

# B2C CONTENT MARKETING

## 2016 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—North America



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## WELCOME

### Hello, Content Marketers,

Welcome to *B2C Content Marketing 2016: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—North America*.

The results presented in this report derive from our sixth annual content marketing survey. Earlier this fall we released the companion report on business-to-business (B2B) content marketing.

An overriding theme in both reports is that the most effective content marketers are those whose organizations have a clear vision of what content marketing success looks like. That clarity, together with frequent team meetings, a documented strategy, and an editorial mission statement, can help transform a good content marketing program into a great one.

Of course, many other areas of content marketing need to be managed as well—metrics, content creation, and distribution, to name just a few. This report covers those topics and more.

For additional resources, contact us anytime. We're happy to help!

**Yours in content,**

**Joe & Ann**



**Joe Pulizzi**

Founder

Content Marketing Institute



**Ann Handley**

Chief Content Officer

MarketingProfs

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

One of the central themes of this year's business-to-consumer (B2C) research is that communication is an important key to content marketing success. While studying this year's data, we made that observation about business-to-business (B2B) marketers, too; however, it's even more apparent with B2C marketers. Compared with B2B marketers, B2C marketers:



### Here are some key takeaways:

B2C marketers have made impressive progress over the past year with documenting their content marketing strategy (37% have a documented content marketing strategy vs. 27% last year). Over the years, our research has consistently shown that marketers who have a documented content marketing strategy are more effective than those who have a verbal-only strategy or no strategy at all.

48% of B2C marketers meet with their teams either daily or weekly to discuss their content marketing program; 28% of those marketers say the meetings are “extremely” valuable and 31% say they are “very” valuable.



### Key takeaways continued:

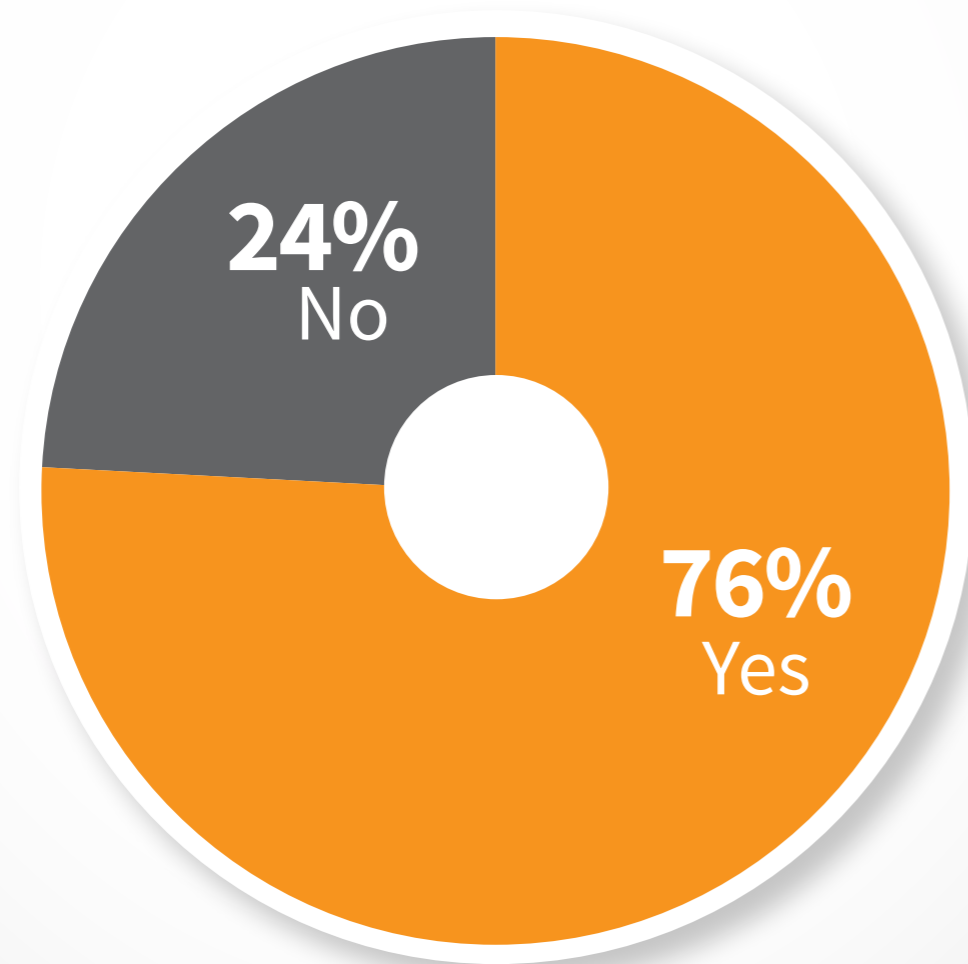
More and more B2C marketers are using infographics (62% this year vs. 45% last year), making this the content marketing tactic with the greatest year-over-year increase. The effectiveness rating for infographics increased as well (42% said infographics were effective last year vs. 63% this year).

B2C marketers are getting better results with Facebook, which is the social media platform they use most often. This year, 66% rated it effective (vs. 58% last year).

There's been a shift in the paid methods that B2C marketers use to promote/distribute content. Over the last year, the use of promoted posts, social ads, and search engine marketing (SEM) overtook print/other offline promotion as the paid method that B2C marketers use most frequently to distribute content.

B2C marketers are putting more budget toward content marketing. This year, they're allocating 32% of their total marketing budget, on average, to content marketing (vs. 25% last year).

## Percentage of B2C Respondents Using Content Marketing



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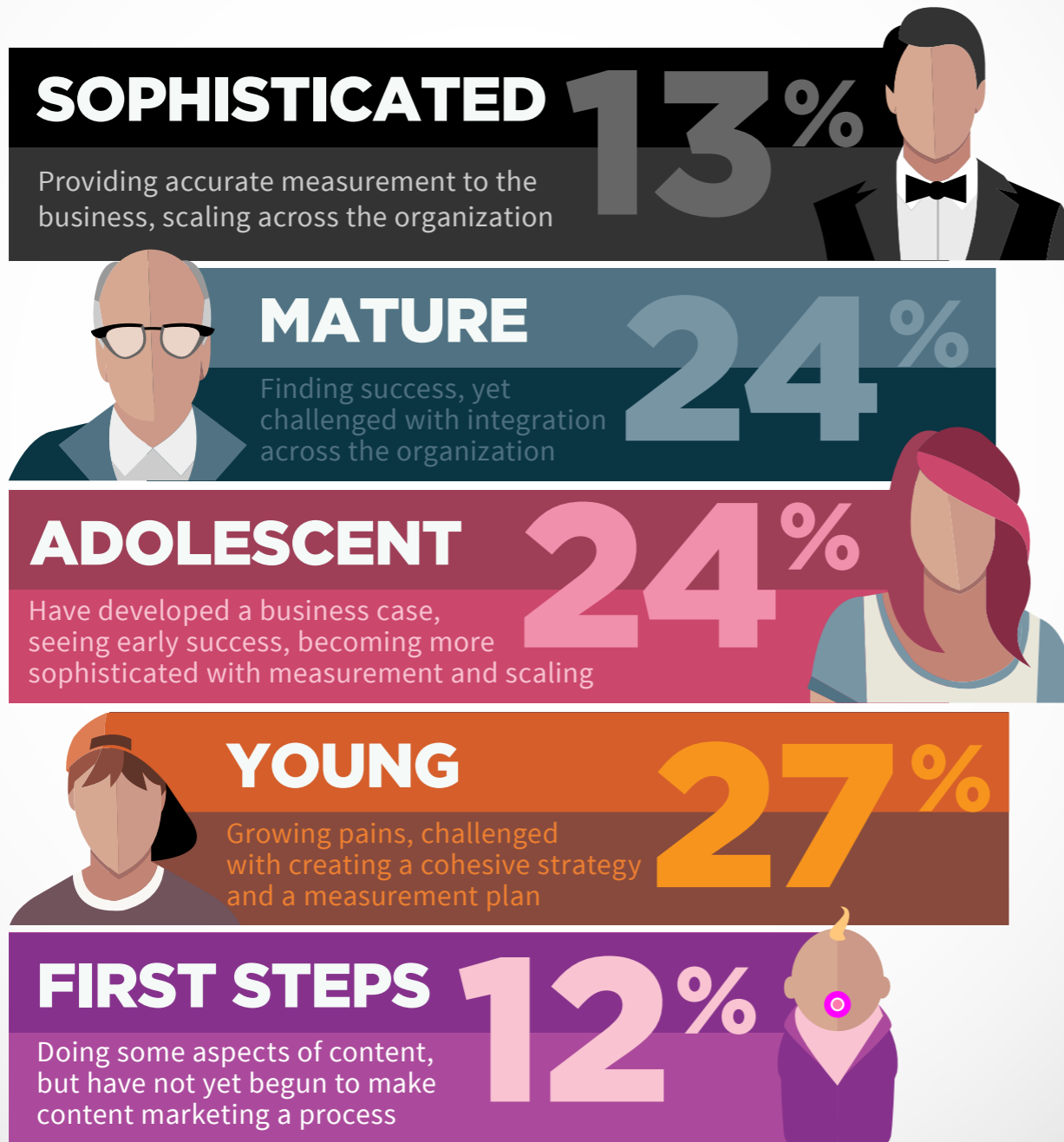
**Does your organization use content marketing?**

**76%** SAY YES

Last year, 77% of respondents said they use content marketing.

Content marketing is defined as “a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience—and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action.”

## How B2C Marketers Assess Their Content Marketing Maturity Level



2016 B2C Content Marketing Trends—North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

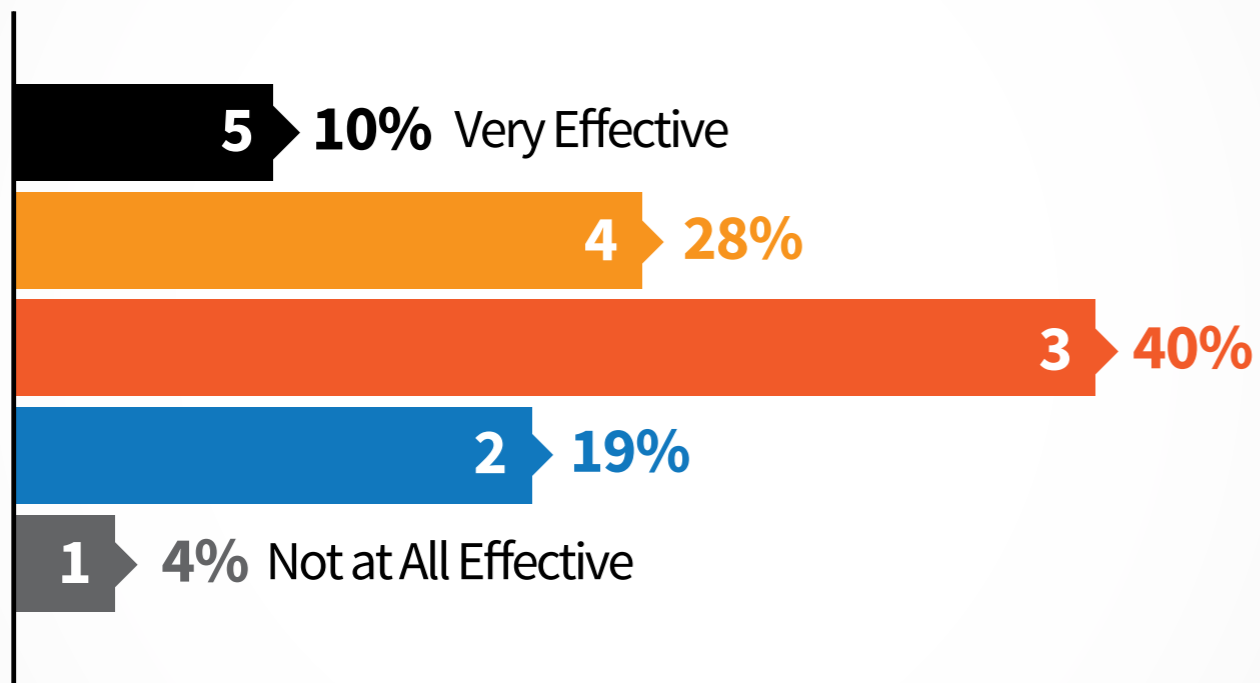
## How would you describe your organization's content marketing maturity level?

**37%** SAY SOPHISTICATED OR MATURE

This was a new question this year. In general, effectiveness levels are greater among marketers with higher levels of content marketing maturity:

- 70% in the sophisticated/mature phase say they are effective at content marketing
- 18% in the adolescent phase say they are effective at content marketing
- 11% in the young/first steps phase say they are effective at content marketing

## How B2C Marketers Rate the Effectiveness of Their Organization's Use of Content Marketing



**Note:** For this survey, we define effectiveness as “accomplishing your overall objectives.” We refer to those who rate their organizations as a 4 or 5 (on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being “Very Effective” and 1 being “Not at All Effective”) as the “most effective” or “best-in-class” marketers. The 1s and 2s are considered the “least effective,” while the 3s are neutral.

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### Overall, how effective is your organization at content marketing?

**38%** SAY THEY ARE EFFECTIVE

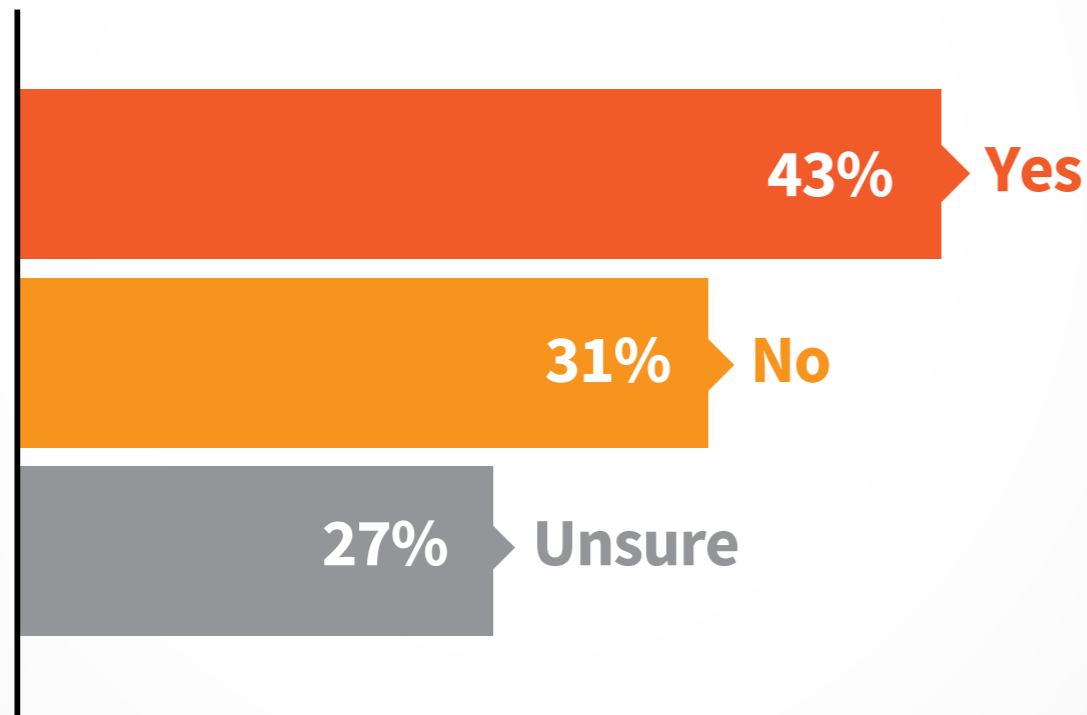
Last year, 37% of B2C marketers said they were effective.

Effectiveness levels increase with:

- Experience (71% of sophisticated/mature marketers say they are effective)
- Organizational clarity on what content marketing success looks like (66%)
- A documented content marketing strategy (58%)
- A documented editorial mission statement (48%)
- Daily or weekly content marketing meetings (44%)



### Percentage of B2C Marketers Whose Organizations Have Clarity on Content Marketing Success



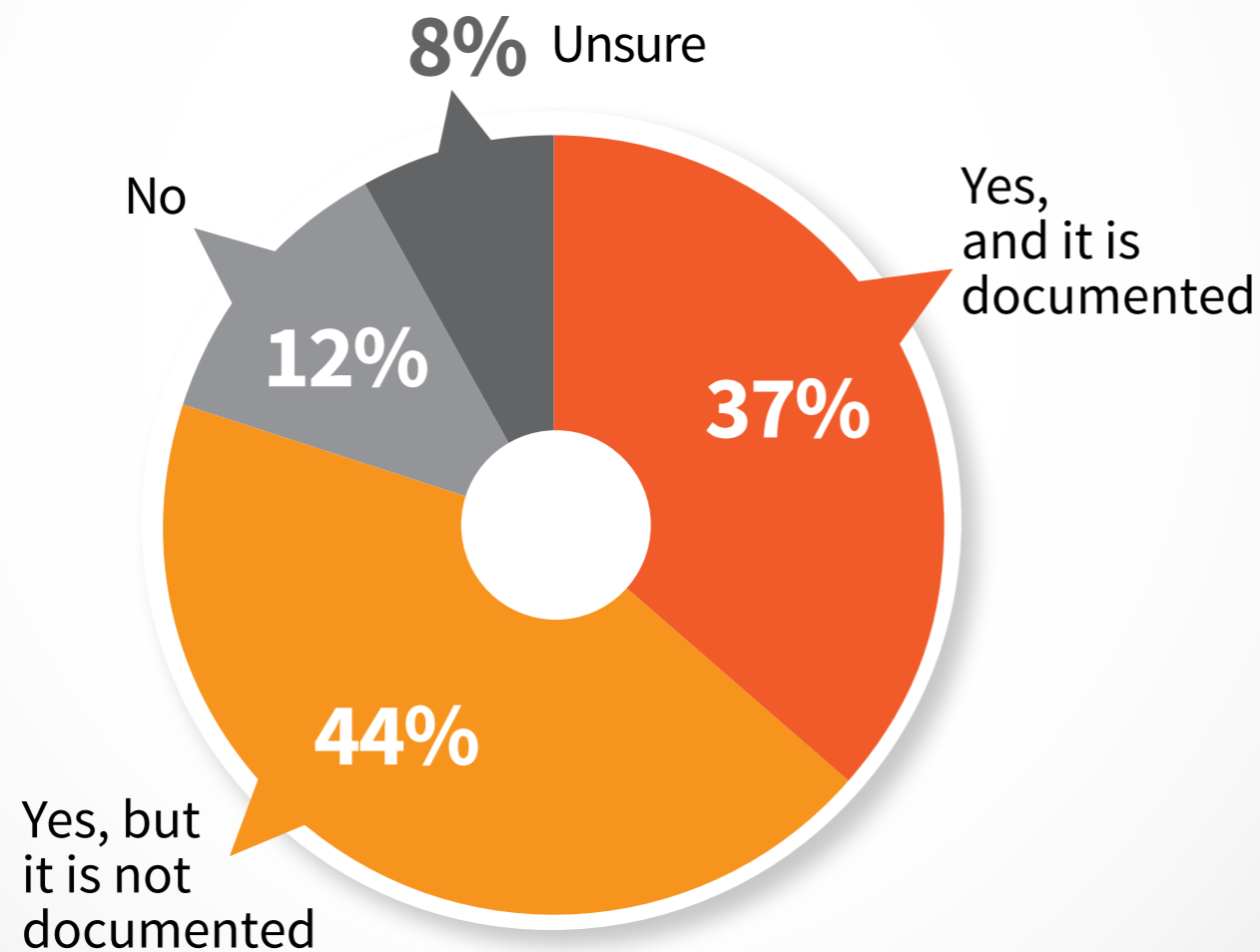
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**In your organization, is it clear what an effective or successful content marketing program looks like?**

**43%** SAY YES

B2C marketers whose organizations have a clear vision of content marketing success are more effective than those that do not (76% of the most effective marketers have clarity).

## Percentage of B2C Marketers Who Have a Content Marketing Strategy



2016 B2C Content Marketing Trends—North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

## Does your organization have a content marketing strategy?

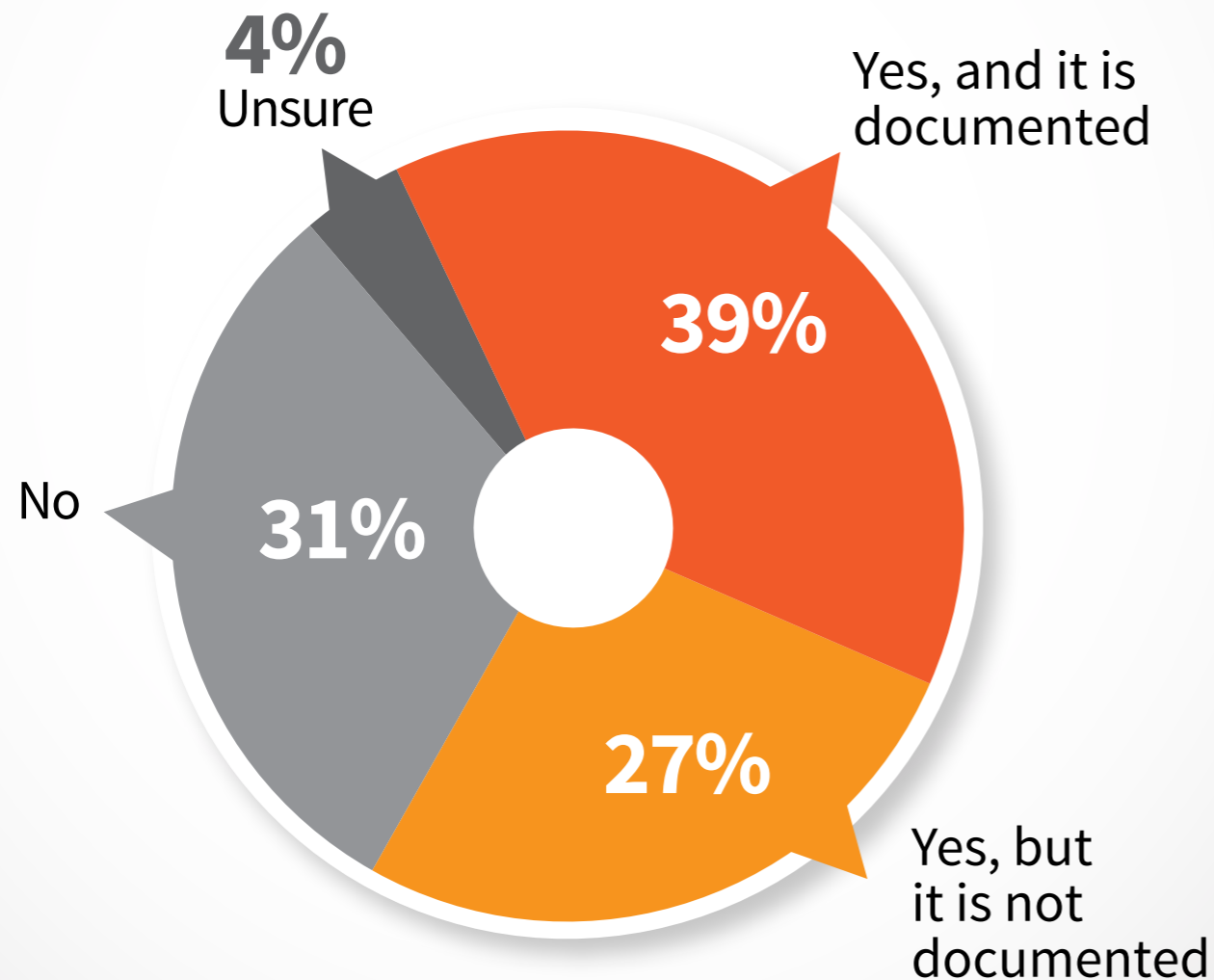
**37%** HAVE A DOCUMENTED CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY

Last year, 27% of B2C marketers had a documented content marketing strategy, 50% had a verbal-only strategy, and 15% had no strategy.

A documented content marketing strategy influences effectiveness (58% of the most effective B2C marketers have a documented content marketing strategy).

In general, compared with B2C marketers who have a verbal-only strategy, B2C marketers who have a documented content marketing strategy get better results with the tactics, social media platforms, and paid advertising methods they use (i.e., they rate them as more effective).

## Percentage of B2C Marketers Who Have an Editorial Mission Statement



2016 B2C Content Marketing Trends—North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

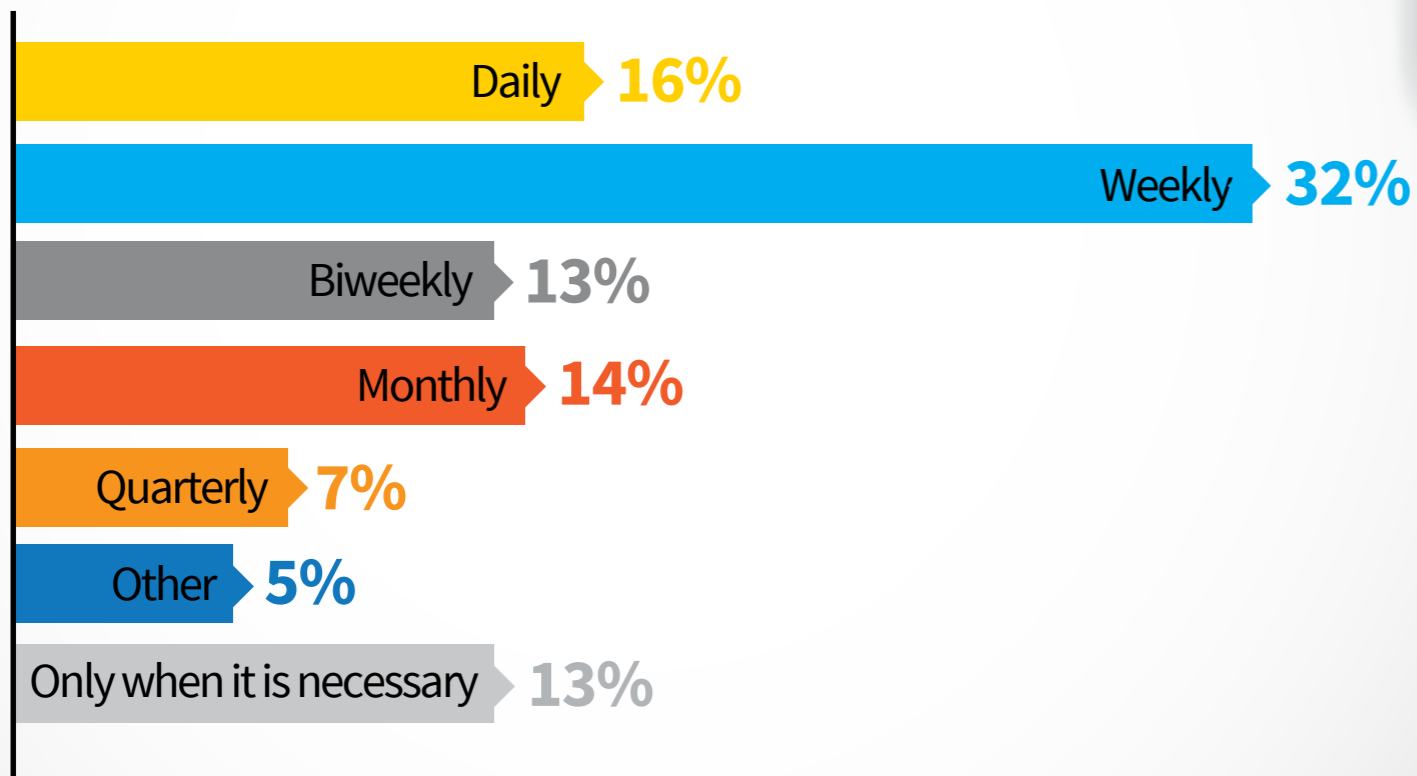
### Does your organization have an editorial mission statement for the primary audience you target?

**39%** HAVE A DOCUMENTED EDITORIAL MISSION STATEMENT

This was a new question this year. The likelihood of having a documented editorial mission statement increases if the B2C marketer also has a documented content marketing strategy (64% of those with a documented content marketing strategy also have a documented editorial mission statement).

In addition, 50% of the most effective B2C marketers have a documented editorial mission statement.

## How Often B2C Marketers Meet to Discuss Their Content Marketing Program



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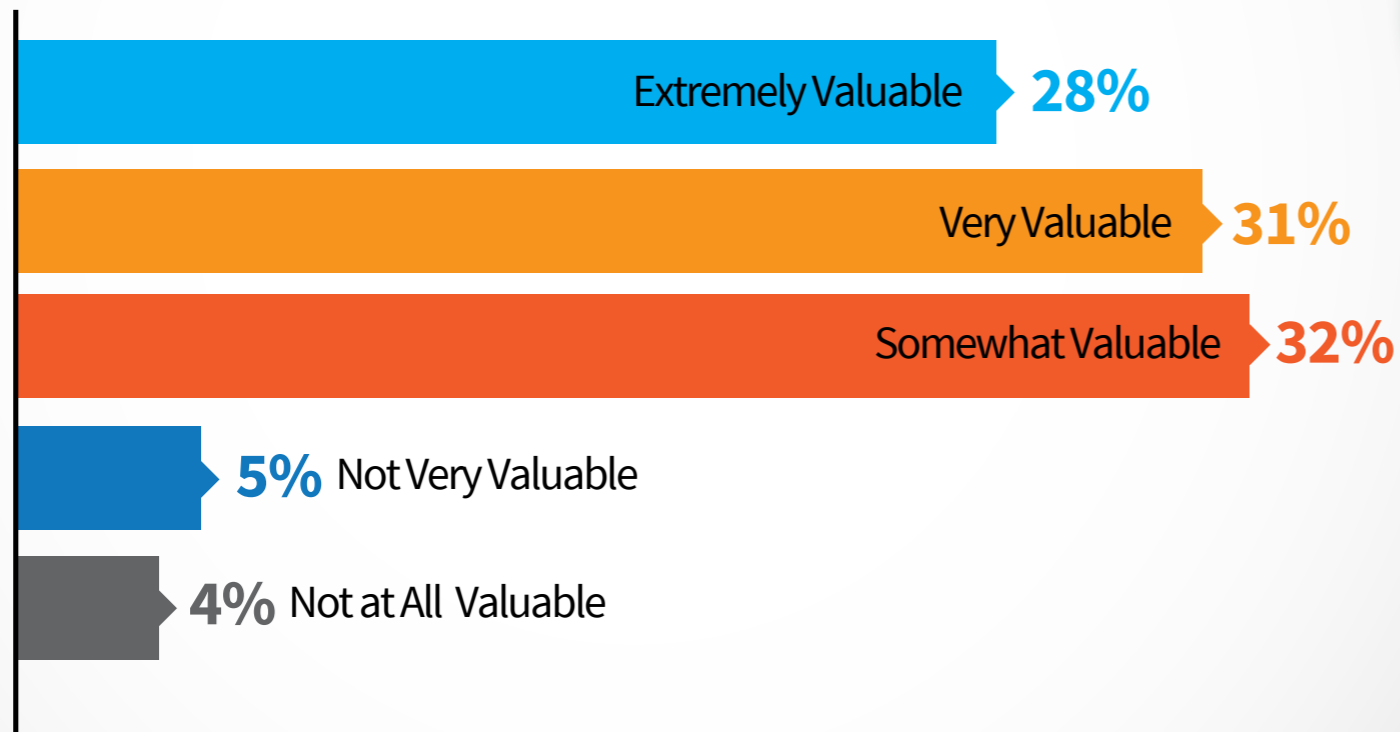
**How often does your team meet (either in person or virtually) to discuss the progress/results of your content marketing program?**

**48%** SAY DAILY OR WEEKLY

Effectiveness is greater among teams that meet more frequently (55% of the most effective B2C marketers meet daily or weekly).



## How B2C Marketers Perceive the Value of Internal Content Marketing Meetings



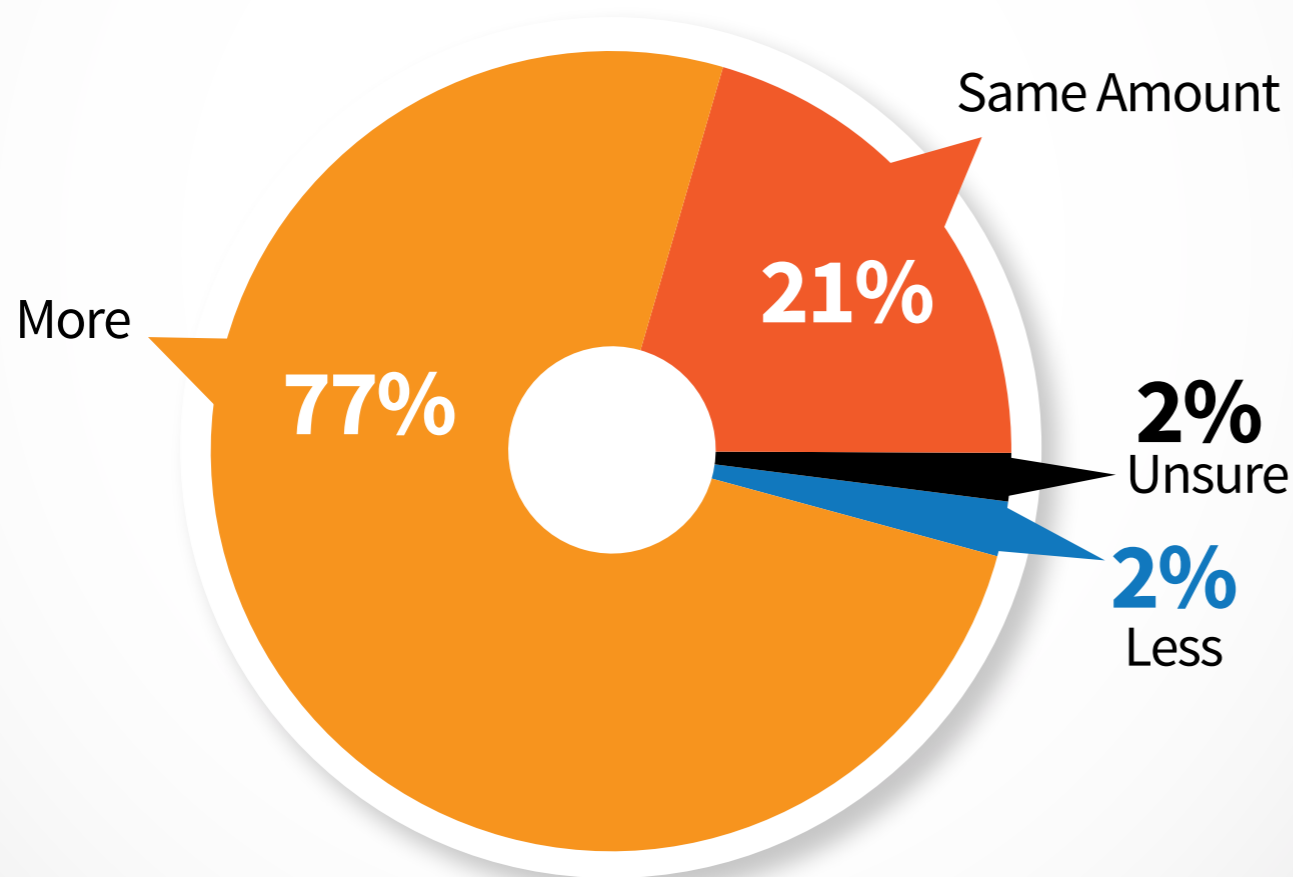
2016 B2C Content Marketing Trends—North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

**How valuable are team meetings in helping your organization to be more effective at content marketing?**

**59%** SAY MEETINGS ARE VALUABLE

B2C marketers who meet daily or weekly are more likely to consider meetings valuable (70%) than those who meet biweekly or monthly (54%).

### Expected Change in B2C Content Creation (2015 vs. 2016)



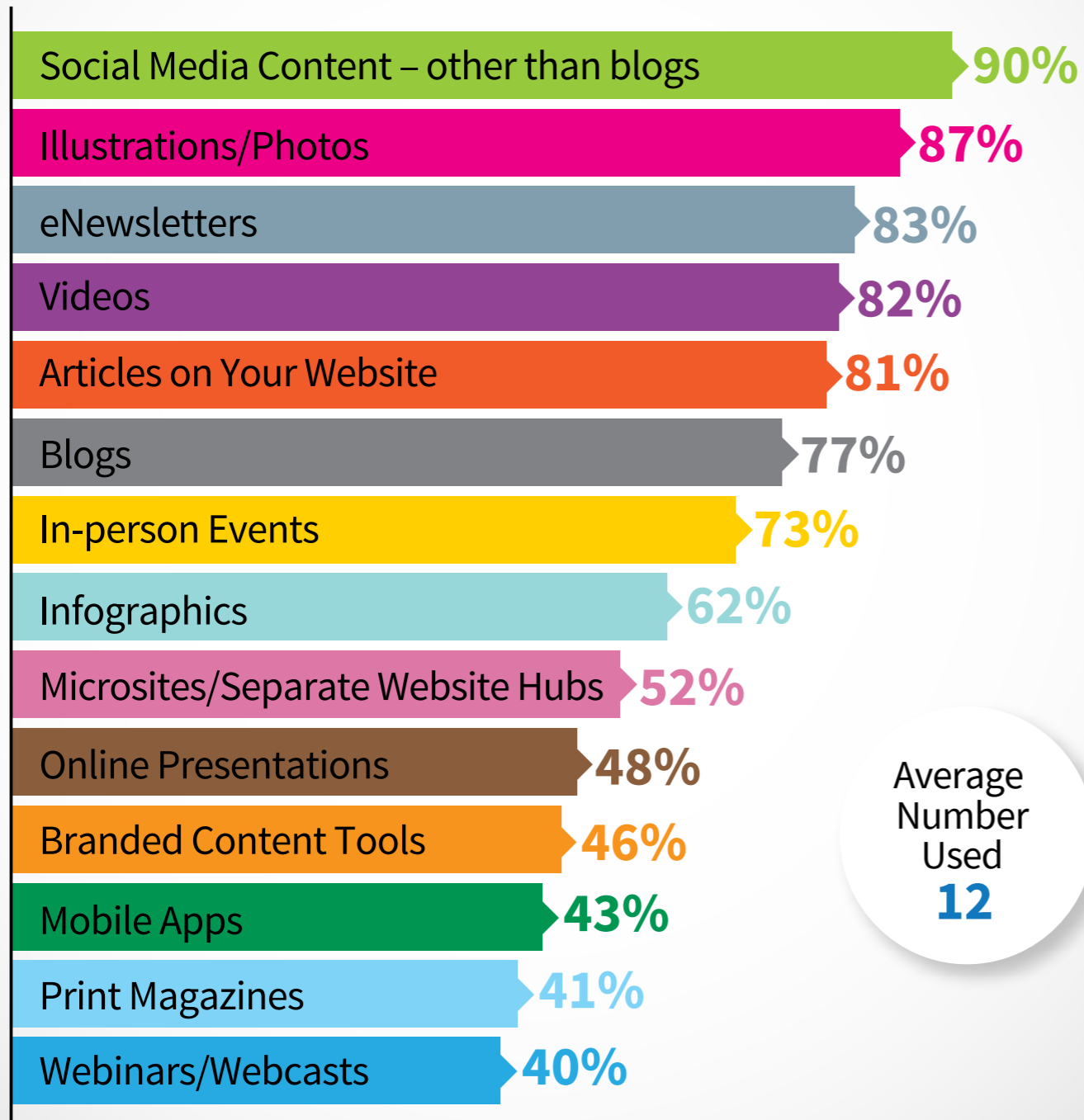
2016 B2C Content Marketing Trends—North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Compared with 2015, how much content will your organization produce in 2016?

**77%** SAY THEY WILL PRODUCE MORE

Approximately 80% of B2C marketers plan to produce more content in 2016 vs. 2015, regardless of their organization's effectiveness, size, documentation of content marketing strategy and editorial mission, clarity around success, or communication frequency.

## B2C Content Marketing Tactic Usage



Average Number Used  
**12**

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## Which content marketing tactics does your organization use?

**90%** USE SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

B2C marketers are using more tactics, on average, than they did last year (12 vs. 11).

Social media content (other than blogs) remains the most often used tactic (93% last year vs. 90% this year).

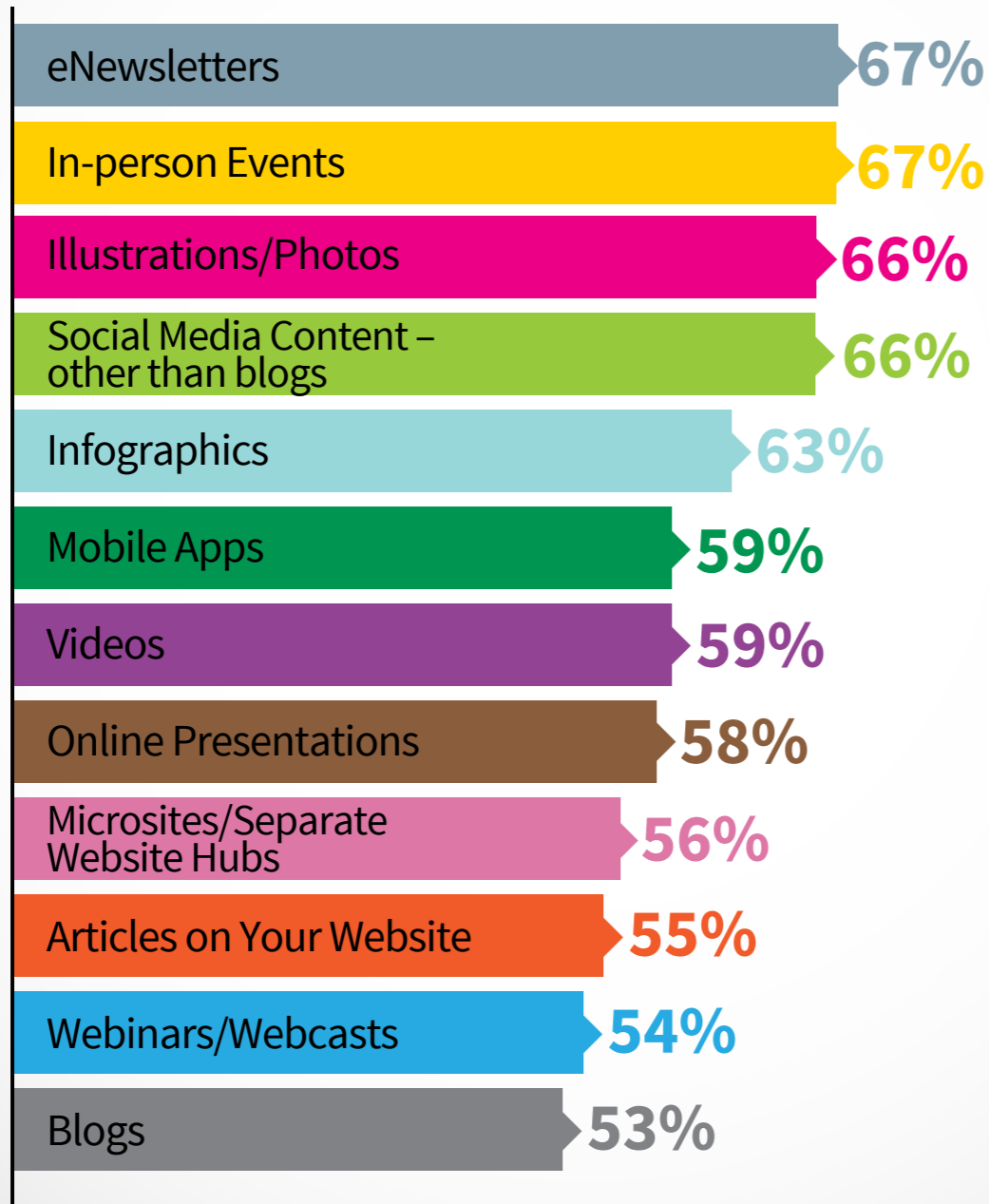
The use of the following tactics increased most:

- Infographics (45% last year vs. 62% this year)
- Illustrations/photos (75% last year vs. 87% this year)
- Online presentations (36% last year vs. 48% this year)

Other than the 3% decrease in the use of social media content, along with a slight decrease for branded content tools and podcasts (-1% for both), the use of all other tactics increased.

**Note:** Fewer than 40% of B2C marketers said they use the following tactics: Case Studies (38%), Research Reports (36%), Print Newsletters (35%), White Papers (32%), Digital Magazines (31%), Books (31%), eBooks (30%), Virtual Conferences (26%), Games/Gamification (22%), and Podcasts (21%).

## Effectiveness Ratings for B2C Tactics



2016 B2C Content Marketing Trends—North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

## How effective are the tactics your organization uses?

**67%** SAY eNEWSLETTERS AND IN-PERSON EVENTS ARE EFFECTIVE

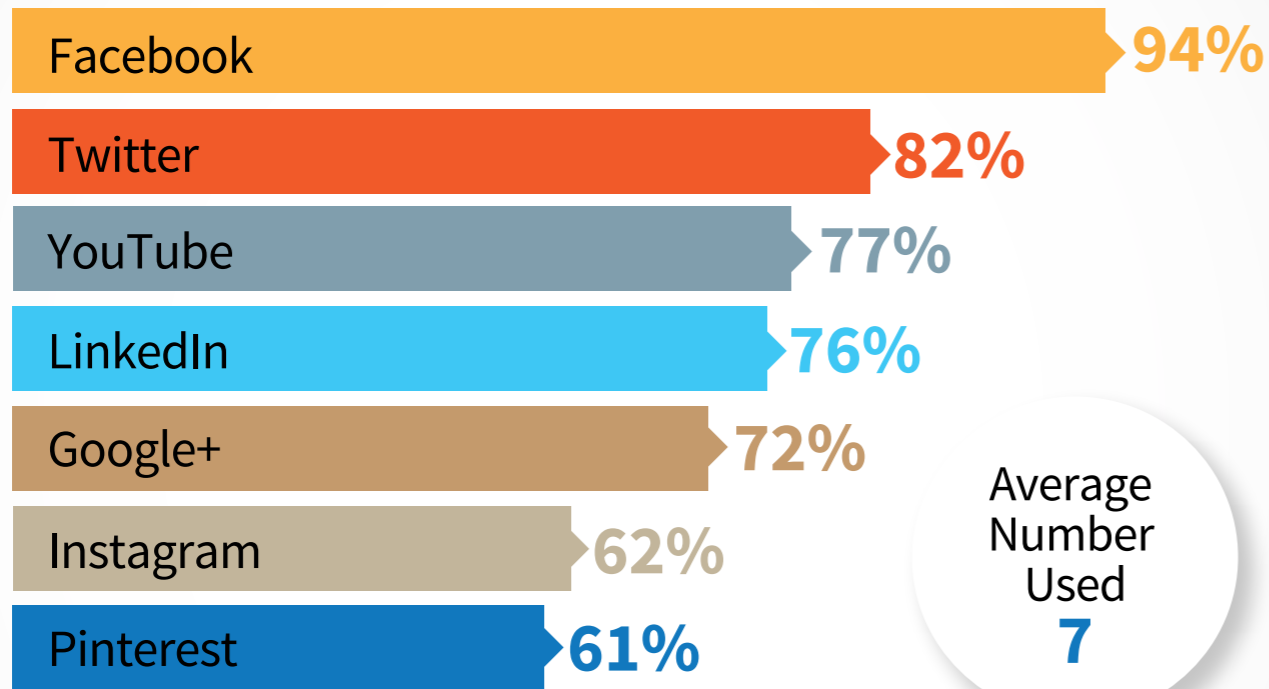
Like last year, eNewsletters, in-person events, and illustrations/photos were rated the most effective tactics.

Effectiveness ratings increased for all tactics shown here, except for blogs (54% last year vs. 53% this year).

The greatest effectiveness rating increase was for infographics, up 21 percentage points (42% last year vs. 63% this year).



## B2C Content Marketing Social Media Platform Usage



**Note:** Fewer than 30% of B2C marketers said they use the following social media platforms: Vimeo (25%), Tumblr (20%), SlideShare (20%), iTunes (18%), Vine (15%), Snapchat (13%), Periscope (11%), and Medium (9%).

2016 B2C Content Marketing Trends—North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

## Which social media platforms does your organization use to distribute content?

94% USE FACEBOOK

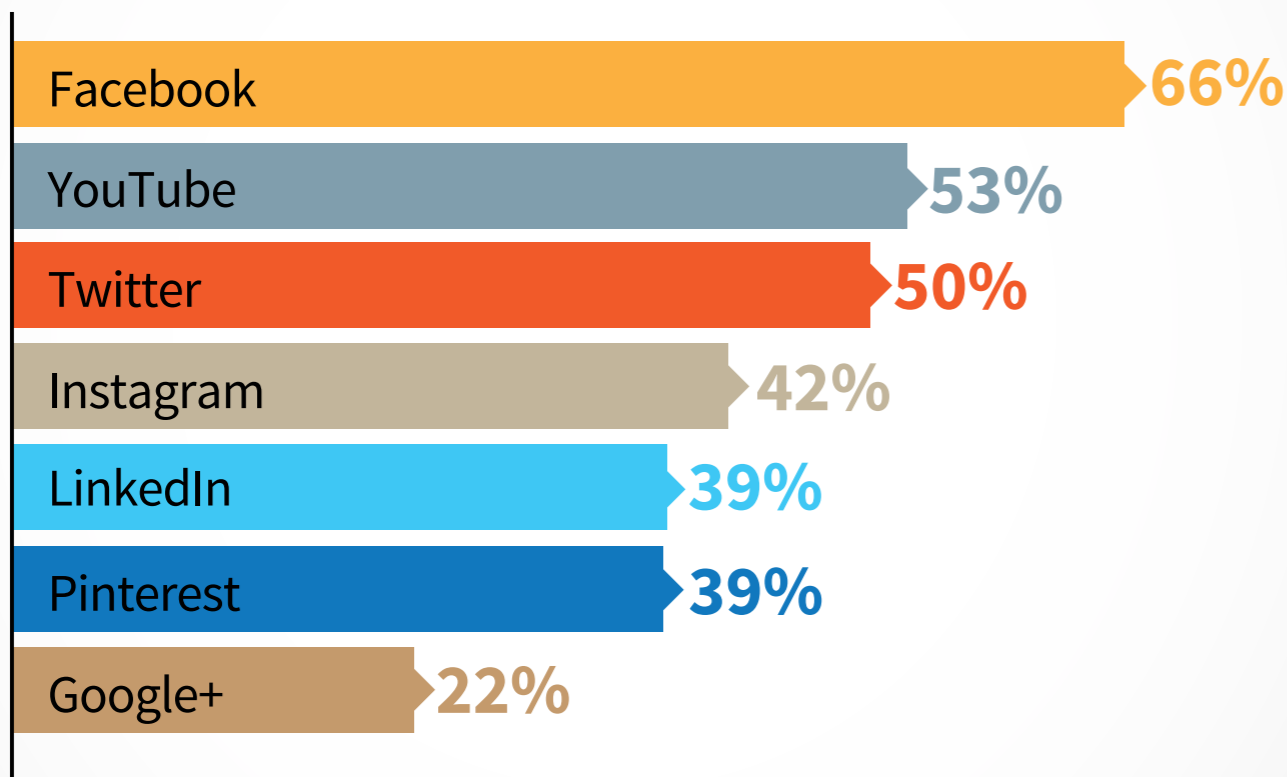
Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube remain the platforms used most often. There have been no major increases or decreases in their use since last year.

Regarding other leading platforms:

- LinkedIn use increased from 71% to 76%
- Google+ use increased from 68% to 72%
- Pinterest use increased from 59% to 61%

The biggest increase in use was with Instagram, up 13 percentage points (49% last year vs. 62% this year).

## Effectiveness Ratings for B2C Social Media Platforms



2016 B2C Content Marketing Trends—North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

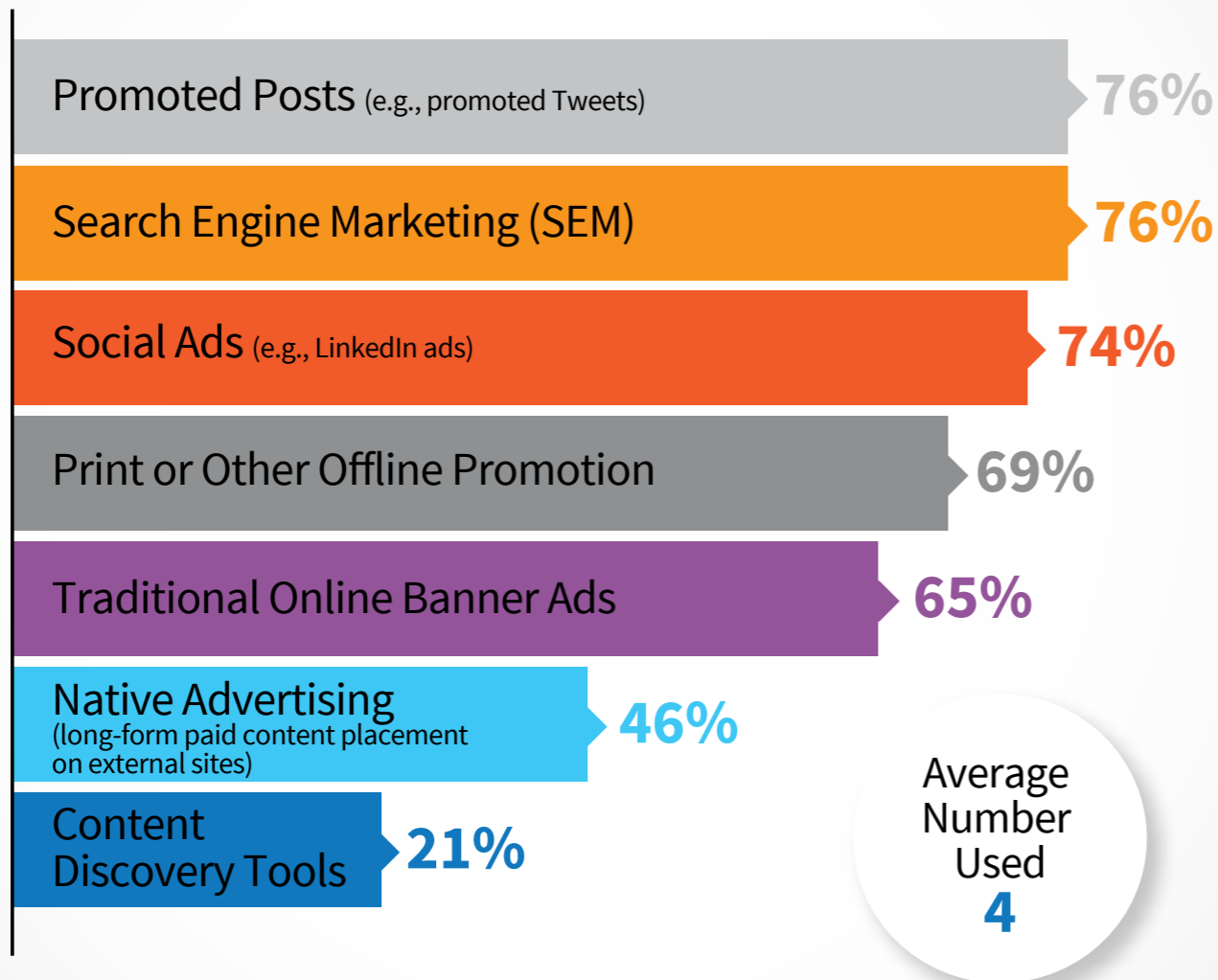
How effective are the social media platforms your organization uses?

**66%** SAY FACEBOOK IS EFFECTIVE

As they did last year, B2C marketers rated Facebook the most effective platform. This year, its effectiveness-rating increase was the most of any other platform's (58% last year vs. 66% this year).

The effectiveness of the remaining leading platforms fluctuated only slightly (either up or down).

### B2C Paid Advertising Usage



2016 B2C Content Marketing Trends—North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

## Which paid advertising methods does your organization use to promote/distribute content?

**76%** USE PROMOTED POSTS AND SEM

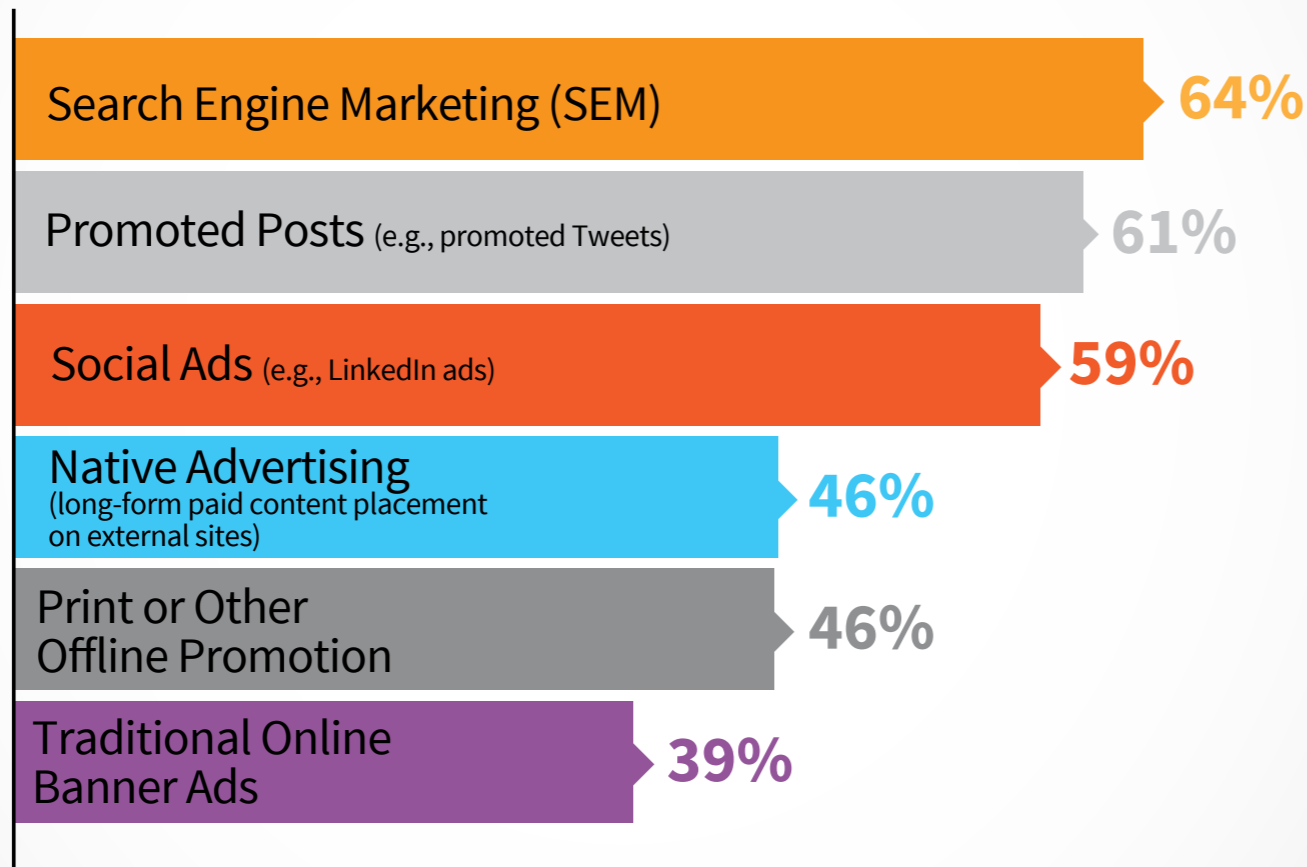
The greatest effectiveness rating increase was for promoted posts, up 17 percentage points (59% last year vs. 76% this year).

The next largest increases were for:

- Social ads (60% last year vs. 74% this year)
- SEM (63% last year vs. 76% this year)

Use of other methods increased as well, except for print/other offline promotion, which decreased slightly (minus two percentage points). Last year, print/other offline promotion was the top method (at 71%).

## Effectiveness Ratings for B2C Paid Advertising Methods



2016 B2C Content Marketing Trends—North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

**How effective are the paid advertising methods your organization uses to promote/distribute content?**

**64%** SAY SEM IS EFFECTIVE

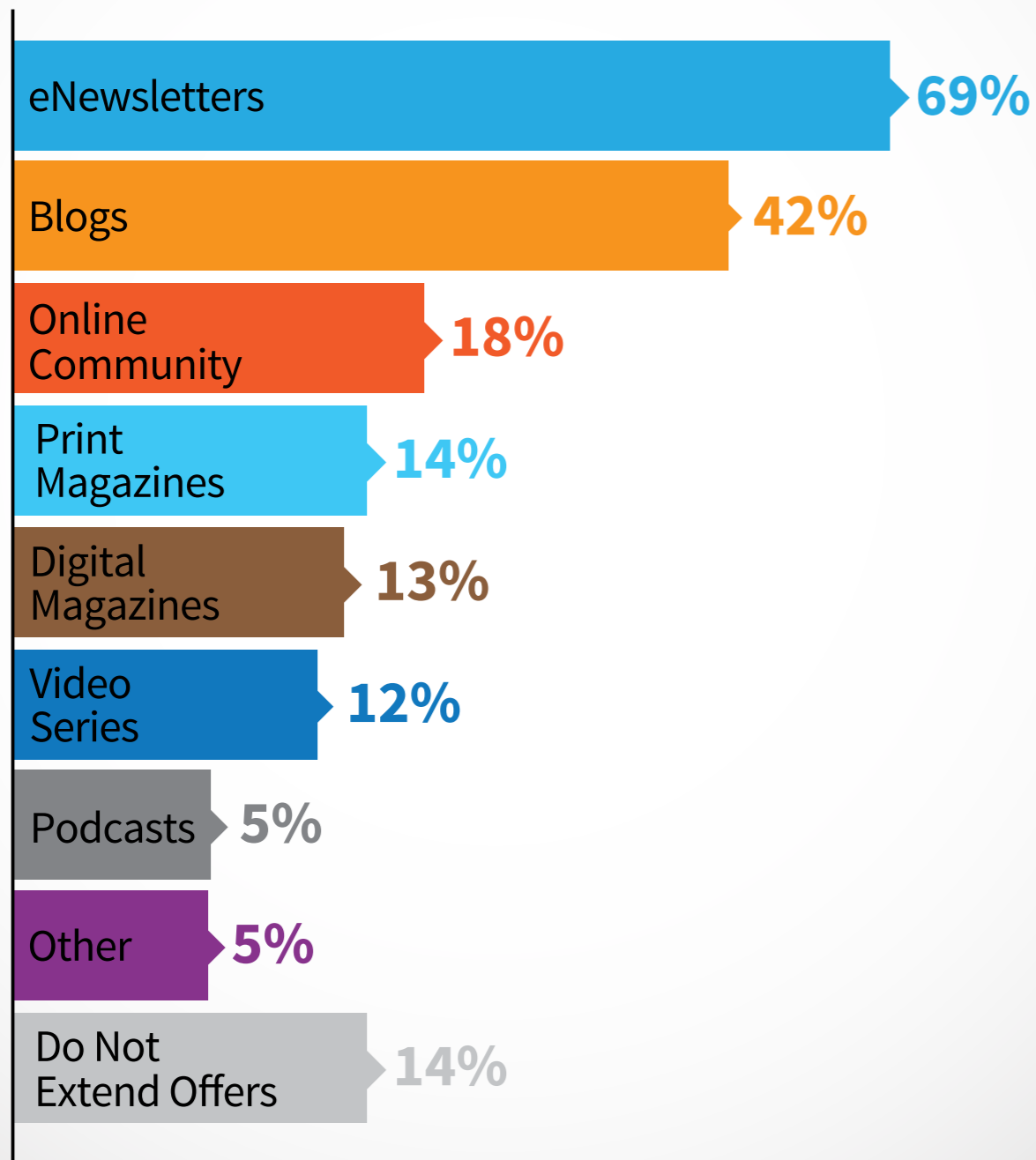
As they did last year, B2C marketers say search engine marketing (SEM) is the most effective paid method for promoting/distributing content.

The effectiveness rating of each paid method has increased over the past year, except for that of print/other offline promotion, which stayed the same.

The greatest effectiveness rating increase was for promoted posts (47% last year vs. 61% this year).



## Content Offers B2C Marketers Ask Audience to Subscribe to



2016 B2C Content Marketing Trends—North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

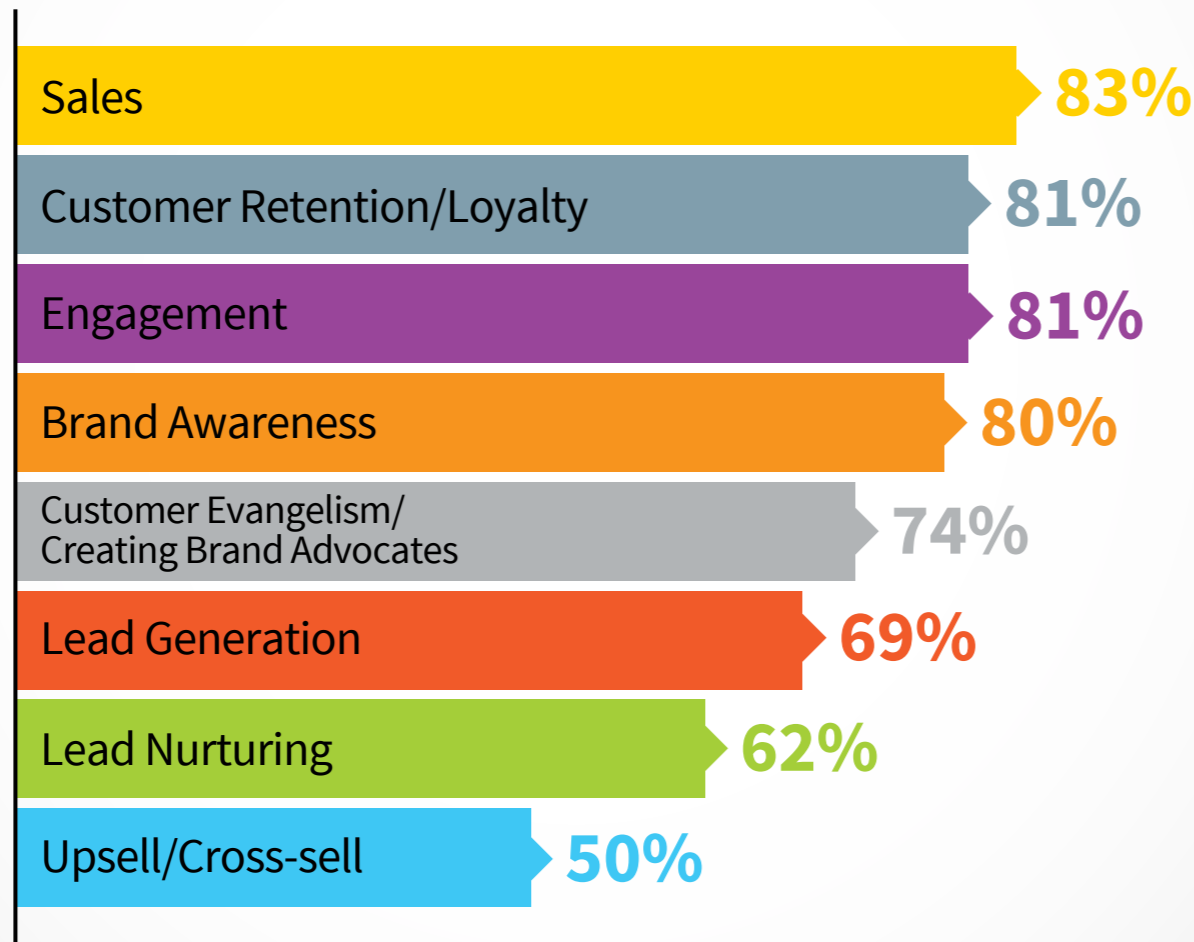
Which content offers does your organization ask its audience to subscribe to?

**69%** SAY eNEWSLETTERS

This was a new question on the survey. Fully 85% of respondents extend at least one offer.

Most B2C marketers, regardless of effectiveness, company size, or other factors, focus mainly on eNewsletters and blogs.

## Organizational Goals for B2C Content Marketing



**Note:** Percentages comprise marketers who rated each goal a 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale where 5 = “Very Important” and 1 = “Not at All Important.”

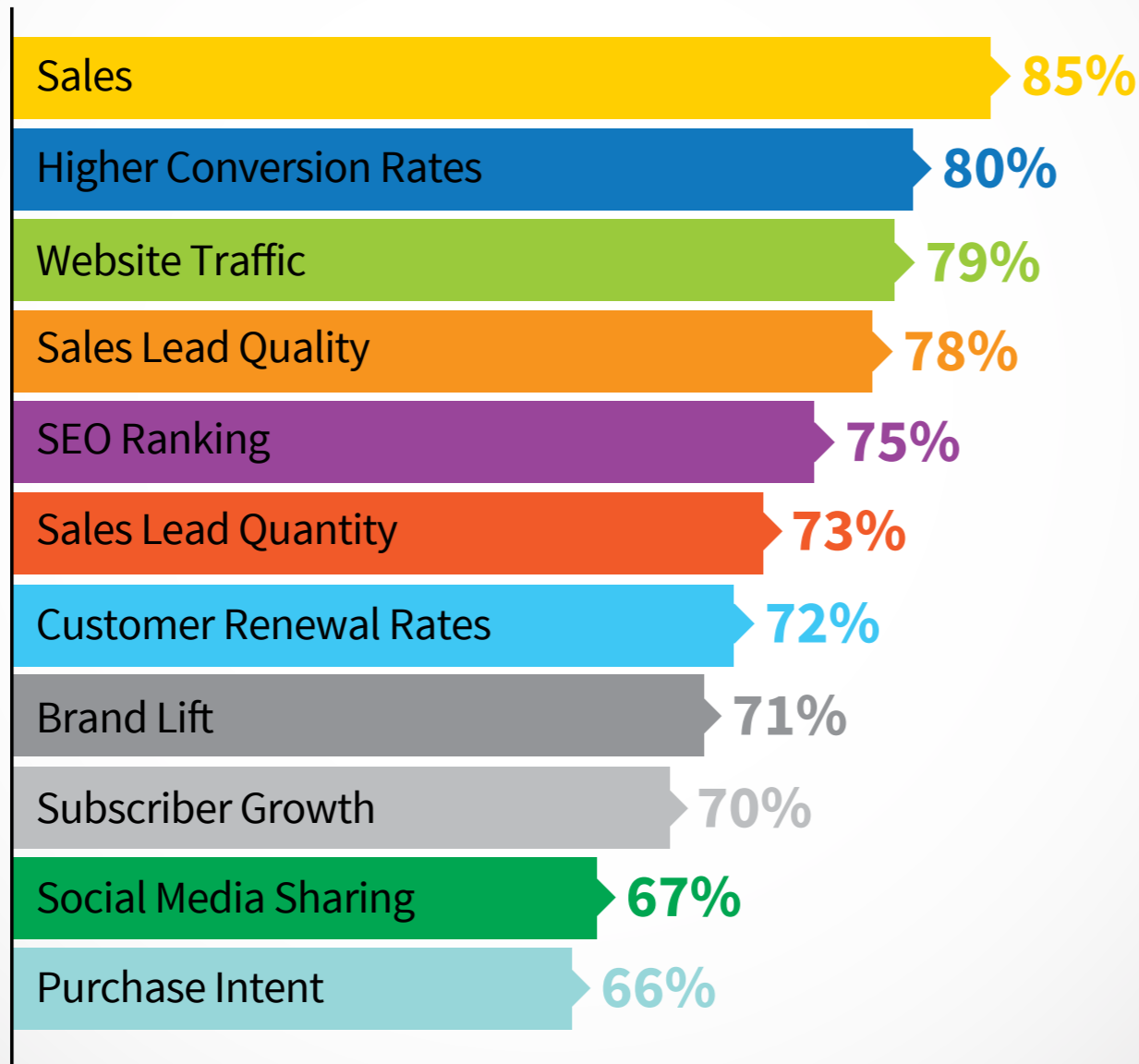
2016 B2C Content Marketing Trends—North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

How important will each of these content marketing goals be to your organization in the next 12 months?

**83%** SAY SALES IS AN IMPORTANT GOAL

Although many B2C marketers are focused on sales, the most effective among them place more importance on brand awareness (91%), followed by customer retention/loyalty (86%), engagement (86%), and sales (82%).

## Metrics That B2C Content Marketers Use



2016 B2C Content Marketing Trends—North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

## How important are the metrics that your organization uses?

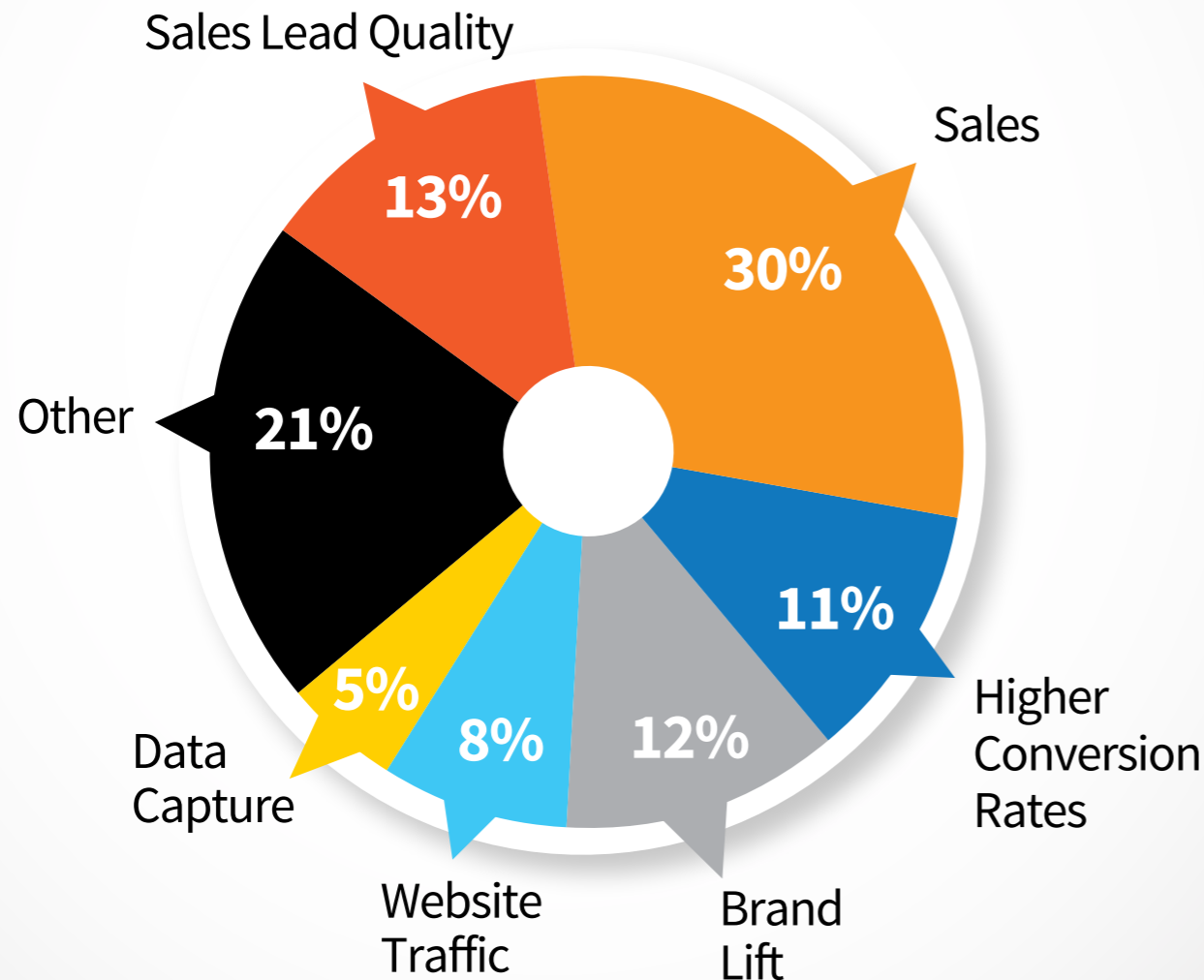
### SALES TOPS THE LIST

The most effective B2C marketers rate website traffic (86%) as more important than sales (84%). They also view customer renewal rates as more important than do their B2C peers overall (84% vs. 72%).

**Note:** Percentages comprise marketers who rated each goal a 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale where 5 = “Very Important” and 1 = “Not at All Important.”

**Note:** Additional metrics rated as important were Qualitative Feedback from Customers (63%), Data Capture (60%), Time Spent on Website (60%), Cost Savings (56%), and Inbound Links (56%).

## The Most Important Metric B2C Content Marketers Use



2016 B2C Content Marketing Trends—North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

**What is THE MOST important metric that your organization uses?**

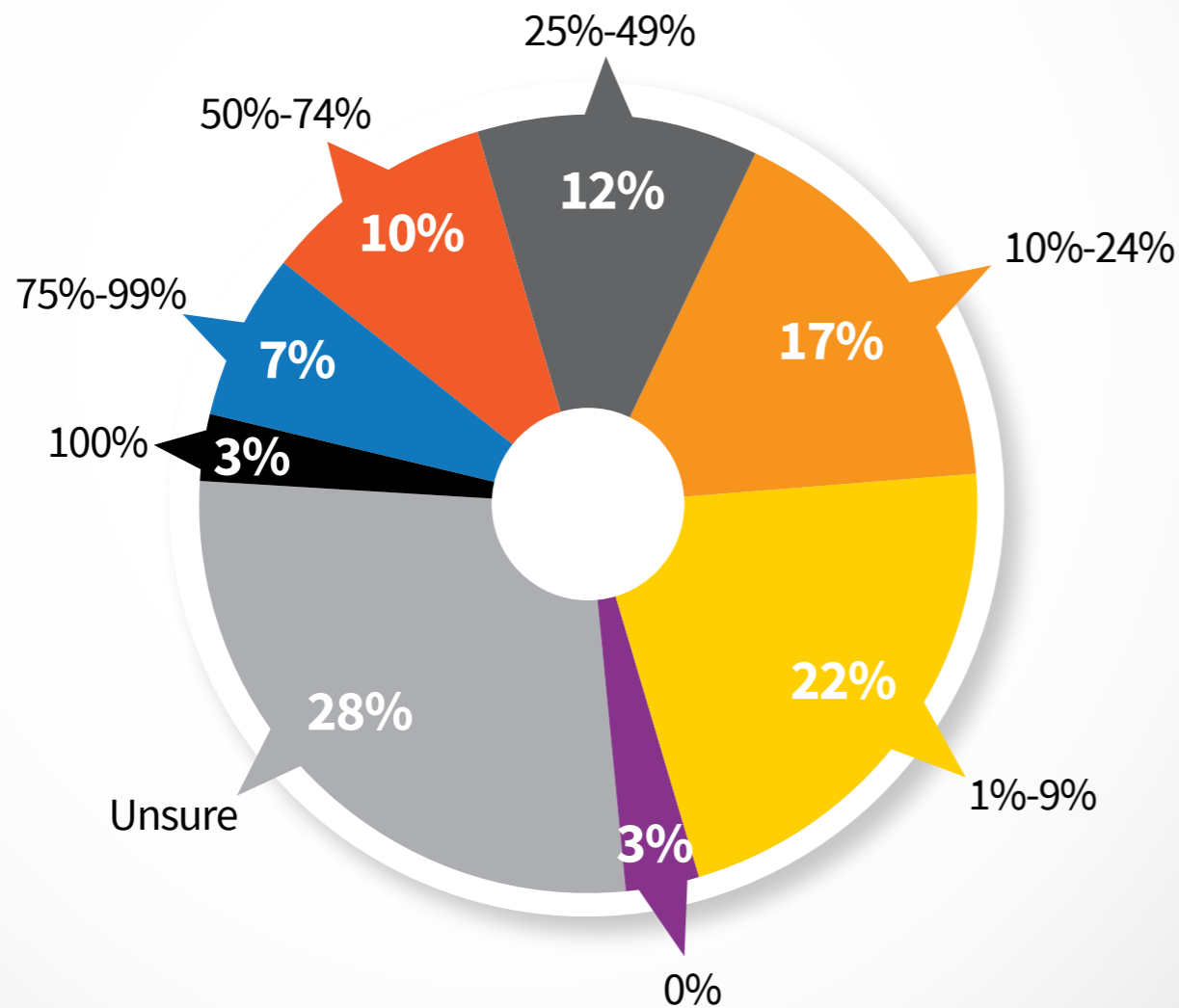
**30%** SAY SALES

When presented with the same list of metrics shown on p. 23 of this report—and asked, “which is the most important metric your organization uses”—30% of B2C marketers said sales.

The most effective B2C marketers, however, were more equally divided on their top two important metrics: 19% cited sales and 19% cited sales lead quality.



## Percentage of Total Marketing Budget Spent on B2C Content Marketing



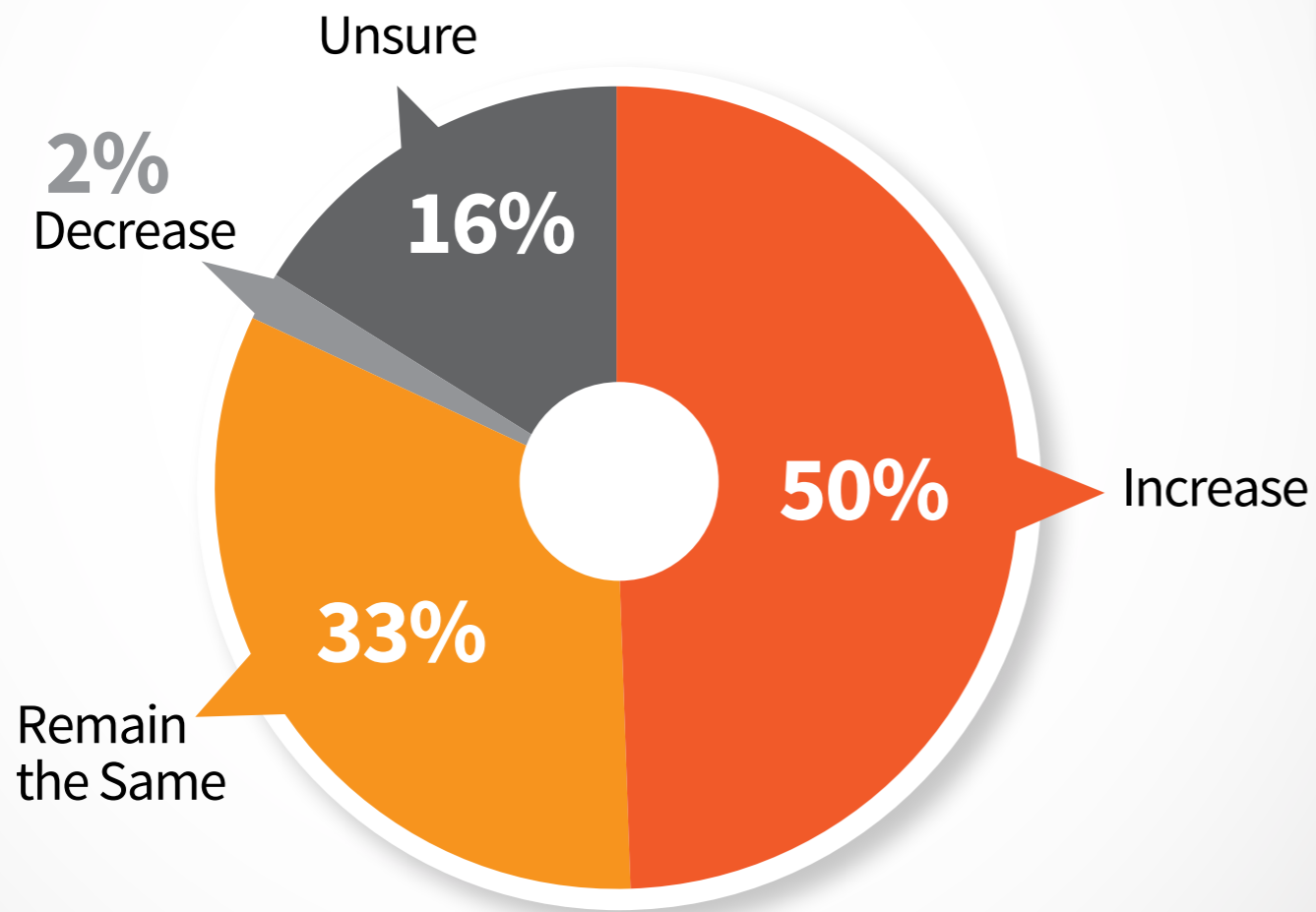
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**Approximately what percentage of your organization's total marketing budget (not including staff) is spent on content marketing?**

**32%** IS THE AVERAGE

B2C marketers are allocating a higher average proportion of total marketing budget to content marketing this year (32% vs. 25% last year). The most effective allocate even more (38%, up from 29% last year).

## B2C Content Marketing Spending (Over Next 12 Months)



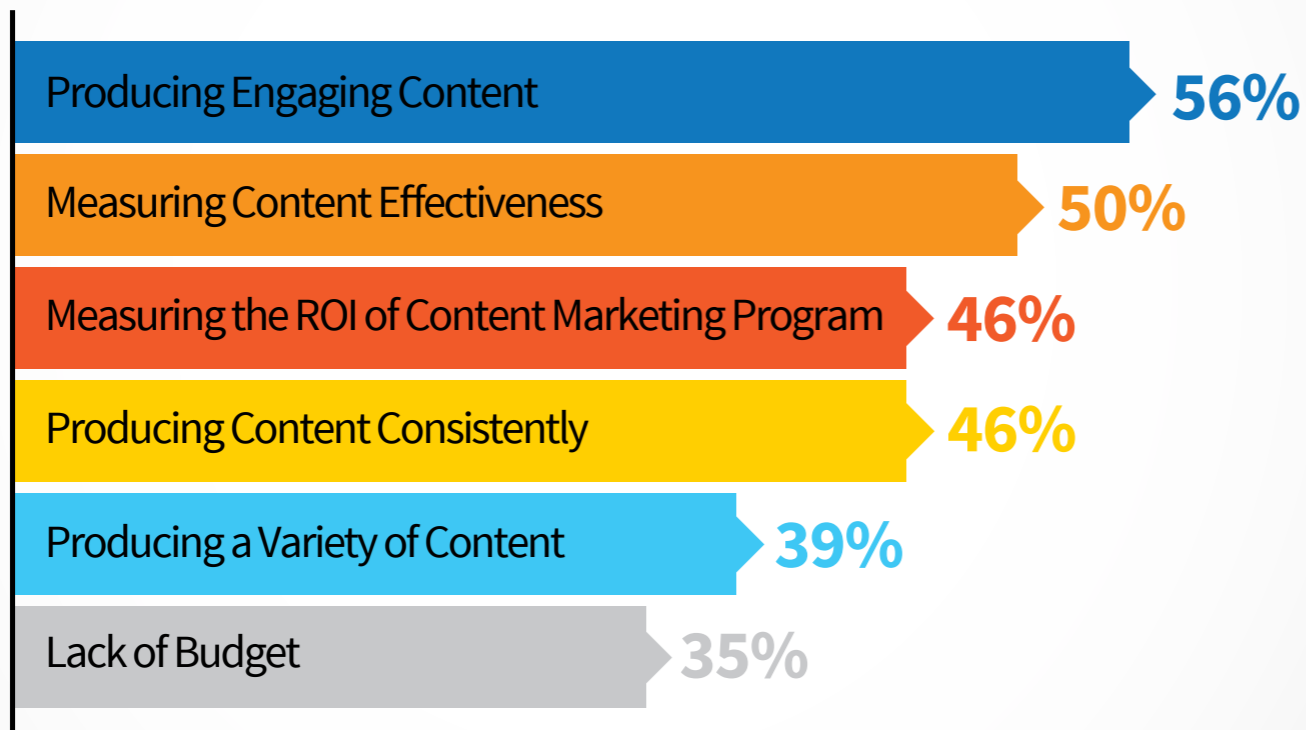
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**How do you expect  
your organization's content  
marketing budget to change  
in the next 12 months?**

**50%** SAY THEY WILL  
INCREASE SPENDING

The largest B2C organizations (1,000+ employees) are more likely to increase their content marketing budget over the next 12 months (60%).

## Top Challenges for B2C Content Marketers



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## What are your organization's top five content marketing challenges this year?

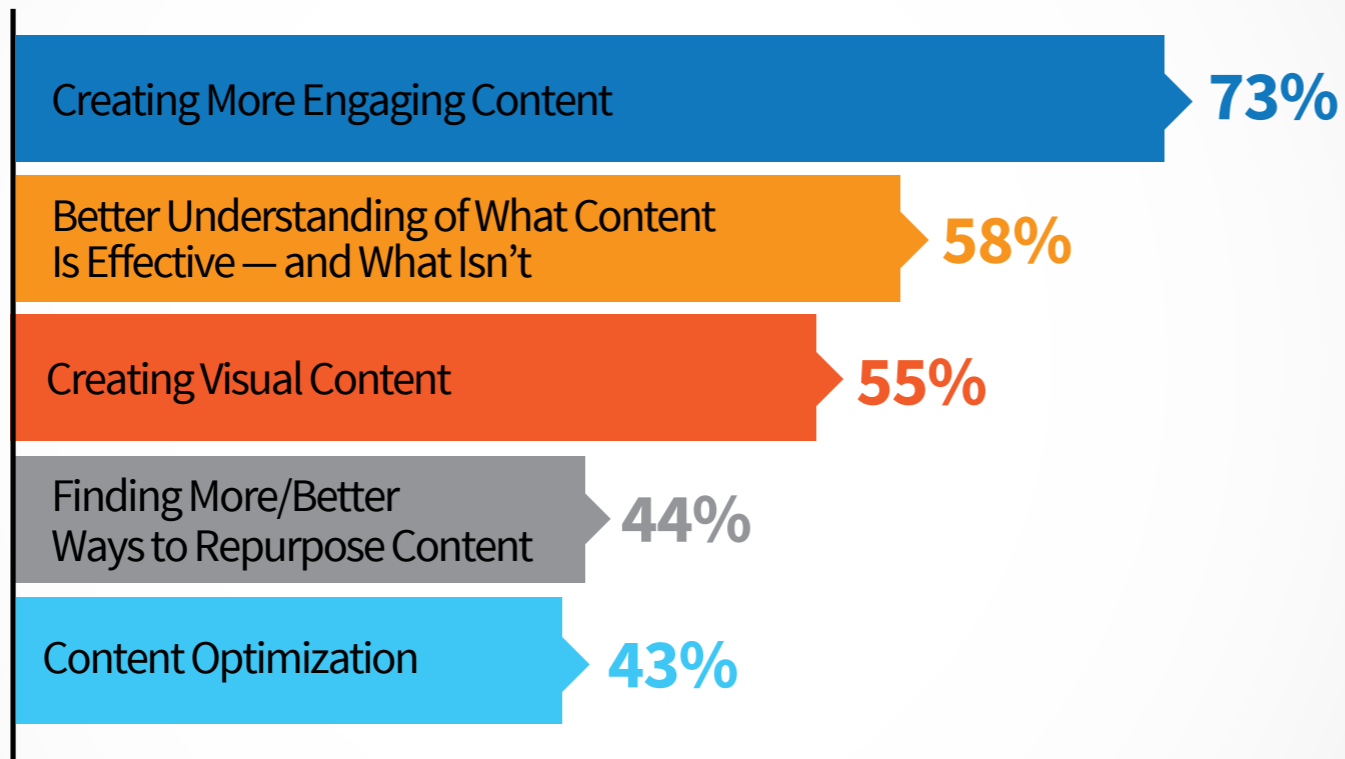
**56%** SAY PRODUCING ENGAGING CONTENT

This year, we asked B2C marketers to select their top five challenges from a list that also included:

- Understanding/choosing technology that we need (31%)
- Implementing the technology that we already have in place (24%)
- Lack of buy-in/vision from higher-ups (23%)
- Lack of integration across marketing (22%)
- Gaps in knowledge and skills of internal team (21%)
- Finding or training skilled content marketing professionals/content creators (18%)
- Other (6%)
- No challenges (1%)

B2C marketers' challenges are similar to those faced by B2B marketers; however, B2C marketers are more challenged with understanding/choosing technology (31% B2C vs. 24% B2B) and implementing the technology they currently have in place (24% B2C vs. 18% B2B).

### Top Priorities for B2C Content Creators



2016 B2C Content Marketing Trends—North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

## What are the top five priorities that your organization's content creators will focus on this year?

This year, we asked B2C marketers to select their top five priorities for internal content creators from a list that also included:

- Better understanding of audience (38%)
- Becoming better storytellers (37%)
- Content personalization (29%)
- Becoming stronger writers (20%)
- Content curation (20%)
- Other (2%)
- No priorities this year (2%)

Creating more engaging content was also the top priority last year, no matter how effective the marketer or what size the company.

B2C marketers' priorities are similar to those of B2B marketers. The biggest gap is in finding more/better ways to repurpose content (44% of B2C marketers said it was a priority vs. 57% of B2B marketers).



## COMPARISON CHART

# Profile of a Best-in-Class B2C Content Marketer

	Most Effective	Average/Overall
Organization is clear on what an effective or successful content marketing program looks like	76%	43%
Describes organization as sophisticated/mature	70%	37%
Meets daily or weekly to discuss content marketing program	55%	48%
Finds meetings extremely or very valuable	77%	59%
Has a documented content marketing strategy	58%	37%
Has a documented editorial mission statement	50%	39%
Average number of tactics used	15	12
Average number of social media platforms used	8	7
Average number of paid advertising methods used	5	4
Percentage of total marketing budget allocated to content marketing	38%	32%
Plans to increase content marketing budget in next 12 months	55%	50%

**Chart term definitions:** A “best-in-class” content marketer (aka “most effective”) is one who rates his or her organization a 4 or 5 in effectiveness on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being “Very Effective” and 1 being “Not at All Effective.” Those who rate their organization a 1 or 2 are “least effective.” The numbers under “average/overall” represent total respondents.

2016 B2C Content Marketing Trends—North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

## COMPARISON CHART

# Differences Between B2C and B2B Content Marketers

	B2C	B2B
Uses content marketing	76%	88%
Considers organization effective at content marketing	38%	30%
Organization is clear on what an effective or successful content marketing program looks like	43%	44%
Describes organization as sophisticated/mature	37%	32%
Meets daily or weekly to discuss content marketing program	48%	44%
Finds meetings extremely or very valuable	59%	54%
Has a documented content marketing strategy	37%	32%
Has a documented editorial mission statement	39%	28%
Average number of tactics used	12	13
Average number of social media platforms used	7	6
Average number of paid advertising methods used	4	3
Percentage of total marketing budget allocated to content marketing	32%	28%
Plans to increase content marketing budget in next 12 months	50%	51%

2016 B2B Content Marketing Trends—North America: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

## DEMOGRAPHICS

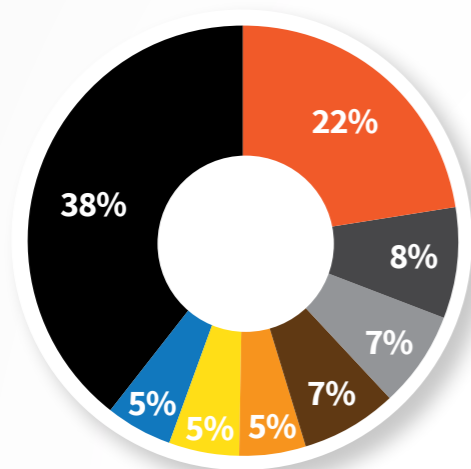
*B2C Content Marketing 2016: Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends—North America* was produced by **Content Marketing Institute** and **MarketingProfs** and sponsored by **TrackMaven**.

The sixth annual content marketing survey, from which the results of this report were generated, was mailed electronically to a sample of marketers using lists from Content Marketing Institute, MarketingProfs, the Business Marketing Association (BMA), Blackbaud, The Association for Data-driven Marketing & Advertising (ADMA), *Industry Week*, *New Equipment Digest*, and WTWH Media.

A total of 3,714 recipients from around the globe—representing a full range of industries, functional areas, and company sizes—completed the survey during July and August 2015. This report presents the findings from the 263 respondents who said they were B2C marketers in North America (200 of whom said “yes, our organization uses content marketing”).

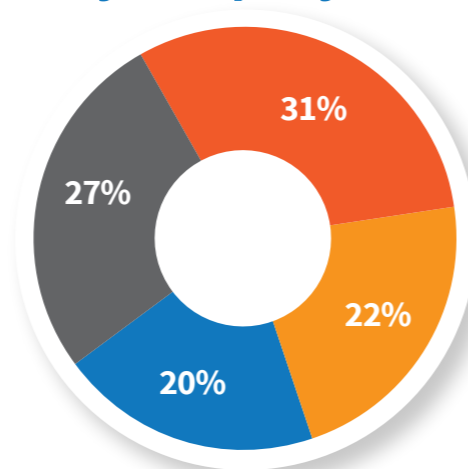
The B2B percentages shown in this report derive from the same research study. The full findings for B2B North America are available in a separate report.

### B2C Industry Classification



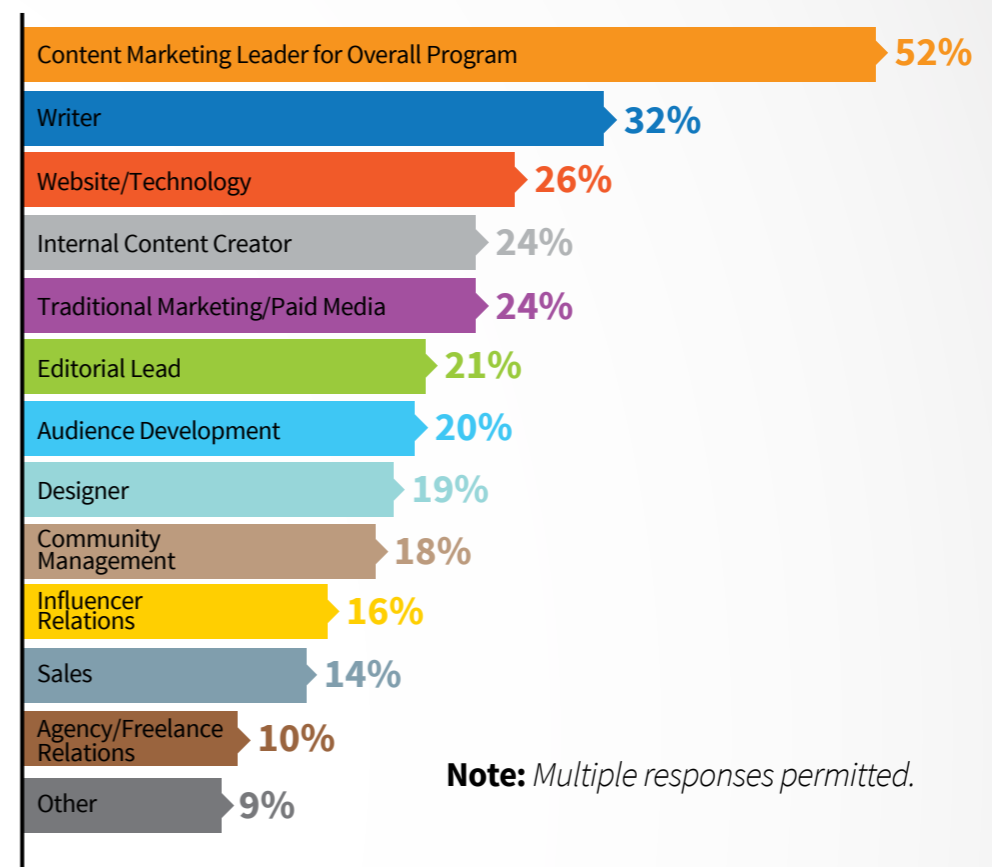
- Retail Trade/Distribution
- Banking/Accounting/Financial
- Healthcare/Pharmaceuticals
- Real Estate
- Advertising/Marketing/PR
- Education
- Travel/Tourism/Hospitality
- Other

### Size of B2C Company (by Employees)



- Micro (Fewer than 10 Employees)
- Small (10-99 Employees)
- Midsize (100-999 Employees)
- Large (1,000+ Employees)

### B2C Content Marketing Roles



**Note:** Multiple responses permitted.

## ABOUT

*Content Marketing Institute and MarketingProfs thank all the survey respondents and distribution partners who made this survey possible.*

### About Content Marketing Institute (CMI)

**Content Marketing Institute** is the leading global content marketing education and training organization, teaching enterprise brands how to attract and retain customers through compelling, multi-channel storytelling. CMI's **Content Marketing World** event, the largest content marketing-focused event, is held every September in Cleveland, Ohio, USA, and the **Intelligent Content Conference** event is held every spring. CMI publishes the bi-monthly magazine **Chief Content Officer**, and provides strategic consulting and content marketing research for some of the best-known brands in the world. CMI is a 2012-2015 Inc. 500/5000 company. Watch this [video](#) to learn more about CMI. View all CMI research at [www.contentmarketinginstitute.com/research](http://www.contentmarketinginstitute.com/research).

### About MarketingProfs

**MarketingProfs** offers real-world education for modern marketers. More than 600,000 marketing professionals worldwide rely on our free daily publications, virtual conferences, **MarketingProfs University**, and more to stay up to date on the most important trends and tactics in marketing—and how to apply them to their businesses. Visit [MarketingProfs.com](http://MarketingProfs.com) for more.

### About TrackMaven

**TrackMaven's** competitive intelligence platform has been adopted by hundreds of the world's best brands. Content and social media marketers use TrackMaven to benchmark content performance and identify engaging topics and tactics. This helps them become more data-driven and increase marketing effectiveness.

Founded in 2012, the company is headquartered in Washington, DC. To learn more, visit [WWW.TRACKMAVEN.COM](http://WWW.TRACKMAVEN.COM) or follow us on Twitter @TrackMaven.