedIn. We collected over 620 responses from B2B marketing professionals across all career levels, industries, and company sizes. Here is a detailed breakdown of the demographics.

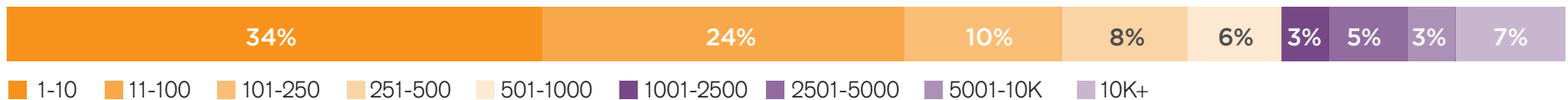
CAREER LEVEL



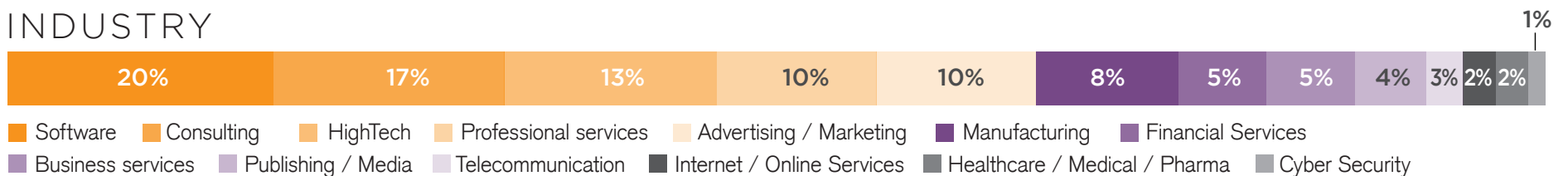
DEPARTMENT



COMPANY SIZE



INDUSTRY



GEOGRAPHY



