

13TH ANNUAL

B2B CONTENT MARKETING

BENCHMARKS, BUDGETS,
AND TRENDS



INSIGHTS FOR 2023

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SURVEY TERM DEFINITIONS

Content Marketing: 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.

Success: Achieving your organization’s desired/targeted results.

CHART TERM DEFINITIONS

All Respondents: B2B content marketers, all of whom indicated they are content marketers, involved with the content marketing function, and/or someone to whom content marketing reports, either directly or indirectly.

Most Successful (aka Top Performers) and Least Successful: The “most successful” are those who characterize their organization’s overall content marketing approach as extremely or very successful (Top 2). The “least successful” characterize their organization’s approach as minimally or not at all successful (Bottom 2). See page 8.

A Content Marketing Wish List:

TIME TO FEED THE GIANT

Welcome to the 13th Annual B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends: Insights for 2023 report.

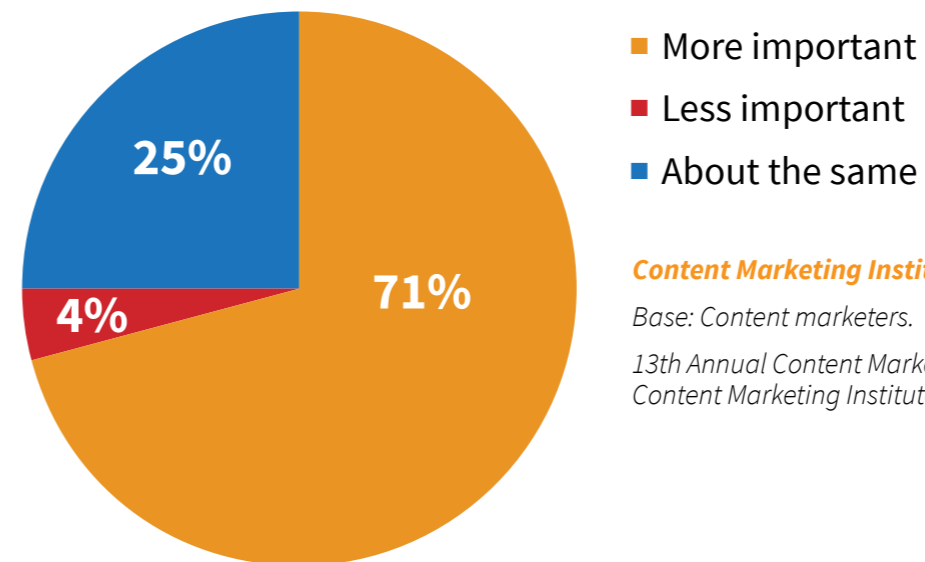
This edition of our report looks back on the last 12 months and includes expectations for 2023.

Last year's theme, The Sleeping Giant Awakes, explored how the pandemic changed the way organizations perceive content marketing. We found that content marketing took a more prominent role as organizations lost the ability to meet face to face with prospects and customers.

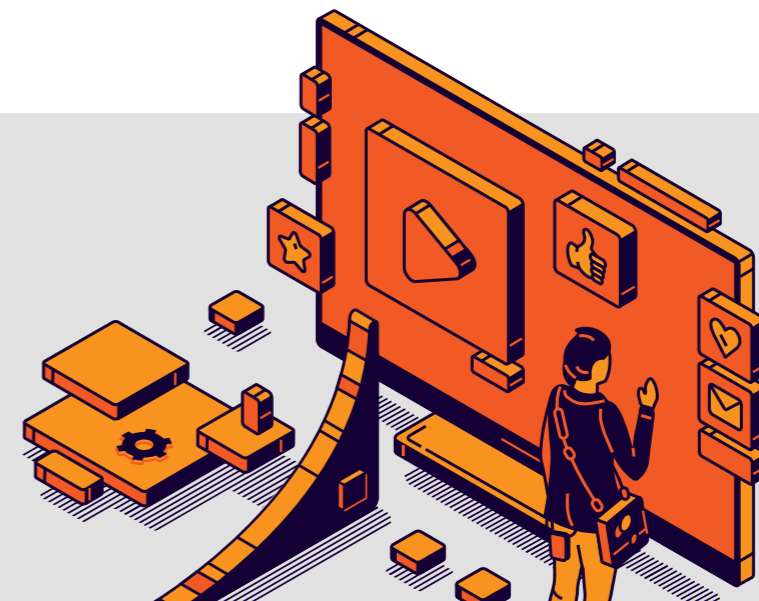
Has that momentum continued?

Well, 71% of content marketers told us that content marketing has become more important to their organization over the last year.

Importance of B2B Content Marketing in the Last Year



Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs
Base: Content marketers.
13th Annual Content Marketing Survey:
Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022



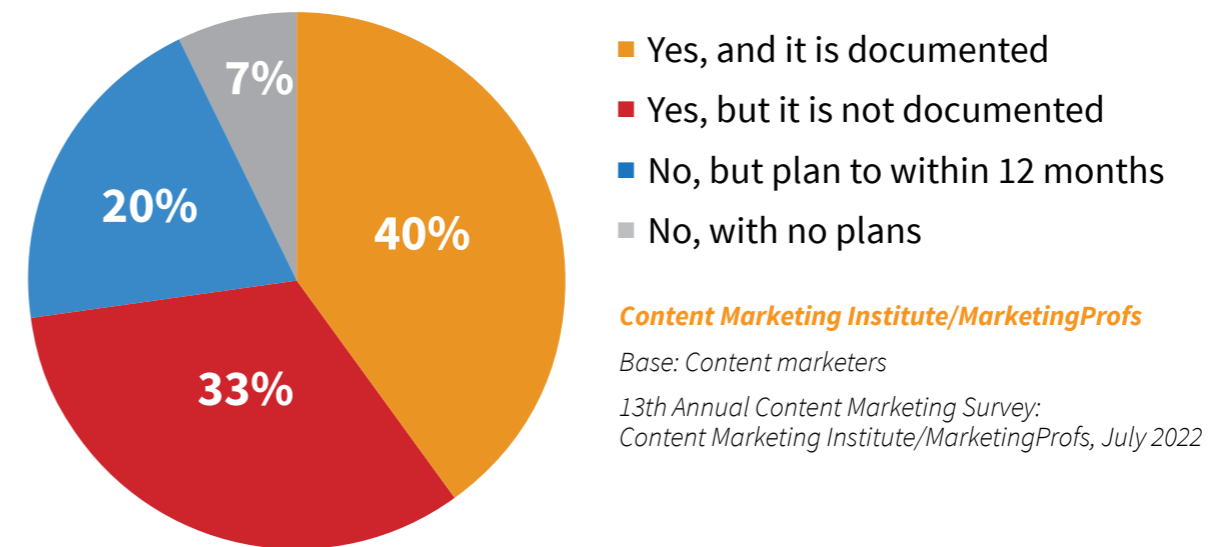
But with the increase in importance and growth comes a need for more staff, more tools, and well, more of a lot of things. When we asked, “If you could change one thing about content marketing in your organization, what would that be?” many of those same marketers told us they are still fighting for:

- ▶ Content marketing buy-in
- ▶ A content marketing strategy/strategic approach to content marketing
- ▶ More budget and additional staff
- ▶ More access to subject matter experts (SMEs)
- ▶ Better technology
- ▶ Better measurement tools
- ▶ Greater alignment between marketing and sales/breaking down silos

That’s a lot to wish for.

Furthermore, the year-over-year needle is stuck at around only 40% of marketers having a documented content marketing strategy. Without a strategy, too many content marketers are creating content for the sake of creating content – in many cases this could mean responding to ad hoc requests.

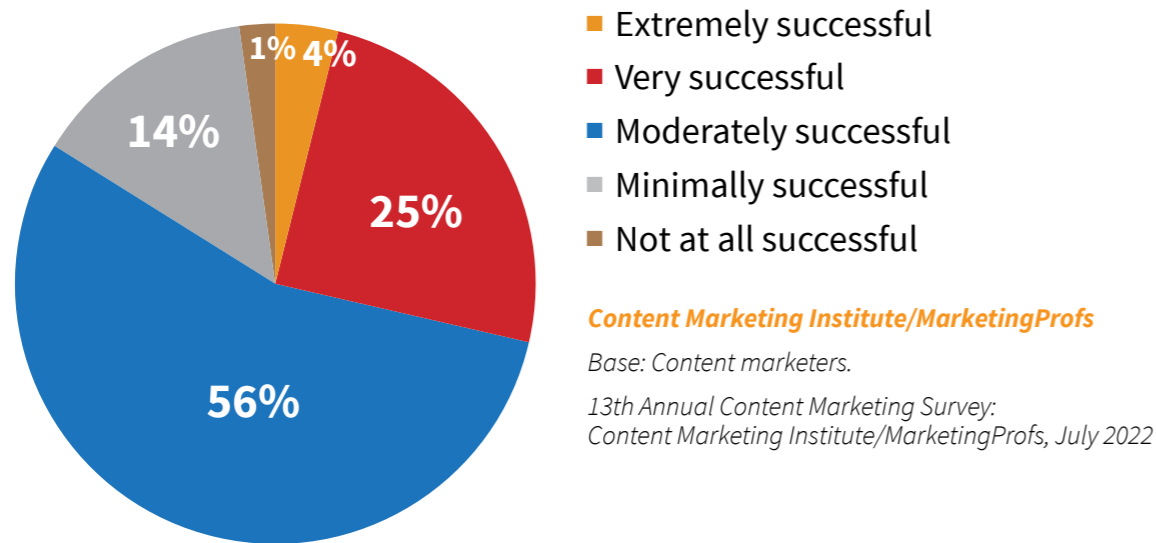
Percentage of B2B Marketers With a Content Marketing Strategy



For content marketing to be truly effective, it needs a strategy with resources behind it. Too many content marketers are operating either alone or with a small staff trying to do too much. In fact, 46% of all marketers surveyed told us that one person (or group) in their organization is responsible for all types of content produced.

It’s unsurprising, then, that the year-over-year needle has also been stuck on overall success – with around 29% of those surveyed saying their organizations are extremely or very successful with content marketing. Indeed, there is much to learn from those top performers and how they do things differently than their peers (see page 8).

How B2B Marketers Rate Their Organization's Overall Level of Content Marketing Success in Last 12 Months

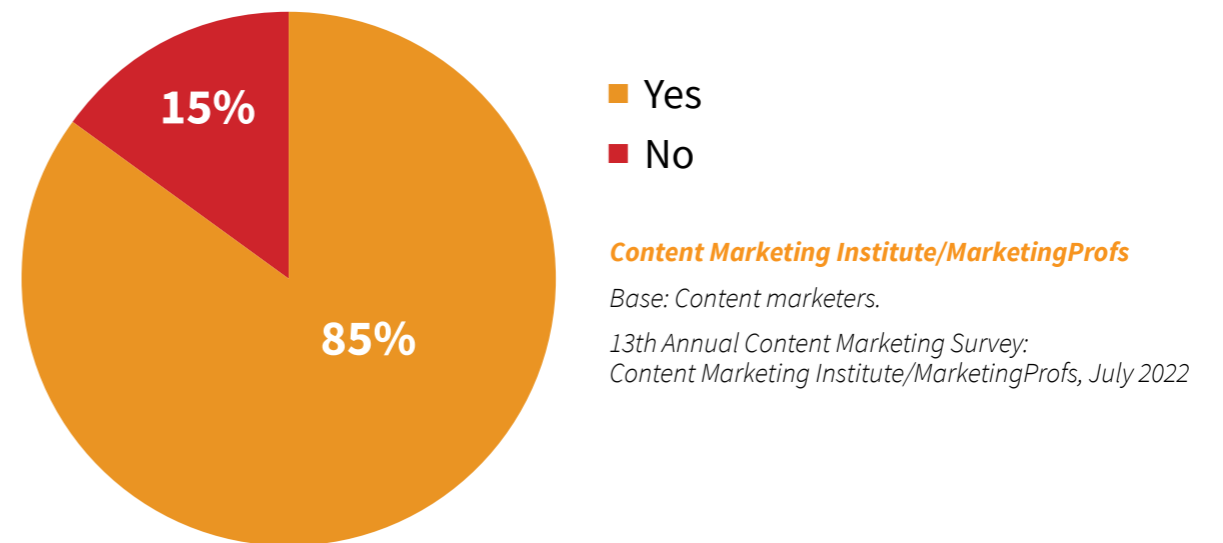


All of this is not to say that content marketers are unhappy. In fact, 85% told us they feel that content marketing provides a rewarding and purposeful career path.

It's just not always with the company in which they're currently working. CMI's recent [Content Marketing Career & Salary 2023 Outlook](#) found that the lack of a clear career path in the organizations content marketers work for is a real problem. And many content marketers are willing to change companies for better opportunities.

Our annual research suggests that content marketers would be happier in their current roles if their organizations prioritized content marketing, backed it with strategies and resources, and invested in technologies to help them do their jobs faster and more efficiently.

Does Content Marketing Provide You With a Meaningful/Purposeful Career Path?



If one theme emerged from this year's annual research it was this: It's time for organizations to finally give content marketing the investment it deserves, staff it accordingly, and reap the rewards. The sleeping giant is awake. Now it's time to feed it.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Nearly half of those surveyed think their organization will hire or contract for content producers in 2023.

Forty-seven percent of respondents told us they expect their organization to hire or contract for content producers in 2023 (e.g., writers, designers, videographers). This should come as a relief to content marketers who are stretched too thin. See page 10.

Marketers who differentiate their content cite three key things.

Those who are excelling with content differentiation say they produce better quality content, cover topics/stories their competitors don't, and actively promote their content. See page 13.

In-person events are back.

In-person events came roaring up the list of content types used in the last 12 months, with 49% reporting they used in-person events to get in front of their audiences versus only 19% (understandably) the previous year. These events were also the content type marketers said produced the best results for their organization. Furthermore, 52% expect their organization's investment in in-person events will increase in 2023 compared with their 2022 budget. See pages 14, 15, and 36.

More marketers are using online communities.

There was a slight uptick in those using their organization's branded online community to distribute content over the last 12 months (26% this year vs. 22% last year). Yet interestingly, social media/community building is the fifth highest area of B2B content marketing investment for 2023 (with 57% expecting investment in this area, compared with only 37% the previous year). See pages 16 and 40.

The use of paid content distribution channels has decreased.

The percentage of marketers using one or more paid distribution channels decreased to 67%, compared with 81% the previous year. Of those who are using paid channels, 85% use paid social media. See page 20.

Investment in video and owned-media assets will continue to rise in 2023.

Seventy-eight percent of content marketers said their organization will invest/continue to invest in video in 2023, up from 69% the previous year. We also saw notable increases in those planning to invest in owned-media assets (69% vs. 57% the previous year). See page 40.

Content technologies are an issue.

In this new section of the annual survey, we asked content marketers whether their organization has the right technology in place to manage content across the organization. Only 28% said yes. Of the 61% who said no, 31% said they have the technology but aren't using it to potential – and 30% said they have not acquired the right technology (11% were unsure). See page 26.

Marketers struggle with creating content for the buyer's journey and aligning content efforts across sales and marketing.

Marketers cited these as their top two current content marketing challenges. Other issues included consistency with measurement and internal communication among teams/silos. See page 38.



How B2B Content Marketing Top Performers* Describe Their Organization – At a Glance

	Most Successful	All Respondents	Least Successful
Has a documented content marketing strategy	64%	40%	19%
Uses content creation/calendaring/collaboration/workflow tools	76%	65%	49%
Has the right technology in place to manage content across the entire organization	47%	28%	9%
Spends 50% or more of total marketing budget on content marketing	33%	21%	8%
Uses one or more paid channels for content distribution	75%	67%	57%
<i>Strongly/somewhat agrees:</i>			
Organization provides customers with a consistent experience across their journey.	87%	65%	40%
Organization measures content performance accurately.	80%	49%	19%
Diversity and inclusion play an integral role in the organization’s content decision-making and creative processes.	70%	56%	38%
<i>Uses content marketing successfully to:</i>			
Nurture subscribers/audiences/leads	66%	54%	32%
Generate sales/revenue	62%	42%	20%
Build/grow a subscribed audience	59%	44%	26%

Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Chart term definitions: A top performer (aka “most successful”) is a respondent who characterizes their organization’s overall content marketing approach as extremely or very successful.

The “least successful” characterize their organization’s approach as minimally or not at all successful.

Base: Content marketers.

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022

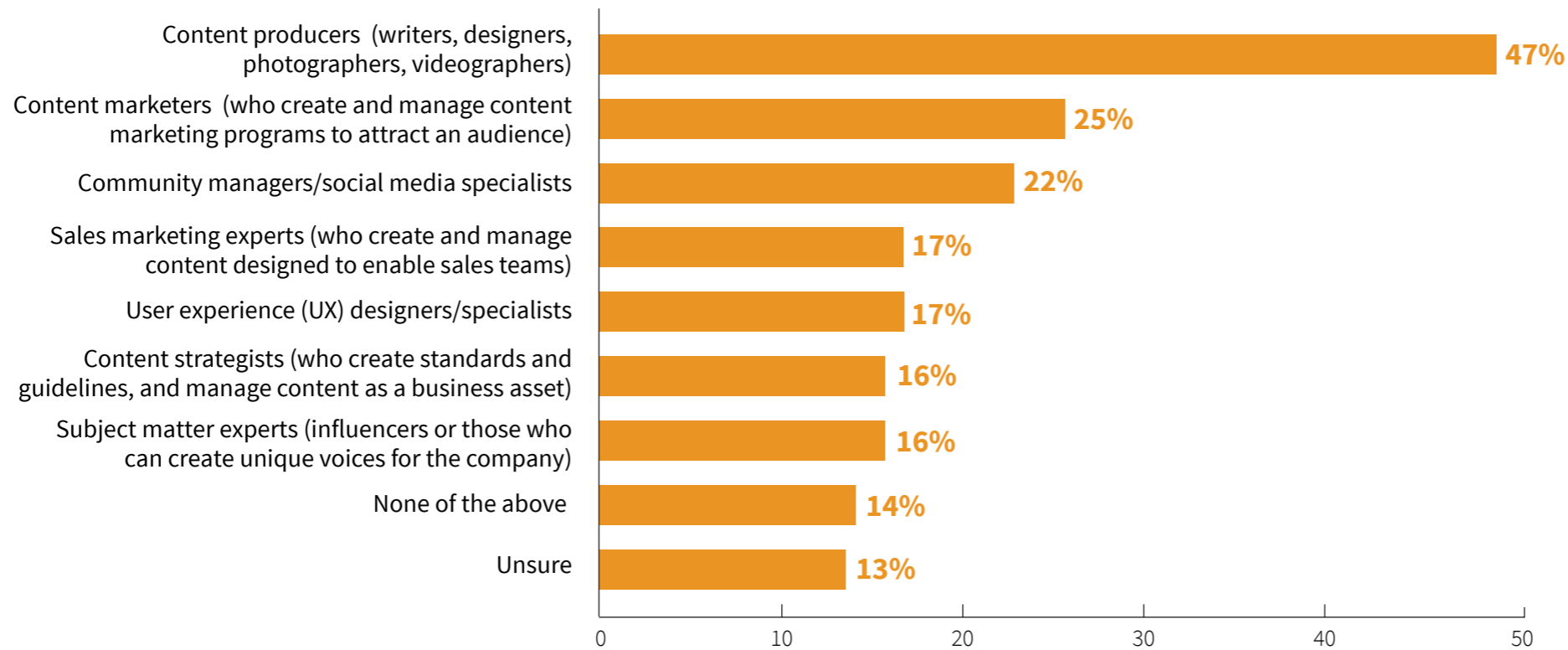
STAFFING & OPINIONS



Many content marketers wear too many hats.

Nearly half of those surveyed said one person (or group) in their organization is responsible for all types of content – but help with content creation may be on the way in 2023.

Which of These Roles Do You Think Your B2B Organization Will Hire or Contract For in 2023?



Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Base: Content marketers.
 13th Annual Content Marketing Survey:
 Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022

46%
 said one group (or person) is responsible for handling all types of content in their organization (including advertising, thought leadership, brochures, SEO content, etc.).*

*This figure was higher for small companies (51%) and lower for large companies (30%).

Base: Content marketers.
 13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022

With society embracing diversity, equity, and inclusiveness (DE&I), brands can do better.

Fifty-seven percent of marketers agreed that diversity and inclusion play an integral role in their organization’s decision-making and creative processes.

B2B Marketers’ Opinions About Content Marketing in Their Organizations

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Our organization values creativity and craft in content creation and production.	51%	35%	6%	7%	2%
Our organization provides customers with a consistent experience across their engagement journey.	19%	46%	13%	18%	5%
Diversity and inclusion play an integral role in our organization's content decision-making and creative processes.	27%	30%	27%	11%	6%
Our organization measures content performance accurately.	13%	36%	23%	21%	8%

Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Base: Content marketers who answered each statement.

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022

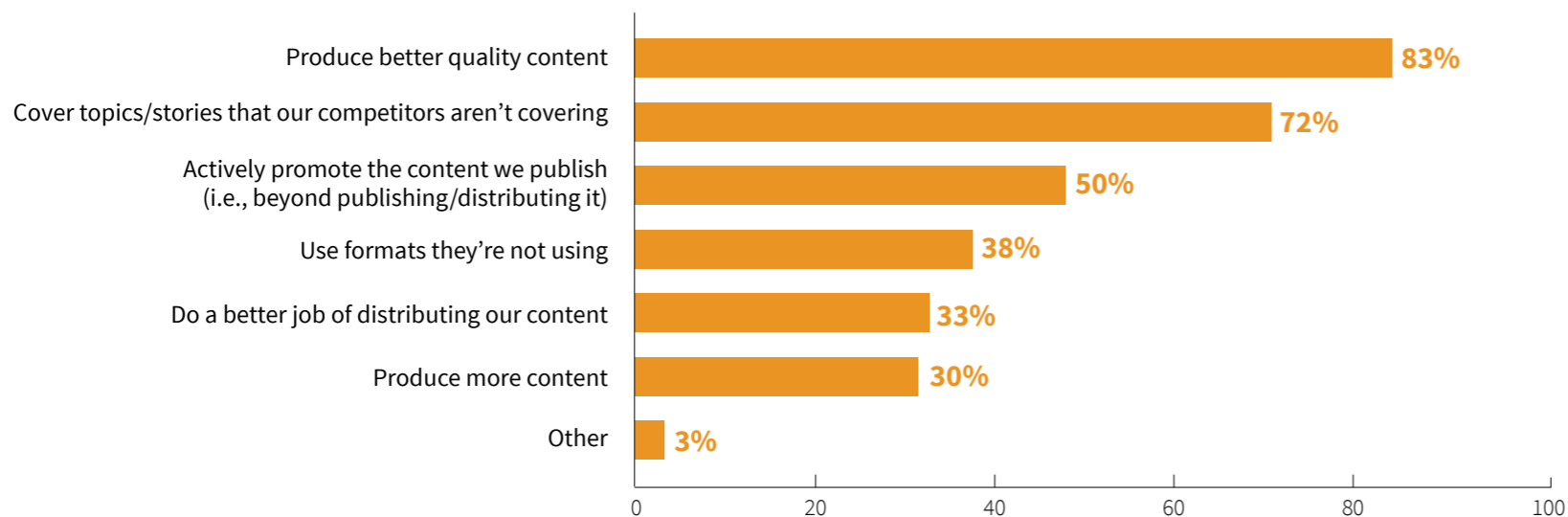
CONTENT CREATION & DISTRIBUTION



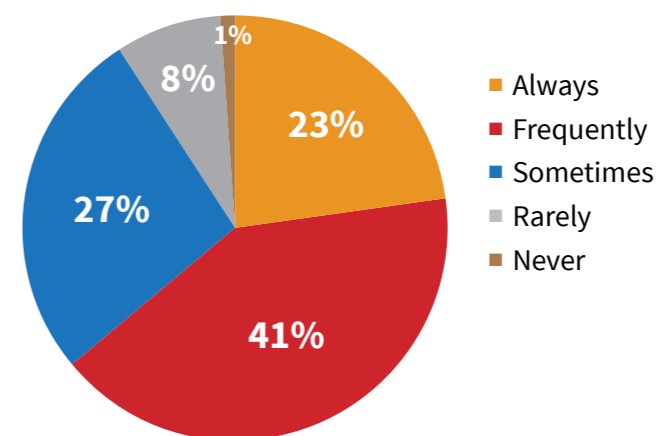
Content marketers who want to differentiate their content should focus on quality and unique stories.

Eighty-three percent of those who always/frequently differentiate their content said they do so by producing better quality content than their competitors.

How B2B Marketers Differentiate Their Content From the Competition



How Often Do You Differentiate Your Content From the Competition?



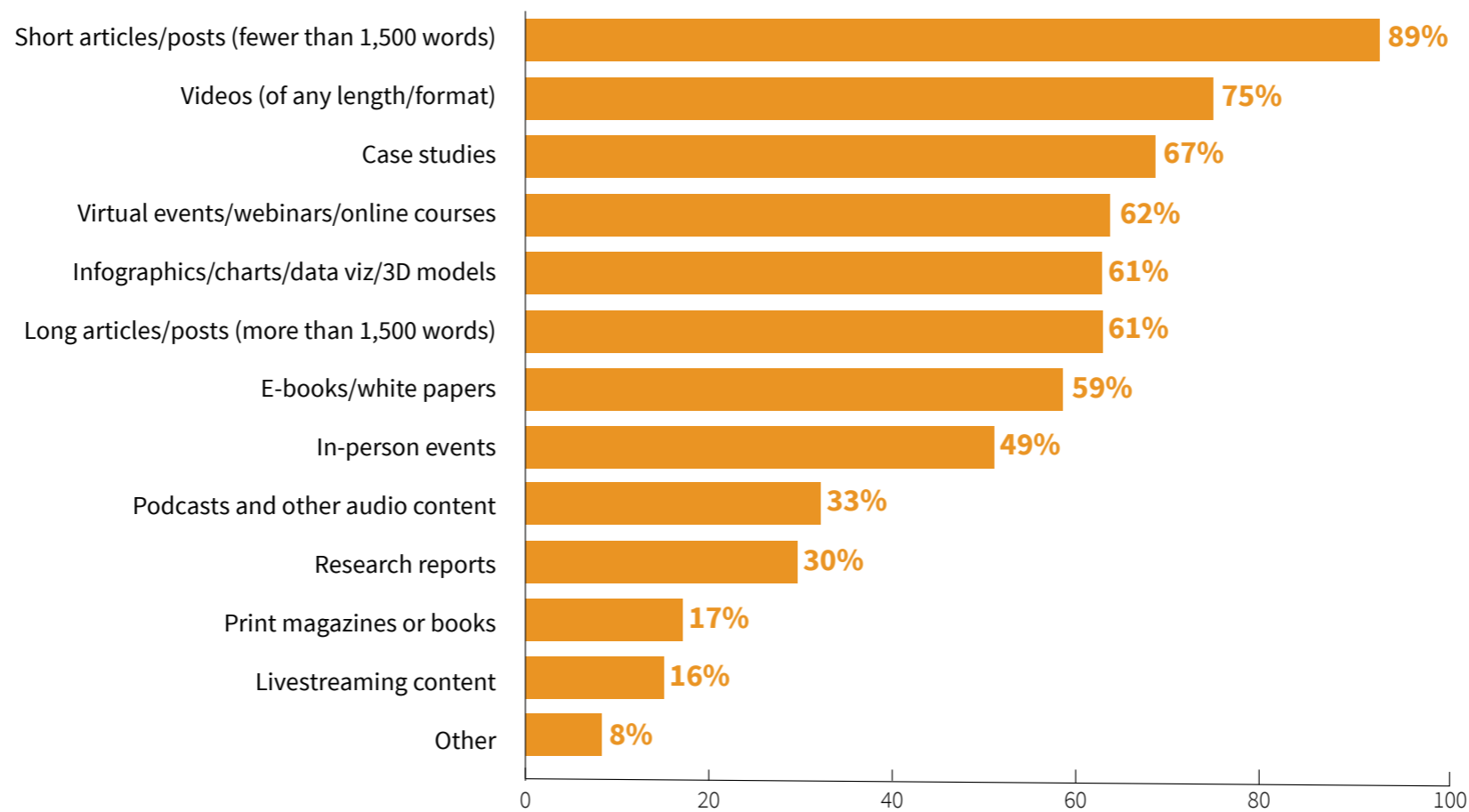
Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Base: Content marketers who always/frequently differentiate their content from the competition.
13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022

In-person events are back – and the use of video continues to soar.

- ▶ Forty-nine percent reported using in-person events, compared with only 19% the previous year. In addition, in-person events are the content type producing the best results (see next page).
- ▶ The use of videos increased to 75% from 66% the previous year.

Content Assets B2B Marketers Created/Used in Last 12 Months



Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

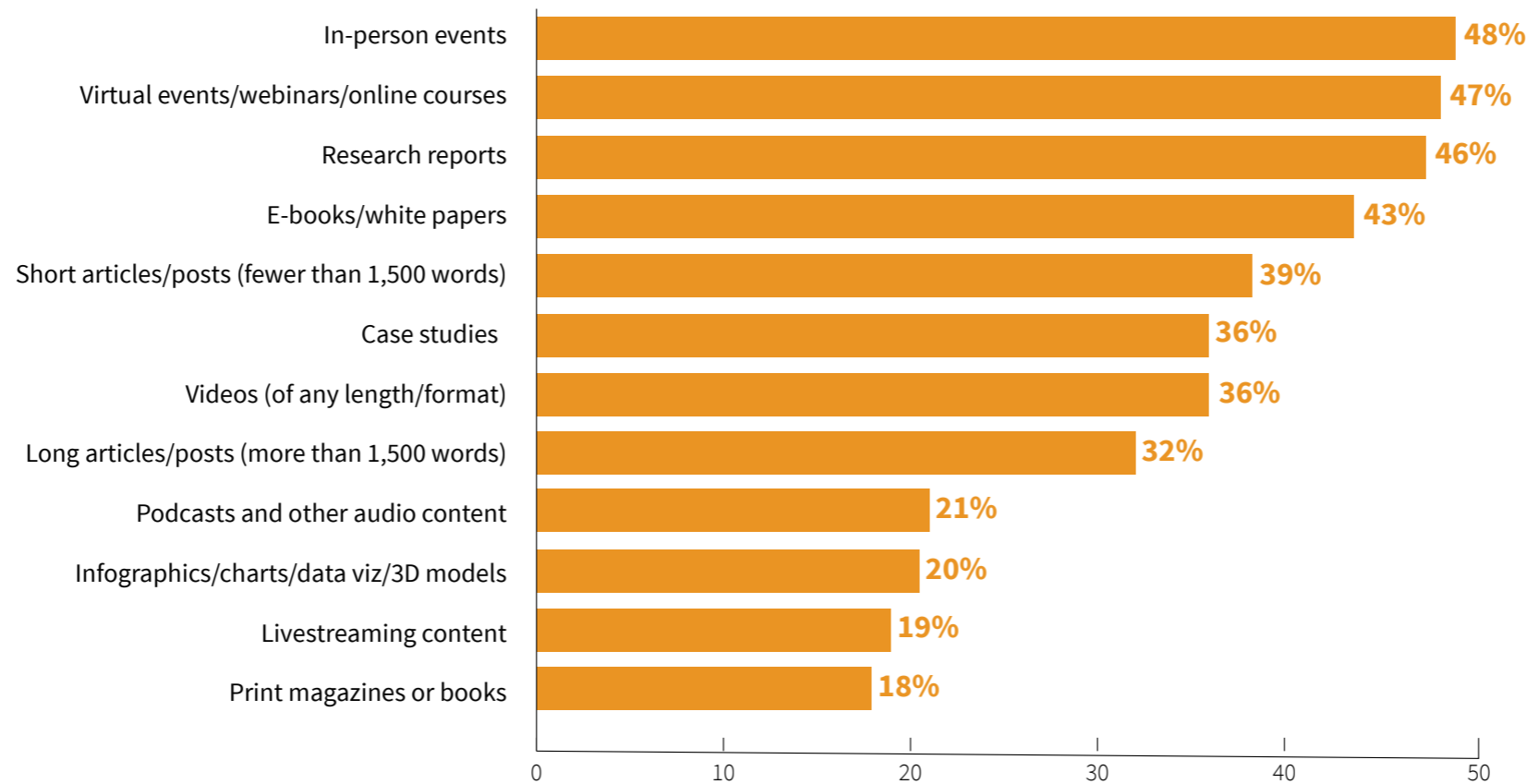
Base: Content marketers. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022

There's no denying the power of face to face.

Marketers said in-person events produced the best results for their content marketing in the last 12 months (48%). Virtual events came in a close second, followed by research reports.

B2B Content Assets That Produced the Best Results in Last 12 Months



Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Note: Respondents were shown a display list of the content types they used in the last 12 months and asked, “Which content assets produced the best results for your content marketing in the last 12 months? (Select all that apply.)”

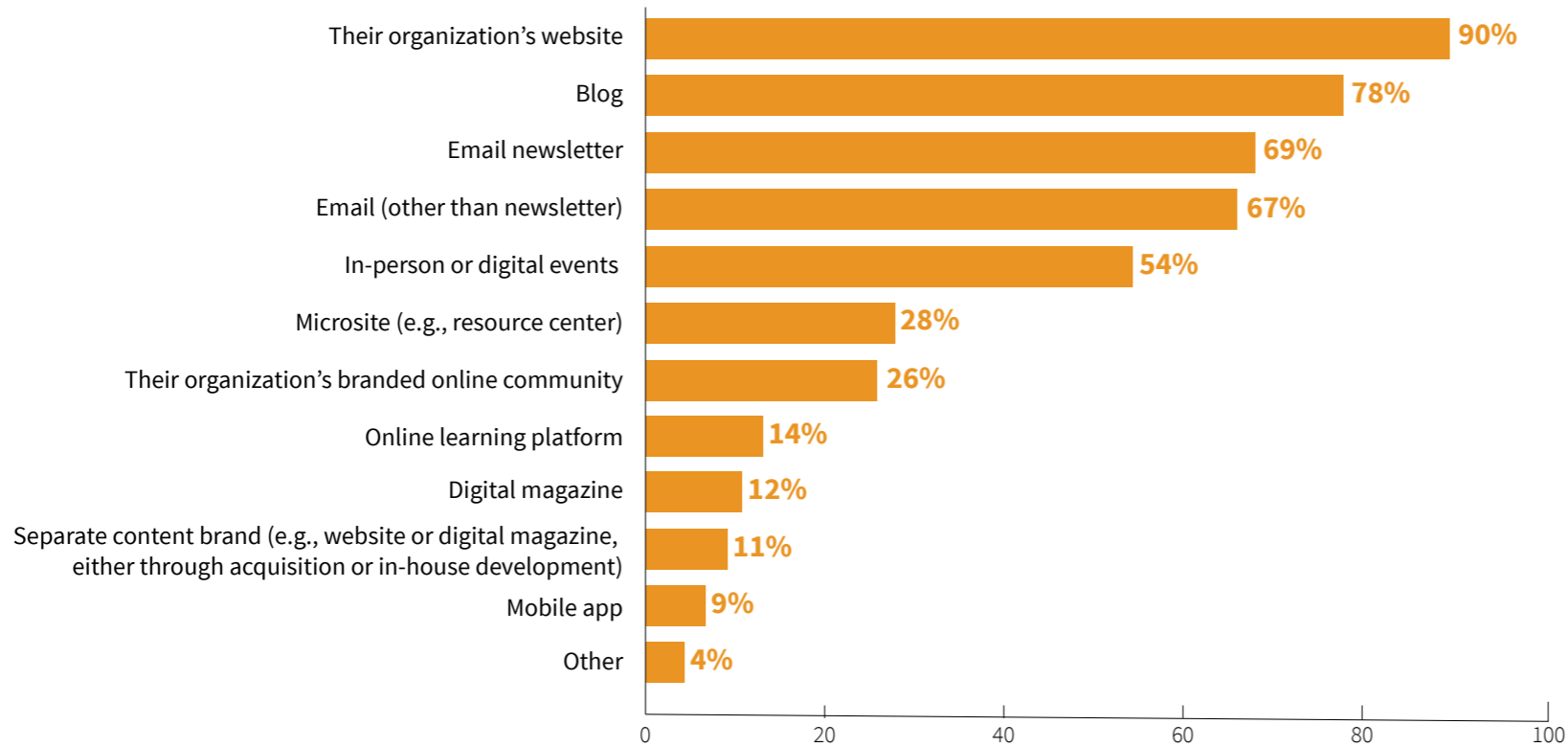
Base: Content marketers who use each content asset listed. Multiple responses permitted.

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022

Nearly three out of four marketers use email newsletters to distribute content.

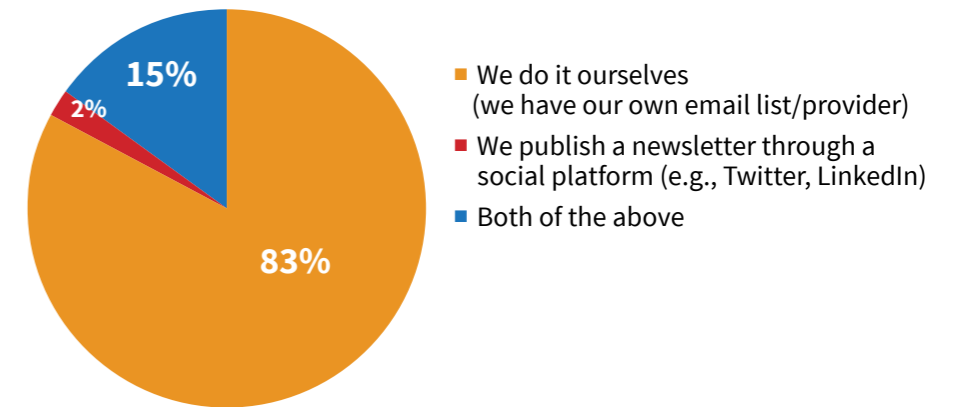
Most publish their newsletters themselves.

Owned-Media Platforms B2B Marketers Used to Distribute Content in Last 12 Months



Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs
 Base: Content marketers. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.
 13th Annual Content Marketing Survey:
 Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022

How B2B Organizations Publish Their Email Newsletters

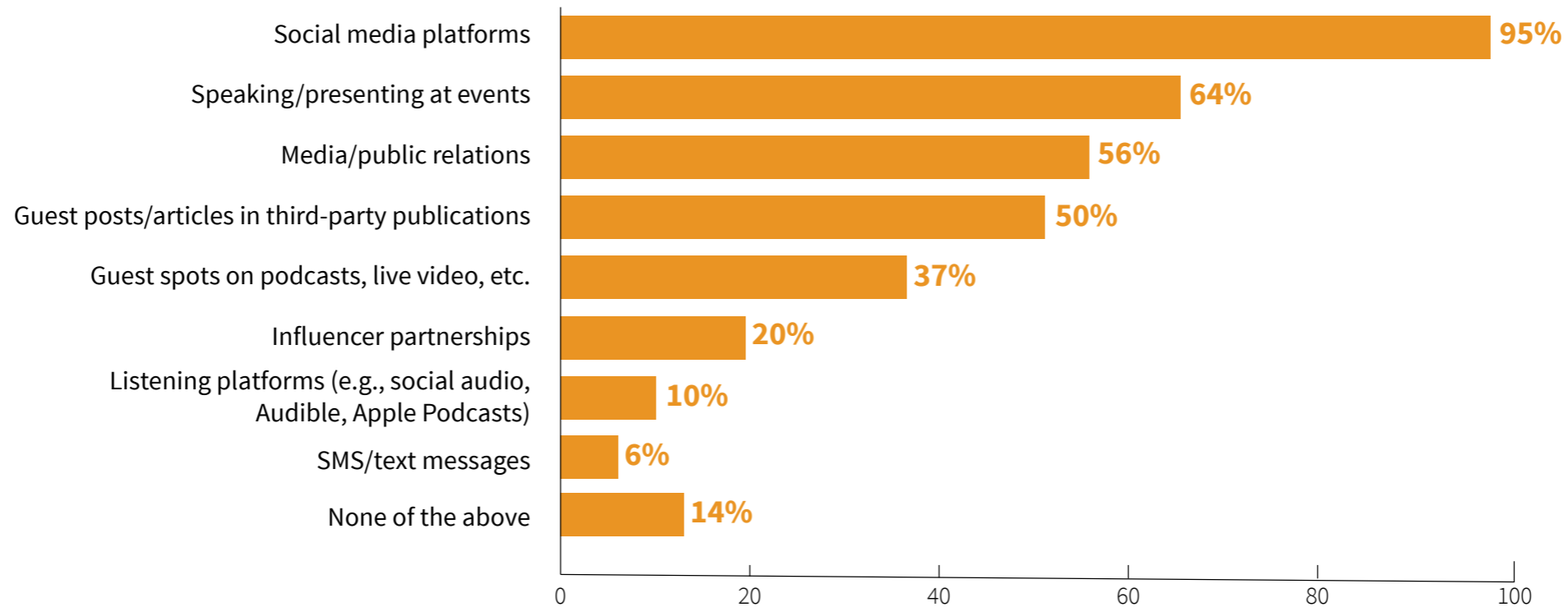


Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs
 Base: Content marketers who publish email newsletters.
 13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/
 MarketingProfs, July 2022

With in-person events back in swing, more marketers are speaking and presenting. More marketers are writing guest posts, too.

- ▶ Speaking increased to 64% from 52% the previous year.
- ▶ Guest posts increased to 50% from 43% the previous year.

Organic (Nonpaid) Platforms B2B Marketers Used to Distribute Content in Last 12 Months



Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

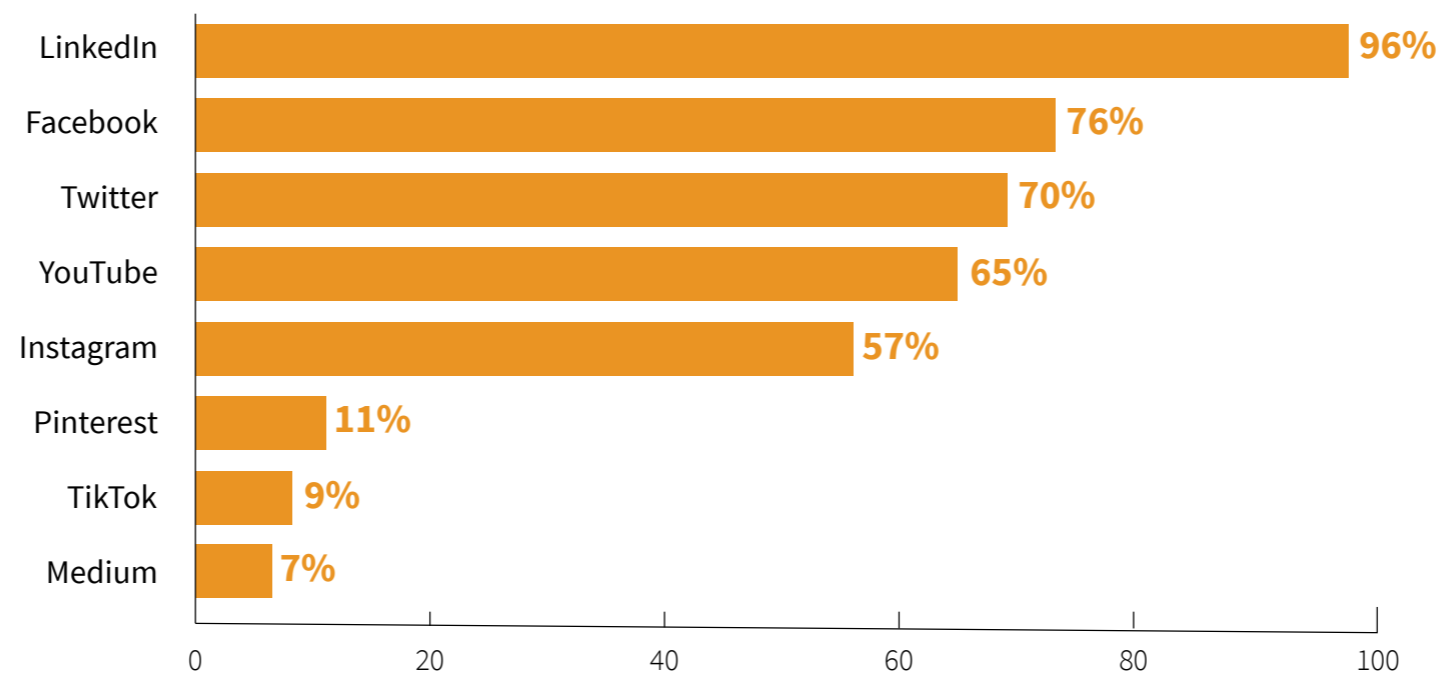
Base: Content marketers. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022

The use of organic social media platforms hasn't changed much from the previous year.

We did, however, see the use of YouTube increase by 5 points (65% this year vs. 60% the previous year), not surprising considering the rise in the use of video. The use of TikTok inched up to 9% from 5%.

Organic (Nonpaid) Social Media Platforms B2B Content Marketers Used in Last 12 Months



Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Base: Content marketers who used organic social media platforms in the last 12 months.

Aided list; multiple responses permitted.

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/Marketing Profs, July 2022

LinkedIn is the organic social media platform B2B content marketers used the most and the one they found most effective.

Facebook had the lowest ratings, with 37% saying it was not very or not at all effective.

	Extremely Effective	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Not Very Effective	Not At All Effective
LinkedIn	21%	39%	33%	6%	1%
Facebook	5%	18%	41%	31%	6%
Twitter	3%	14%	47%	28%	8%
YouTube	9%	29%	45%	15%	2%
Instagram	6%	19%	44%	27%	5%

Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

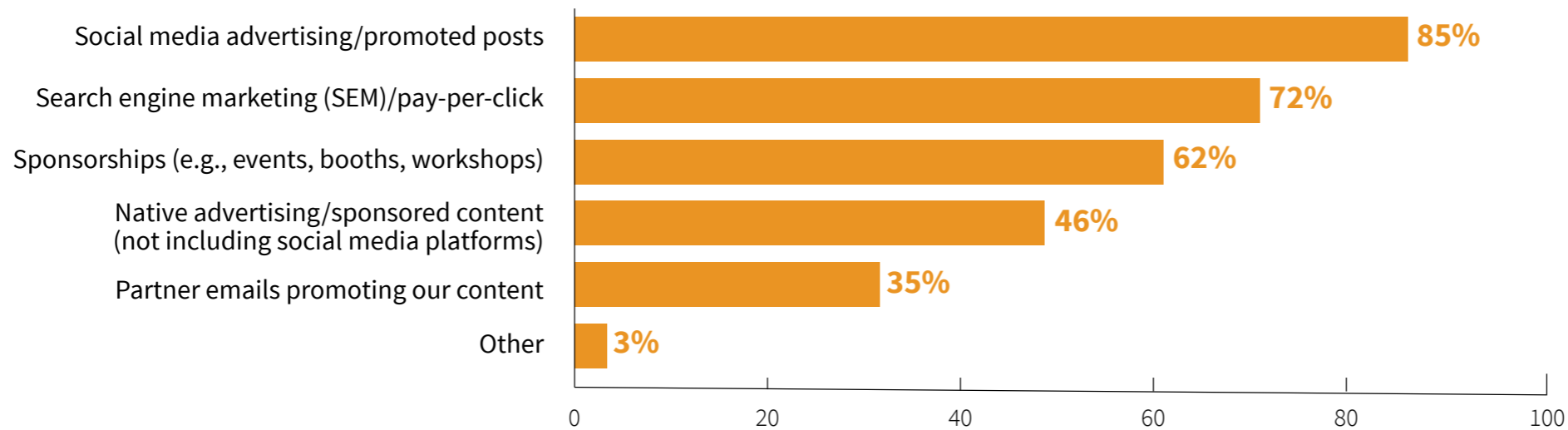
Base: Content marketers who used the organic social media platforms listed in the last 12 months.

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/Marketing Profs, July 2022

The use of paid content distribution decreased to 67% from 81% the previous year.

This suggests that B2B companies moved money from top-of-the-funnel paid awareness activities in the pandemic economy to mid-funnel awareness activities, lead generation, and direct advertising.

Paid Content Distribution Channels B2B Marketers Used in Last 12 Months

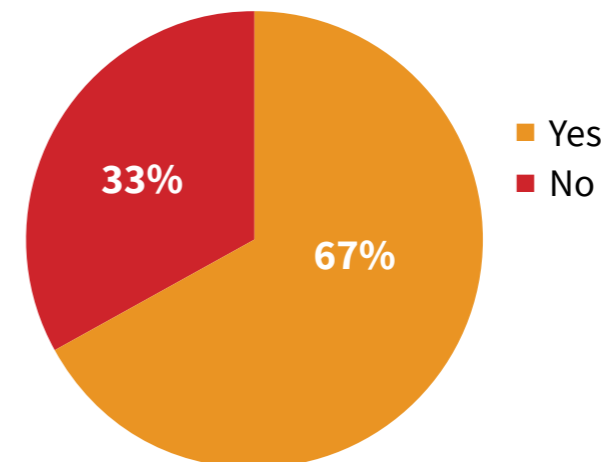


Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Base: Content marketers whose organizations used paid channels to distribute content in the last 12 months. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/Marketing Profs, July 2022

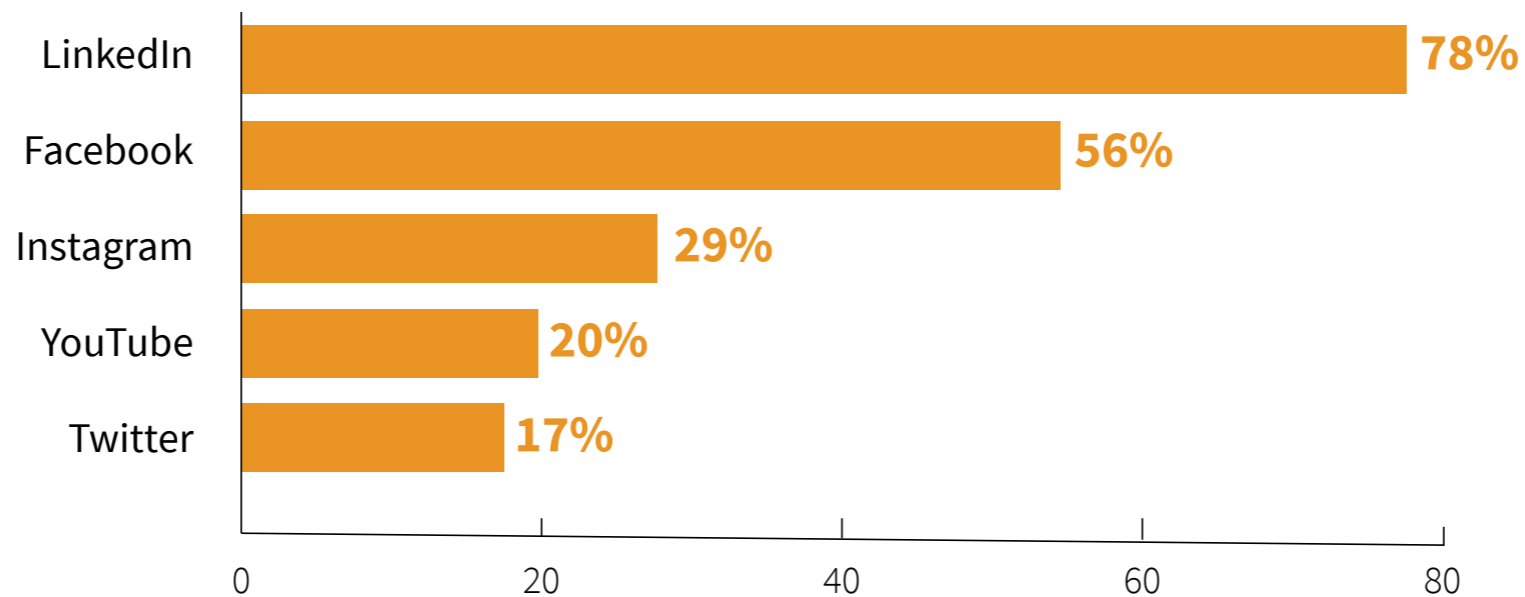
Does Your Organization Use One or More Paid Content Distribution Channels for Content Marketing?



Fewer marketers invested money in paid advertising on Facebook.

The use of Facebook advertising decreased to 56% from 69% the previous year. The others remained steady.

Paid Social Media Platforms B2B Content Marketers Used in Last 12 Months



Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Base: Content marketers whose organizations used paid content promotion in the last 12 months.

Aided list; multiple responses permitted.

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/Marketing Profs, July 2022

Marketers who use paid social are getting the best results with LinkedIn advertising.

Facebook and Instagram had the lowest effectiveness ratings.

How Effective Are These Paid Social Media Platforms in Helping Your Organization Reach Its Content Marketing Goals?

	Extremely Effective	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Not Very Effective	Not At All Effective
LinkedIn	13%	36%	40%	9%	2%
Facebook	9%	30%	45%	12%	5%
Twitter	10%	33%	45%	13%	0%
YouTube	11%	32%	44%	11%	1%
Instagram	10%	29%	45%	14%	3%

Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

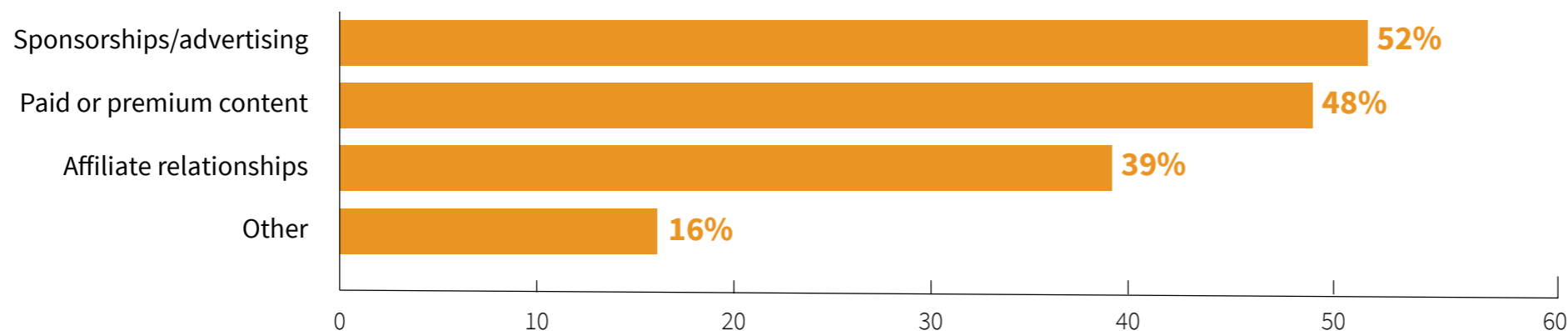
Base: Content marketers who used the paid social media platforms in the last 12 months.

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/Marketing Profs, July 2022

Only 10% of respondents said their organization monetizes content.

These forward-leaning organizations were mostly agencies, consultants, and technology marketers.

How B2B Organizations Monetize Content

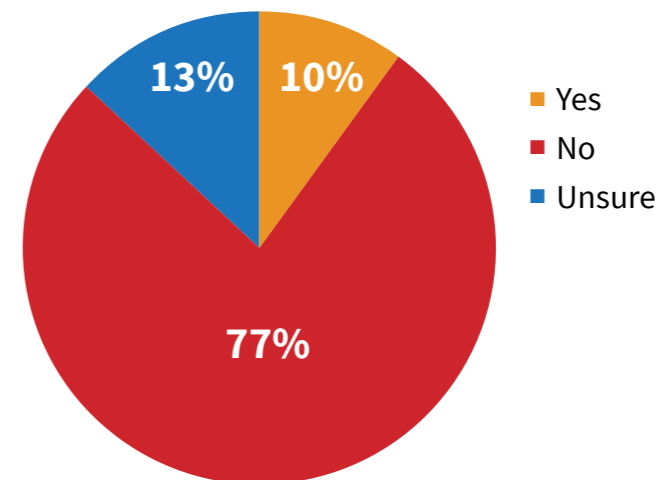


Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Base: Content marketers whose organizations monetize their content. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022

Does Your Organization Monetize Its Content (i.e., Does Your Content Generate Revenue Directly)?



CONTENT MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS

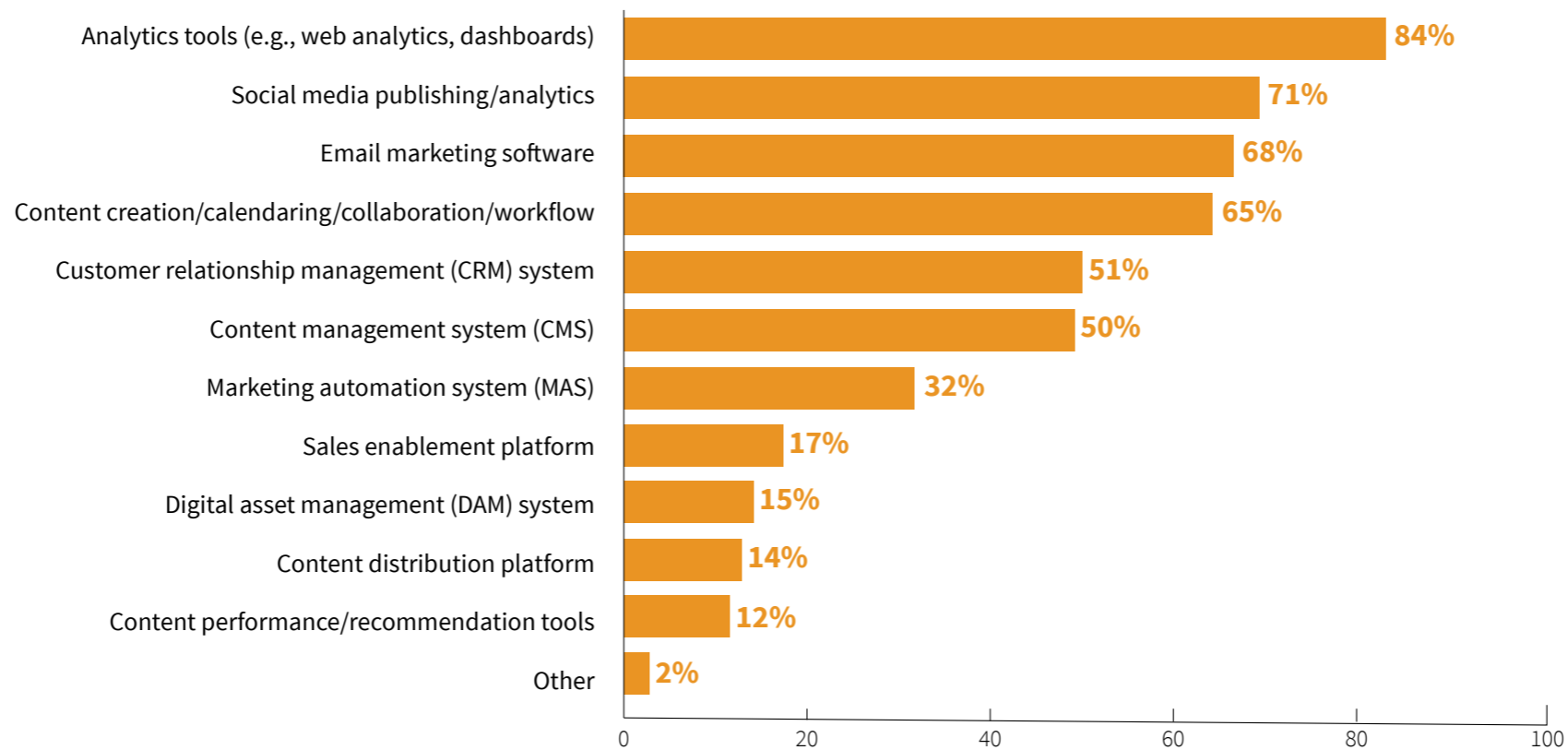


The use of technologies remained steady over the last year, with three notable exceptions.

The use of:

- ▶ Social media publishing/analytics decreased to 71% from 80% the previous year.
- ▶ Content creation/calendaring/collaboration/workflow tools decreased to 65% from 73% the previous year.
- ▶ Email marketing software decreased to 68% from 75% the previous year.

Technologies B2B Organizations Use to Manage Content



Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Base: Content marketers. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.

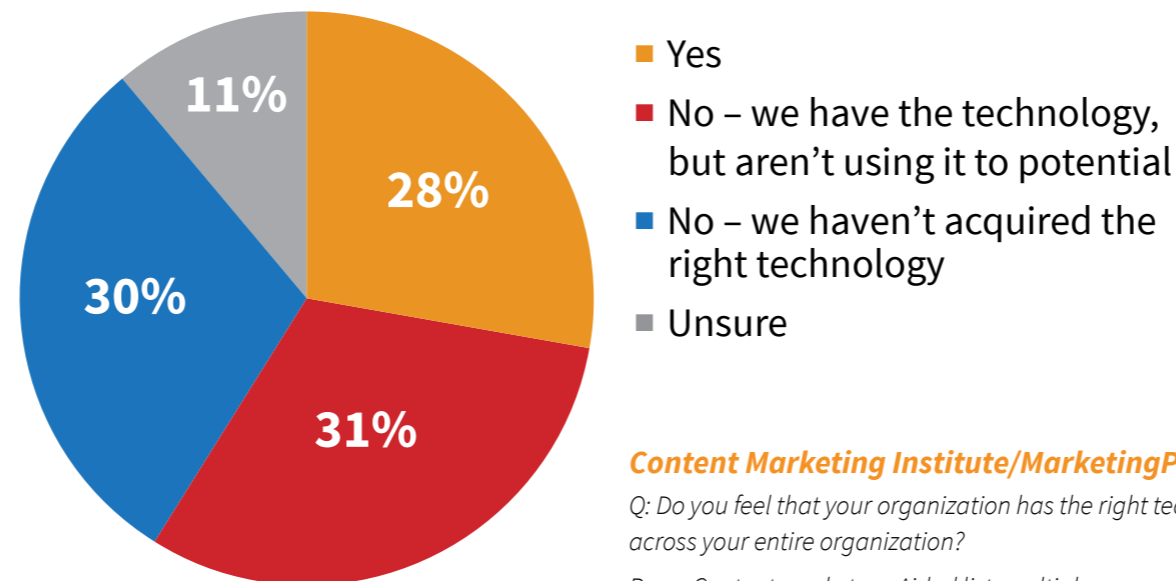
13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022

Sixty-one percent of marketers said their organization either hasn't acquired the right technology - or has the technology but isn't using it to potential.

This suggests that too many B2B companies:

- ▶ Are developing tech stacks without a strategy (i.e., letting features and functions drive the strategy rather than the other way around)
- ▶ Don't appreciate the level of complexity in not just implementing martech tools but also managing and maintaining them

The Right Technology in Place to Manage Content Across the B2B Organization



Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Q: Do you feel that your organization has the right technology in place to manage content across your entire organization?

Base: Content marketers. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.

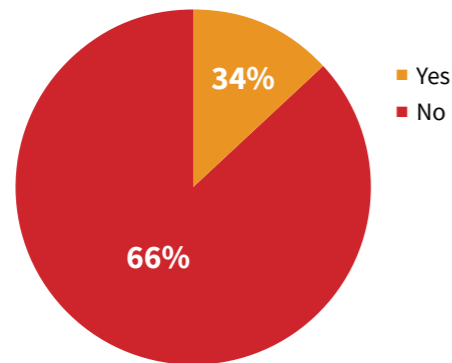
13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022

Thirty-four percent of marketers said their organization translates content into different languages using a variety of methods.

Nearly three out of four who translate content also localize it, mostly using in-house teams.

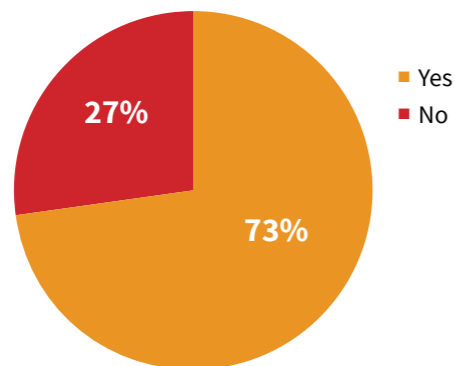
Does Your Organization Translate Content Into Different Languages?

(Translation is defined as the process of changing content into another language.)

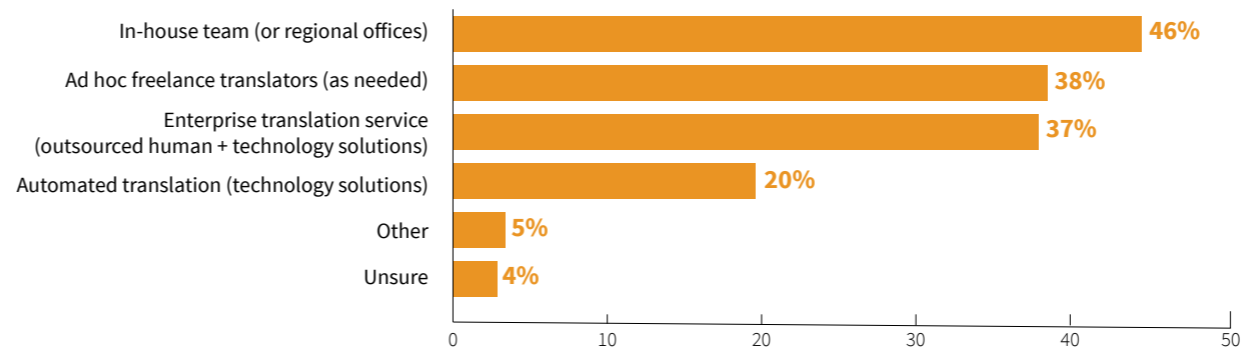


In Addition to Translation, Does Your Organization Also Localize Content?

(Localization is defined as the process of adapting content to meet the needs of local culture or target market.)



B2B Organizations' Approach to Translation



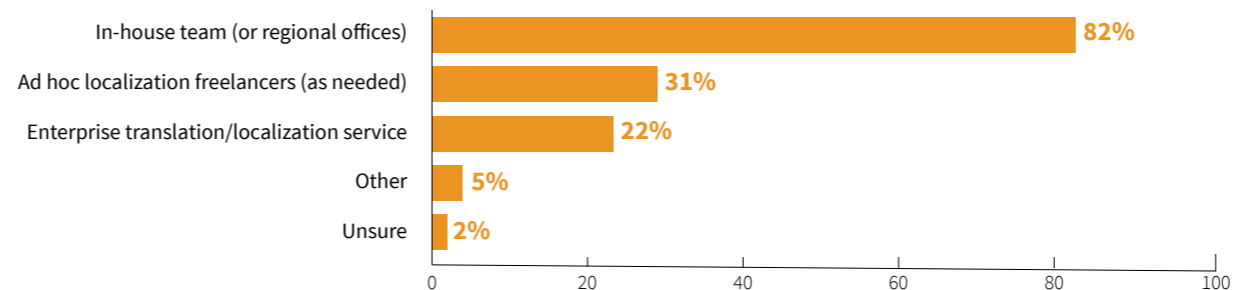
Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Base: Content marketers whose organizations translate content into different languages.

Aided list; multiple responses permitted.

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022

B2B Organizations' Approach to Localization



Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Base: Content marketers whose organizations translate content into different languages. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs, July 2022

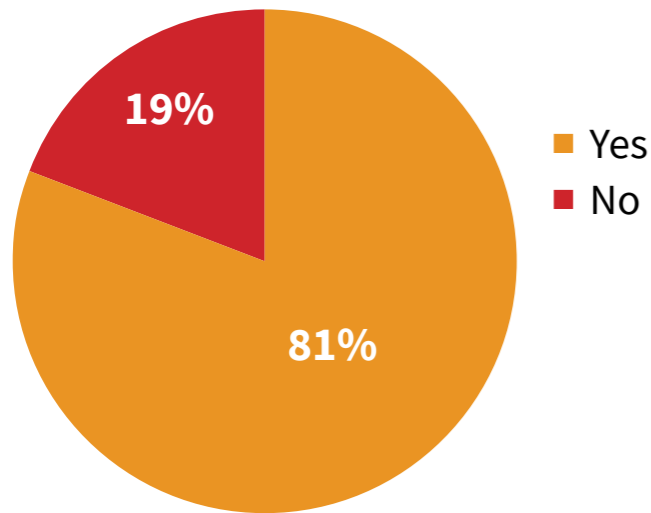
METRICS & GOALS



Four out of five marketers measure content performance.

Eighty-one percent of respondents said their organization measures content performance, up from 75% the previous year.

Does Your B2B Organization Measure Content Performance?



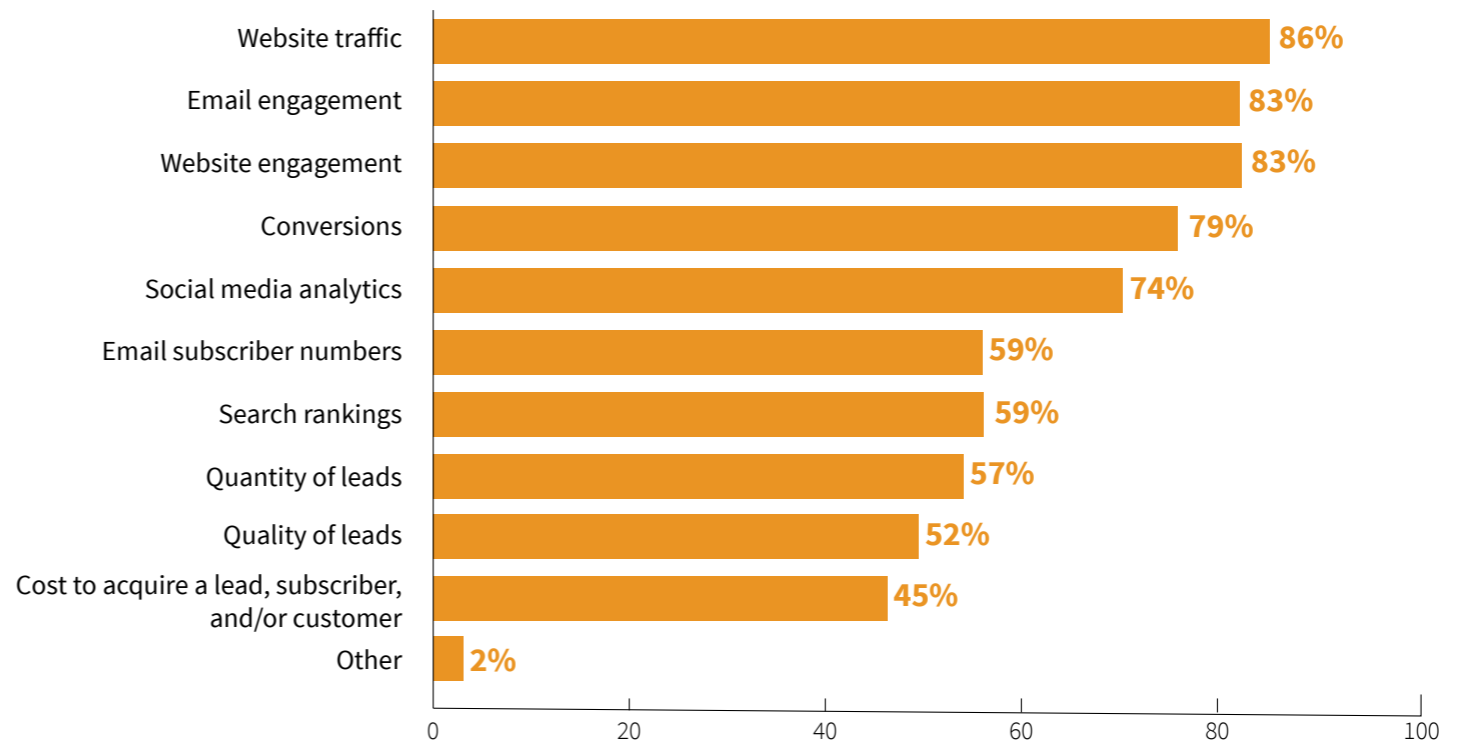
Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Base: Content marketers.

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey:

Content Marketing Institute/Marketing Profs, July 2022

Metrics B2B Marketers Have Used to Track Content Performance in Last 12 Months



Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Base: Content marketers who measure content performance.

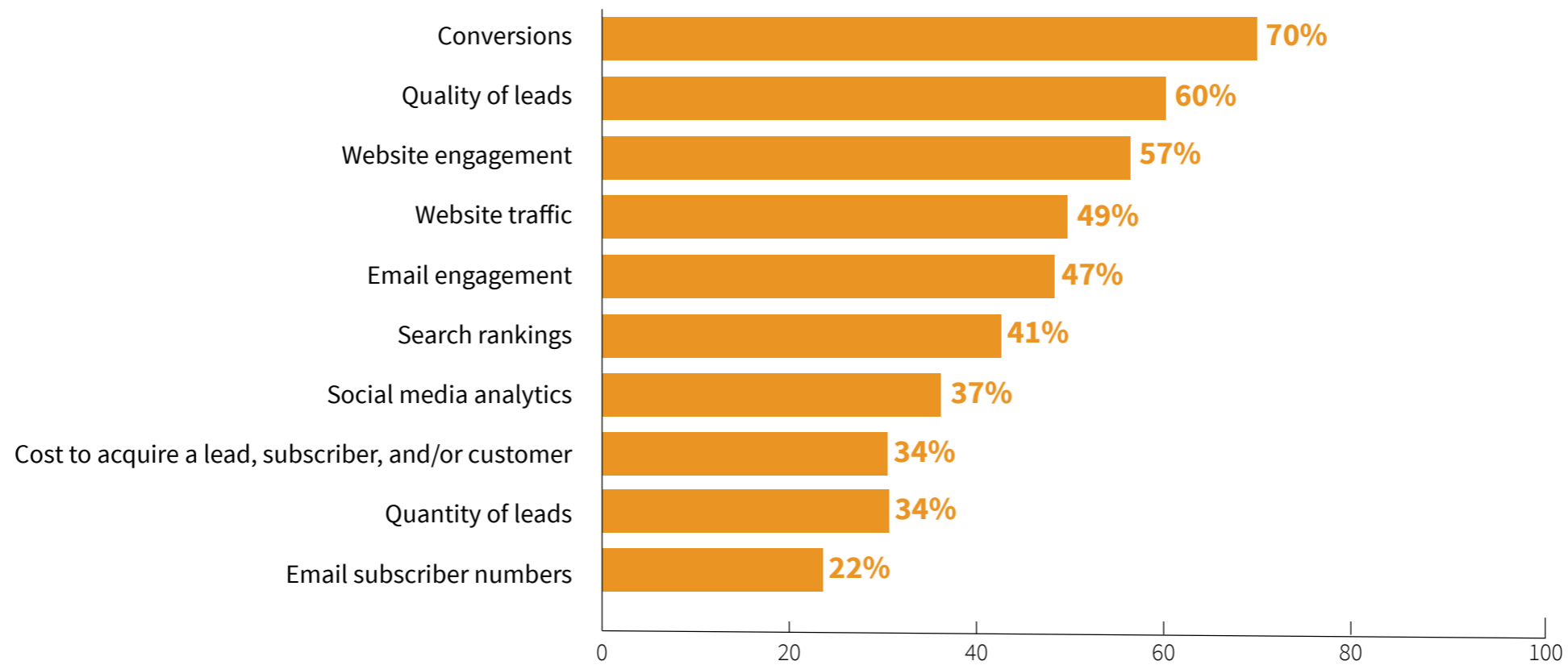
Aided list; multiple responses permitted.

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey:

Marketers rely most on conversions when evaluating content performance.

Quality of leads and website engagement are also among the top three metrics.

Metrics B2B Marketers Rely on Most When Evaluating Content Performance



Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Base: Content marketers who measure the content performance metrics listed.

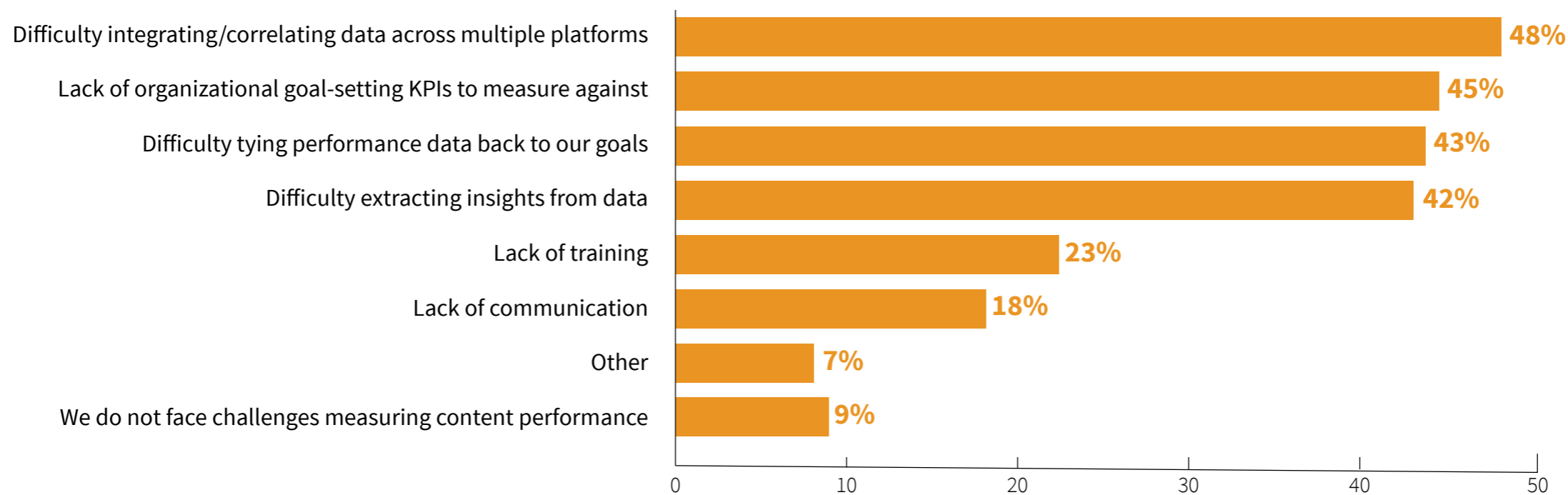
Aided list; multiple responses permitted.

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/Marketing Profs, July 2022

It's difficult for many marketers to connect content, experiences, data, and measurement across platforms.

The top challenge B2B marketers face with measuring content performance is difficulty integrating/correlating data across multiple platforms (48%).

Challenges B2B Marketers Face With Measuring Content Performance



Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Base: Content marketers who measure content performance.

Aided list; multiple responses permitted.

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/Marketing Profs, July 2022

Content marketing is a proven strategy for creating brand awareness, building trust, and educating audiences.

As we’ve found in past years, B2B marketers say the top three goals content marketing helps them achieve are creating brand awareness, building credibility/trust, and educating the audience.

Goals B2B Marketers Have Achieved by Using Content Marketing Successfully in Last 12 Months

	All Respondents	As Reported One Year Ago
Create brand awareness	83%	80%
Build/grow credibility/trust	77%	75%
Educate audience(s)	72%	70%
Build/grow loyalty with existing clients/customers	63%	60%
Generate demand/leads	67%	60%
Nurture subscribers/audiences/leads	54%	49%
Drive attendance to one or more in-person or virtual events	49%	47%
Generate sales/revenue	42%	42%
Support the launch of a new product	42%	42%
Build/grow a subscribed audience	44%	37%
None of the above	2%	2%

Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Base: Content marketers. Aided list; multiple responses permitted.

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/Marketing Profs, July 2022

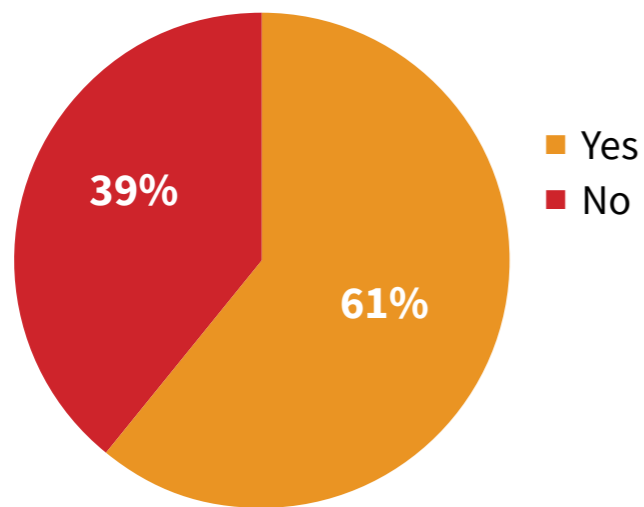
BUDGETS & SPENDING



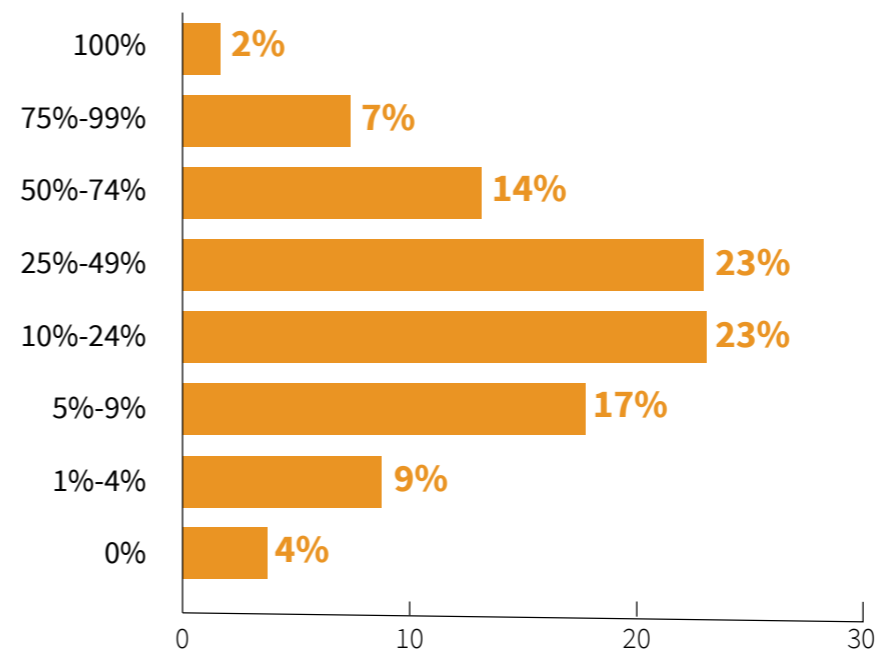
The percentage of marketing budget going toward content marketing is about the same as it was the previous year.

Sixty-one percent of respondents said they had knowledge of their company’s content marketing budget. Of those, 23% said their organization spent 50% or more of its total marketing budget on content marketing.

Do You Have Knowledge of Your B2B Organization’s Budget/Budgeting Process for Content Marketing?



Percentage of Total Marketing Budget Spent on B2B Content Marketing



Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

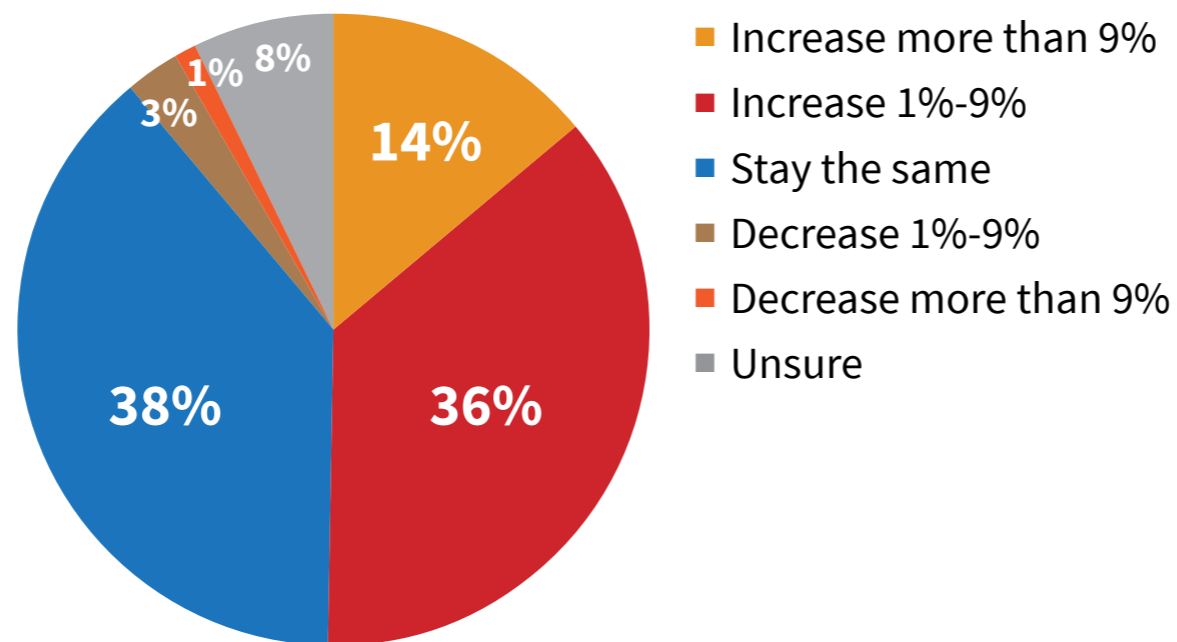
Base: Content marketers who know their organizations’ budget/budgeting process for content marketing. Aided list.

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/Marketing Profs, July 2022

Half of respondents think their content marketing budget will increase in 2023.

In 2021, 66% expected their 2022 content marketing budget to increase. In 2022, only 50% think their 2023 budget will increase, suggesting caution in an unpredictable economy.

How B2B Content Marketing Budget Will Change in 2023 Compared With 2022



Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Base: Content marketers who know their organizations' budget/budgeting process for content marketing. Aided list.

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/Marketing Profs, July 2022

As in the previous year, 52% of marketers expect their investment in in-person events to increase in 2023.

Expected investment in digital/virtual events decreased to 25% from 33% the previous year. Still, 42% expect investment to stay the same.

The most notable differences were with hybrid events: While 23% expect investment to increase (down from 39% the previous year), 10% expect a decrease, and 28% said they will not/do not use hybrid events at all, compared with 18% the previous year.

How B2B Organizations' Investment Will Change in 2023 Compared With 2022

	Increase	Stay the same	Decrease	Will be a new area of investment	Do not/will not use
Digital/virtual events	25%	42%	16%	3%	14%
In-person events	52%	29%	6%	3%	10%
Hybrid events	23%	33%	10%	5%	28%

Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Base: Content marketers who know their organizations' budget/budgeting process for content marketing. Aided list.

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/Marketing Profs, July 2021

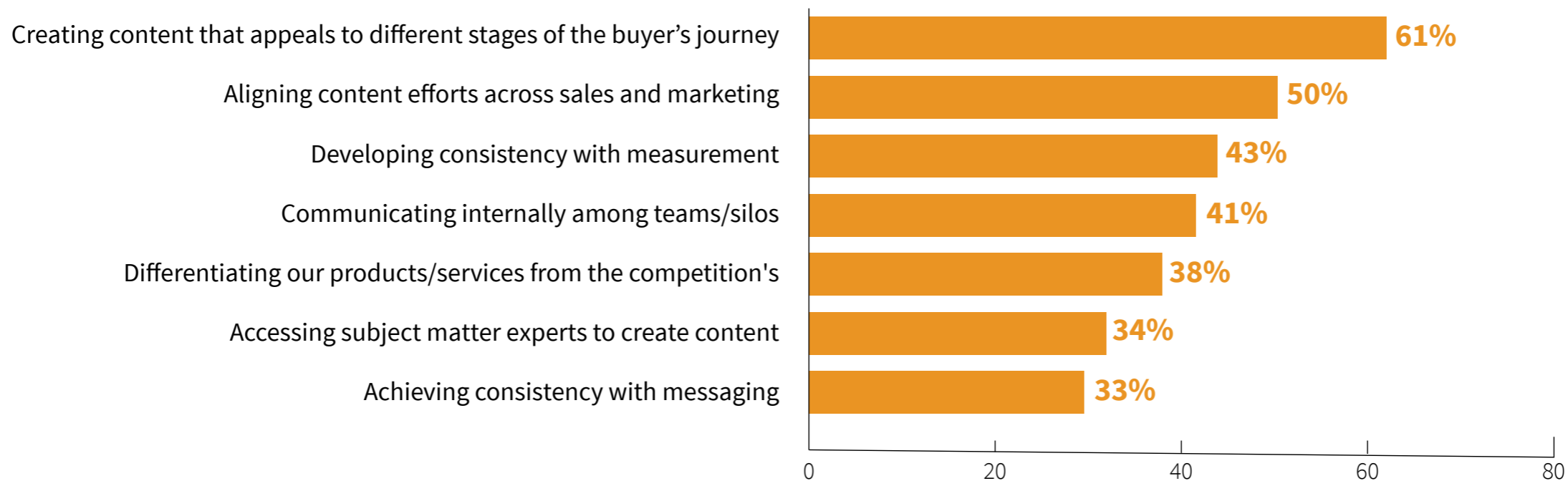
CHALLENGES



Creating content for the buyer’s journey and aligning sales are two important areas where content marketers face challenges.

Technology and communication will be key to making advances in these areas in 2023.

B2B Organizations’ Current Content Marketing Challenges



Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Base: Content marketers who measure content performance.

Aided list; multiple responses permitted.

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey:

Content Marketing Institute/Marketing Profs, July 2022

LOOKING FORWARD

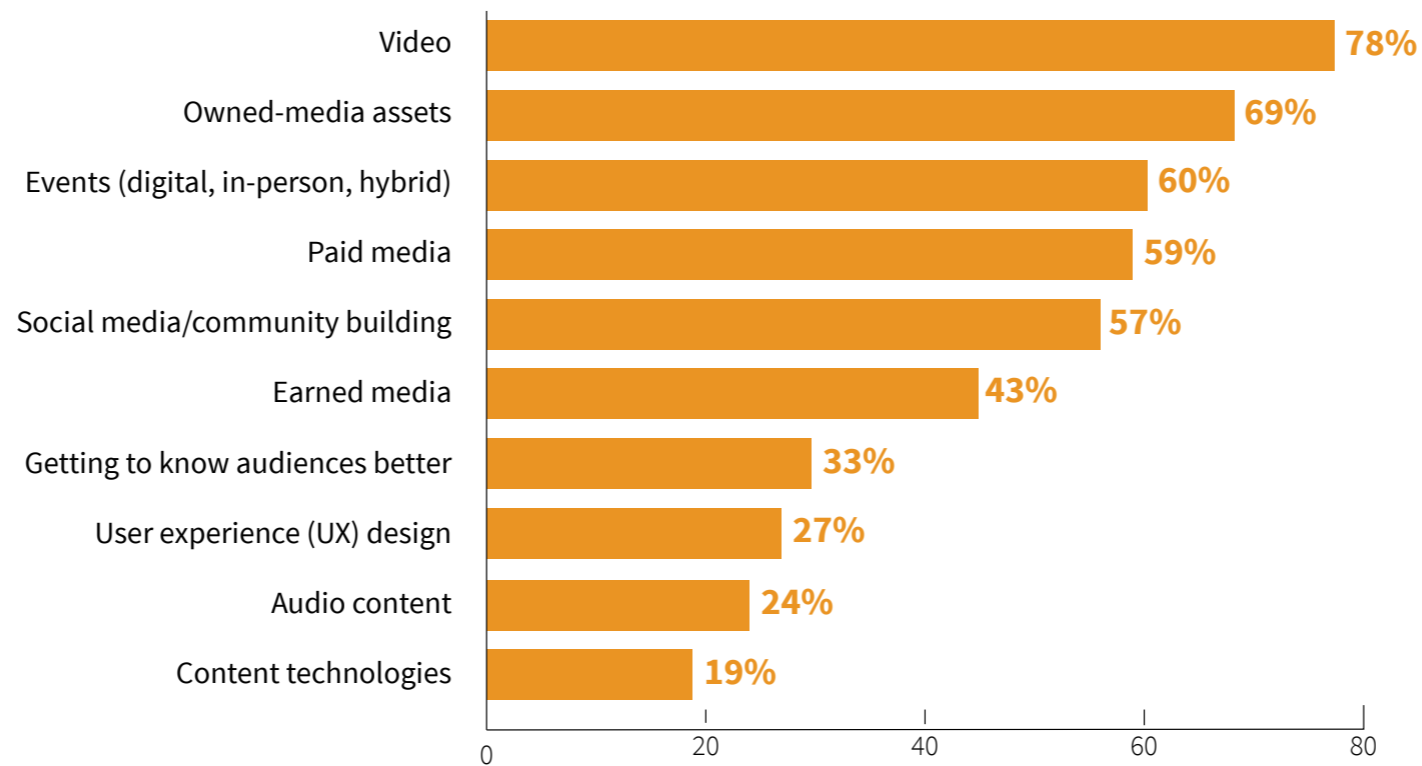


Investment in video will continue to grow.

Seventy-eight percent of content marketers said their organization will invest/continue to invest in video in 2023, up from 69% the previous year. We also saw notable increases in those planning to invest in:

- ▶ Owned-media assets (69% vs. 57% the previous year)
- ▶ Social media/community building (57% compared with 39% the previous year)

Areas of B2B Content Marketing Investment in 2023



Content Marketing Institute/MarketingProfs

Base: Content marketers who measure content performance. Aided list; up to seven responses permitted.

13th Annual Content Marketing Survey: Content Marketing Institute/Marketing Profs, July 2022

We asked marketers, “If you could change one thing about content marketing in your organization, what would that be?” Most of the answers revolved around seven key themes.

Here are some of the answers.

▶ **A content marketing strategy/strategic approach to content marketing**

“I would make our content more strategic. We are still at the stage where it’s highly reactive; there’s nothing to pin it down to in terms of the wider business and marketing strategies.”

“If we had more of an integrated marketing strategy it would not only increase sales but decrease the overall workload.”

“I would like to see us commit to a content strategy as a way to drive campaigns, build our brand, and engage prospects and customers. We have tons of random acts of content, but our company doesn’t see the benefit of orchestration.”

“Our content is largely ad hoc/reactive to organizational needs rather than planned and strategic. I hope to set a content calendar (based on identified needs from sales and the organization) and have the resources to deliver on that plan.”

▶ **Content marketing buy-in**

“A more robust understanding of what the role encompasses and how it touches all aspects of the organization.”

“Define content marketing as a value-producing function to support all other marketing efforts. Recognize the value it brings and support it with adequate funding and resourcing.”

“I would increase the perceived value of content marketing — it’s a functional expertise/skill set, not just something everyone pitches in to do. The right content is critical for the buyer’s journey and campaigns.”

“More focus and support from leadership on our strategic goals so we can refine our content marketing focus to make sure we go in the right direction with the right resources.”



► **More resources/more budget and additional staff**

“Increased investment into training and team knowledge because as a team of three it’s very hard to stay on top of the game.”

“Increase the size of the team to add one or more writers and one or more digital marketing specialists (we currently have 1.5 of each). There’s a lot we want to do but we lack the resources to do it all.”

“Have more budget to selectively outsource content creation; we simply cannot create enough new content to keep up with the demand we have in sales enablement and our brand awareness goals.”

“Add more skilled personnel and increase visibility of the content marketing team’s contribution to the overall achievement of sales goals.”

► **More access to subject matter experts (SMEs)**

“Help our SMEs understand the value of aligning to strategic POVs and topics, rather than pursuing random acts of content and ideas. Related to this, they need to become more audience-focused.”

“Help our experts understand what the audience really wants to hear from them. Not just a sales pitch, but a true connection with their business.”

“Get the subject matter experts to give the story — value props and whys at a deep level and be specific about how what we do adds value.”

“More buy-in from our SMEs. Currently, some of our SMEs are right on the ball when helping to design content, but not all. The ones that don’t require consistent nagging and will treat the content assignments as secondary or tertiary tasks.”

► **Better technology**

“Better technology would allow us to speed up our efforts and measure them better. Only by having a solid measurement framework will we be able to improve our results.”

“The technology. Being able to have a central repository that integrates with all our systems (CMS, CRM, etc.) to be able to manage and track the flow of where/when our content is reaching targets.

“How content is collected and managed. Currently, content is mostly managed by the departments that created it and that restricts access to account managers. We do not have a library where all content can be accessed easily.”

“Better technologies to manage and distribute content and understand content performance. Plus, technologies to better manage the content creation process. Without adequate technology, content marketing is an extremely frustrating endeavor and nearly impossible to measure at scale.”

► **Better measurement tools**

“A better way to track performance of content marketing, both as a whole and the individual content pieces. Right now, it’s disconnected and disorganized, and hard to trace leads back to what may have converted them.”

“Would love to be able to more clearly measure and communicate success and use that information to inform future decision making.”

“Better insight into how content impacts high-value actions and impact on ROI ... earning a place at the strategic marketing table with other revenue-generating disciplines.”

“Prioritize content assessment as part of the marketing metrics we gather and attribute it more clearly to revenue. This would help us be more strategic in what we make.”

► **Greater alignment between marketing and sales/ breaking down silos**

“Aligning sales and marketing. We are never on the same page. They want to sell the features of the product and we want to sell the experience of the product.”

“Alignment between various marketing teams. Too many people or teams work in silos and have the budget to do so. We end up creating too much content and much of it is not used.”

“Convince our sales team of its power and efficacy to better encourage them (and other SMEs throughout the organization) to assist and support us in its creation.”

“Better communication between the marketing team and sales team regarding goals and overall messaging, as well as making sure the sales team understands why we create the content we do and being more cognizant of our time constraints.”



ACTION STEPS

PLAN A PROCESS, NOT A PROJECT



ROBERT ROSE
Chief Strategy Advisor
CMI

What I find fascinating in this year's research is that, yes, it's time to feed the giant – but we should be careful not to get distracted by the food, rather than our ability to cook.

Too often, content marketers get wrapped up in content creation, rather than their ability to lead the efforts to create.

One of my go-to books of the last decade is Rita Gunther McGrath's, *The End of Competitive Advantage*. In that book, she illustrates that all competitive advantage is transient – perhaps now more than ever. This fact, she contends, is understood. But then “why,” she asks, “hasn't basic strategy practice changed?” As she says:

“Most executives, even when they realize that competitive advantages are going to be ephemeral, are still using strategy frameworks and tools designed for achieving a sustainable competitive advantage, not for quickly exploiting and moving in and out of advantages.”

That last part has the deepest implications for the evolving practice of strategic content marketing in a business. After working with hundreds of enterprise brands over the last 10 years, I've concluded: **Most businesses think about how they can change content to fit marketing's purpose instead of how they might change marketing to fit content's purpose.**

Content will never be a sustainable competitive advantage or differentiator – all content is easily replicable and, at best, only transient in differentiated value.

Instead, consider looking at content operations as the catalyst that can change everything for the content marketing challenges you face. Recognize that you and the activities you perform are the competitive advantage. Your future success hinges on the ability as a team (of 1 or 100) to be dynamic and fluid – moving in and out of “arenas” (as McGrath calls them) of content and creating temporary advantages.

Here's the real takeaway: Ask everyone in your business – including your CEO – if they believe compelling, engaging, useful, and dynamic content-driven experiences will move the business forward.

If the answer is yes, then the *strategic* value is in your ability to evolve and coordinate all the activities to repeatedly create those valuable experiences. It is not the content itself or where you distribute it. The content team's job is not to be good at content; their job is to enable the business to be good at content.

Realizing this strategic value presents a to-do list:

- ▶ Businesses must increasingly stop organizing and scaling new marketing teams based on platforms, technologies, or inside-looking-out views of the customer journey. The successful business becomes skilled and integrated at operating and managing all manners of content-driven experiences. The format and placement of those experiences on multiple channels will always be temporal.
- ▶ Businesses must stop looking at content from a container-first perspective – solely designed to support marketing tactics or initiatives. Instead, businesses must identify content operations as a function supporting the fluid use of content to fuel better customer experiences.
- ▶ Businesses will win with content marketing when they can constantly reconfigure their activities and manage portfolios of content-driven experiences. When one experience is no longer advantageous to the business, they do not say, “That’s the way we’ve always done it.” Instead, they healthily disengage and dismantle these experiences.

Content strategy = different activities that fit together

One of the first signs of trouble in any content marketing approach is if the first question is, “How do we get more efficient at content?”

Getting to efficiency assumes there is a working, standard operation that is providing value. The goal is to change that process to remove the friction. But when there’s no repeatable standard operation, focusing on efficiency means trying to produce the same or more content with the same resources.

That rarely works out to be better for the business.

The more difficult task is to determine the *different* activities the business will undertake to create or augment the existing processes, or which activities the business will undertake differently.

Your business’s content capabilities reflect its ability to communicate. And your ability to evolve the activities that impact communication is the only thing that creates any competitive advantage.

The content you create will provide you with no sustainable competitive advantage. But a strategic content operation just might.

METHODOLOGY & DEMOGRAPHICS

The 13th Annual B2B Content Marketing Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends: Insights for 2023 report was produced by Content Marketing Institute (CMI) and MarketingProfs, and sponsored by ON24.

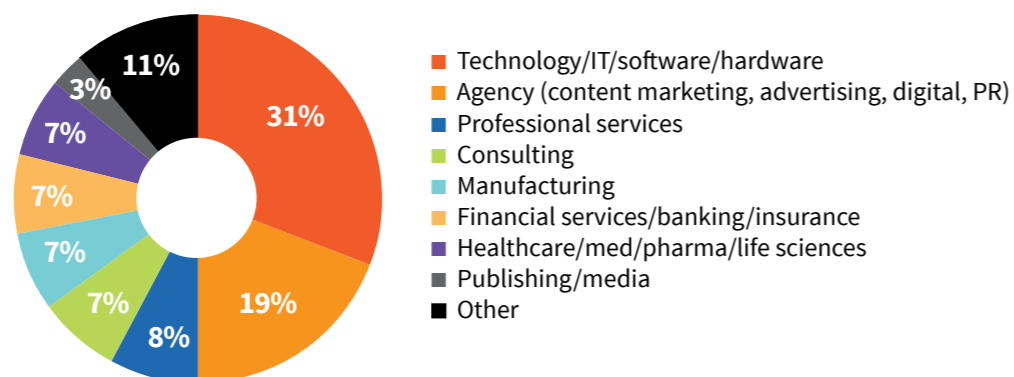
The online survey, from which the results of this report were generated, was emailed to a sample of marketers using lists from CMI and MarketingProfs.

A total of 1,104 recipients from around the globe — representing a range of industries, functional areas, and company sizes — replied to the survey during July 2022.

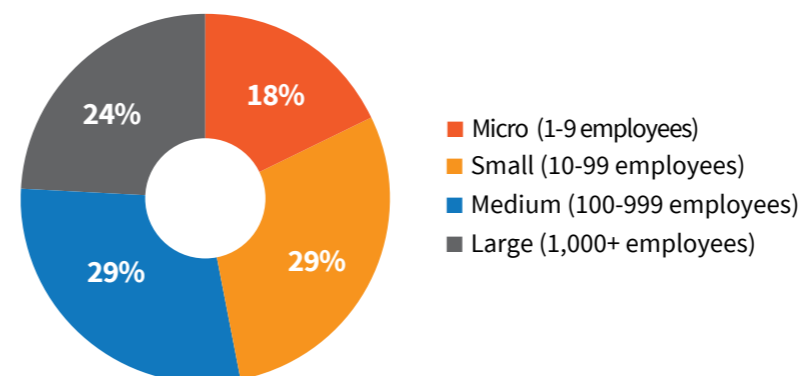
This report presents the findings from the 925 respondents who indicated:

- ▶ Their organization is a for-profit company, primarily selling products/services to businesses (B2B) or businesses and consumers (B2B+B2C).
- ▶ They are a content marketer, involved with the content marketing function, and/or someone to whom content marketing reports.

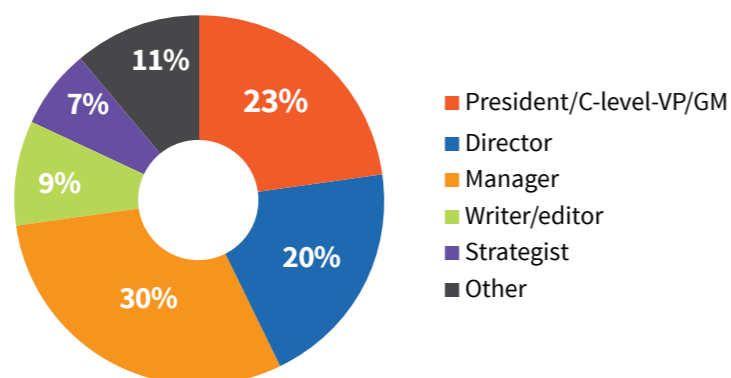
B2B Industry Classification



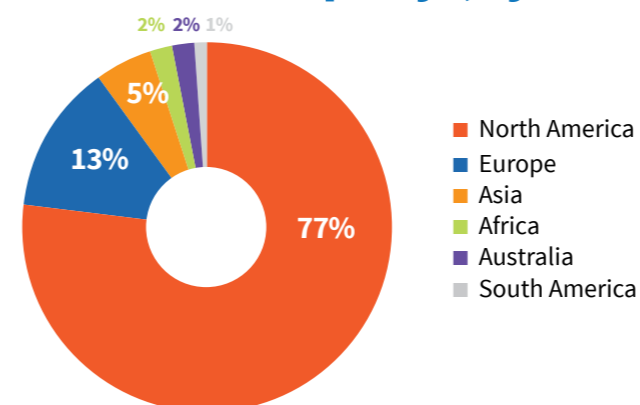
Size of B2B Company (by Employees)



B2B Role



B2B Company (by Location)



Thanks to the survey participants, who made this research possible, and to everyone who helps disseminate these findings throughout the content marketing industry.

About Content Marketing Institute

Content Marketing Institute (CMI) exists to do one thing: advance the practice of content marketing through online education and in-person and digital events. We create and curate content experiences that teach marketers and creators from enterprise brands, small businesses, and agencies how to attract and retain customers through compelling, multichannel storytelling. Global brands turn to CMI for strategic consultation, training, and research. Organizations from around the world send teams to Content Marketing World, the largest content marketing-focused event, ContentTECH Summit, and CMI virtual events. Our community of 215,000+ content marketers shares camaraderie and conversation. CMI is organized by Informa Connect. To learn more, visit www.contentmarketinginstitute.com.

About Informa Connect

Informa Connect is a specialist in content-driven events and digital communities that allow professionals to meet, connect, learn, and share knowledge. We operate major branded events in Marketing, Global Finance, Life Sciences and Pharma, Construction and Real Estate, and in a number of other specialist markets and connect communities online year-round..

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 for more information.

About ON24

ON24 is a leading sales and marketing platform for digital engagement, delivering insights to drive revenue growth. Through interactive webinars, virtual events, and personalized content experiences, ON24 provides a system of engagement powered by AI for businesses to scale engagement, conversions, and pipeline to drive revenue growth. The ON24 Platform supports millions of professionals a month who are totaling billions of engagement minutes per year. ON24 is headquartered in San Francisco with global offices in North America, EMEA, and APAC. For more information, visit ON24.com or [contact us](#) now.