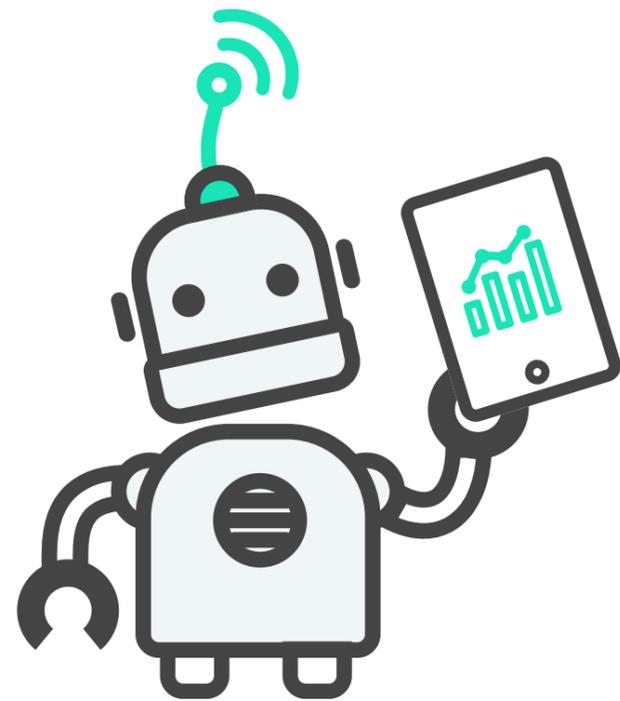


TODAY'S TRENDS IN

B2B CONTENT ENGAGEMENT

The habits, preferences and motivations that drive content consumption



INTRODUCTION

Good content starts with knowing your audience

If you want to create successful content – the kind that earns engagement, shares and ultimately more business – you have to really understand your audience. Easier said than done, right?

This report takes away a lot of the guesswork. GoToWebinar surveyed over 3,000 professionals from around the world to find out about their habits, preferences and motivations when it comes to consuming work-related content.

Stop wondering what kind of content your audience craves. We've got you covered.

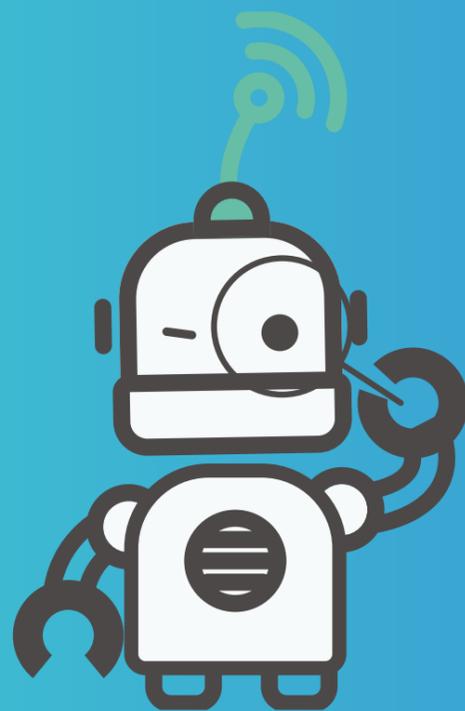


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What content gets the most love and attention?

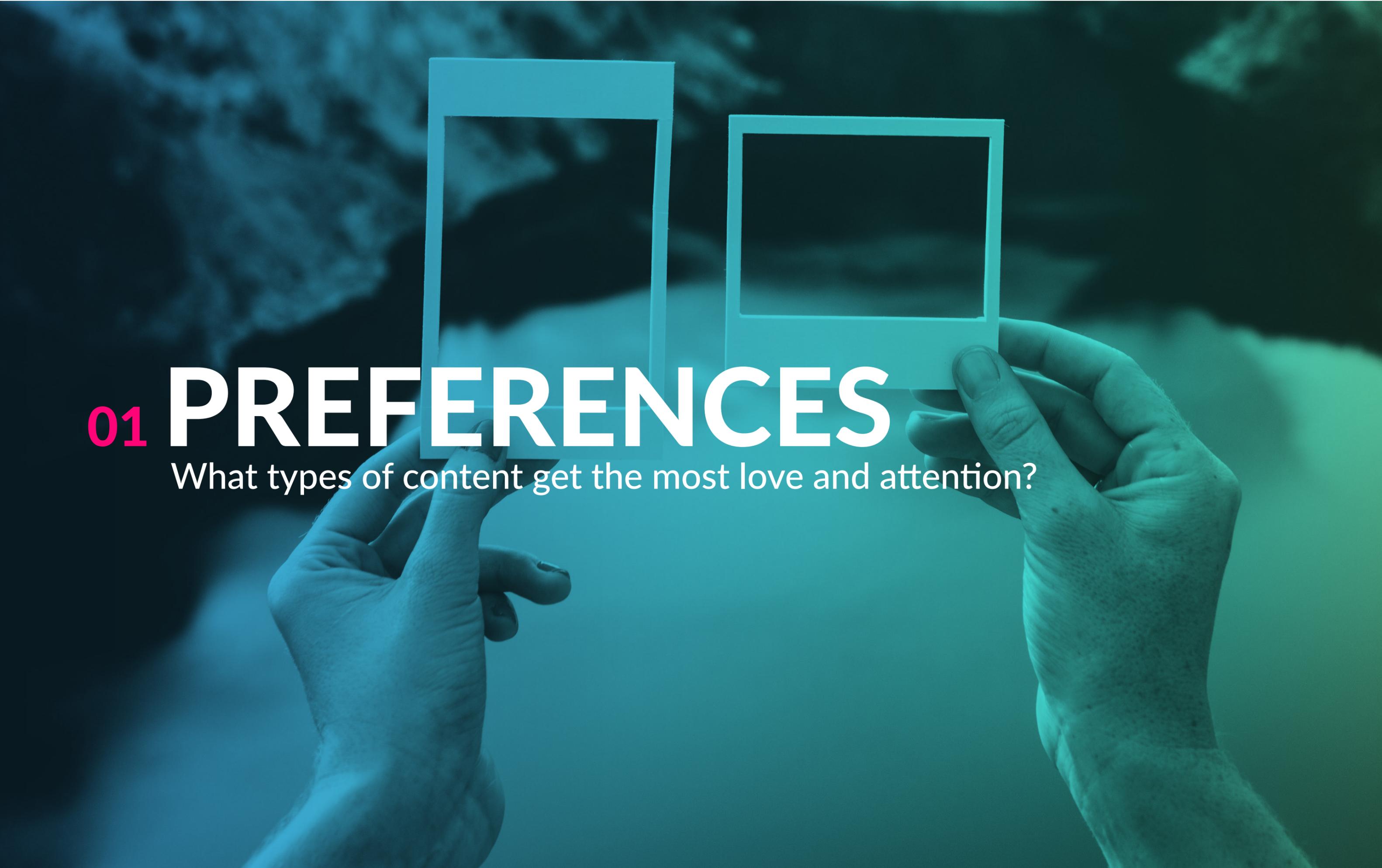
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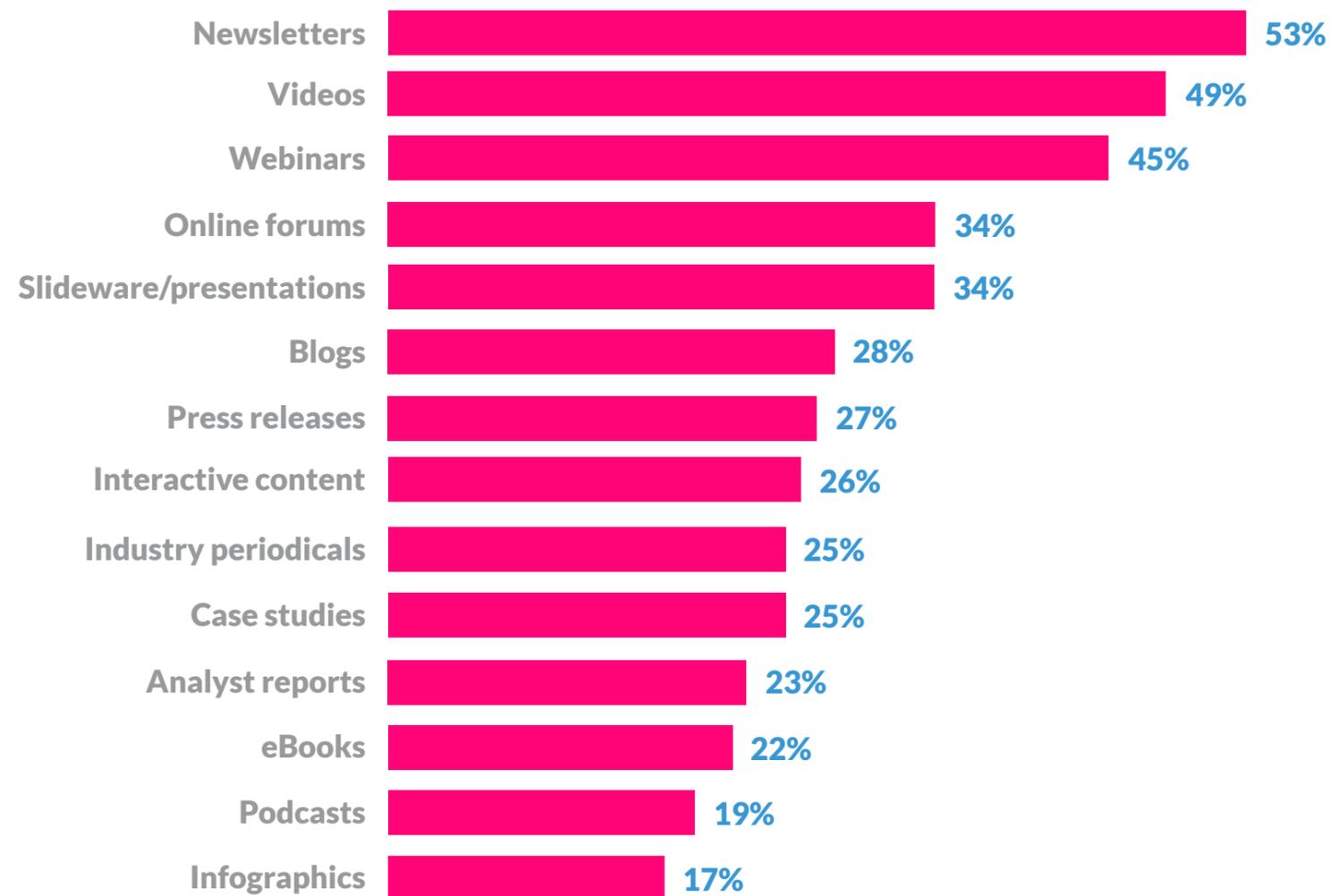
What types of content get the most love and attention?

PREFERENCES

Biggest crowd size

Out of 14 major content formats, newsletters, videos and webinars draw in the biggest crowds of professionals. This is consistent across industries, B2B and B2C companies, job levels and ages.

WHAT TYPES OF CONTENT HAVE YOU CONSUMED FOR PROFESSIONAL REASONS IN THE PAST YEAR?



Fewer than a quarter of professionals surveyed had consumed an ebook or white paper, podcast or infographic in the last year. Podcasts are a relatively new format for professional-based content, which could explain its spot at the bottom. But ebooks and infographics just aren't the types of content professionals consume on a regular basis.



#VideoLove

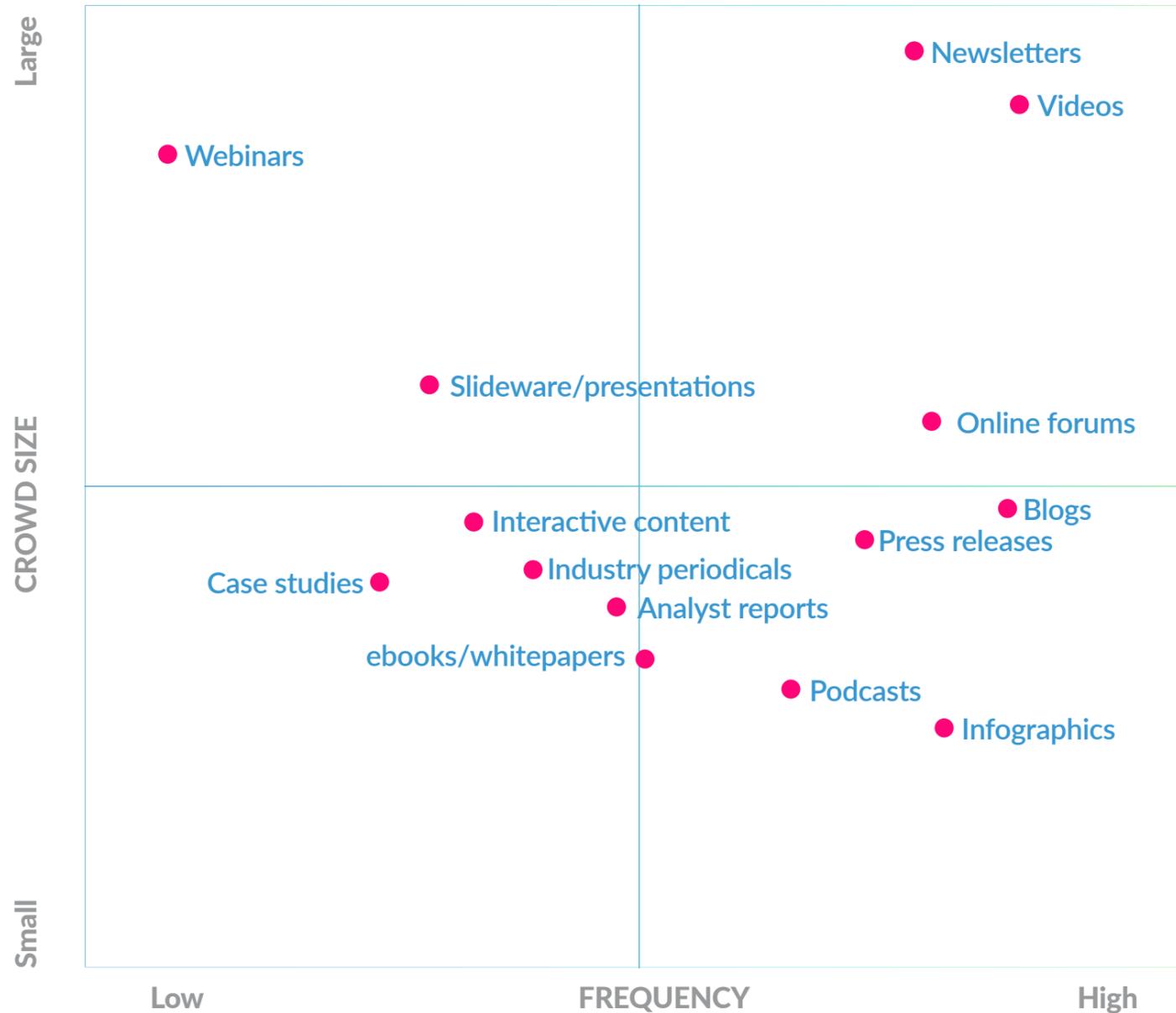
While newsletters top the chart, millennials show the strongest preference for video content. In fact, "60% of millennials prefer to watch a company video than read a newsletter."¹

PREFERENCES

The four corners of content: a look at crowd size + frequency

AWARD WINNERS
Everybody loves webinars and other online presentations, just in smaller doses. While professionals value good presentations, the time required to attend means they typically can't squeeze them in more than once a month.

INDIE
This type of content appeals to more targeted groups and is only consumed a couple times a year. Case studies, interactive content and industry periodicals offer great information, but are only used occasionally, and typically for a specific purpose.



BLOCKBUSTERS
This type of content appeals to everyone and is consumed most frequently. These content formats are likely to get the most views and shares.

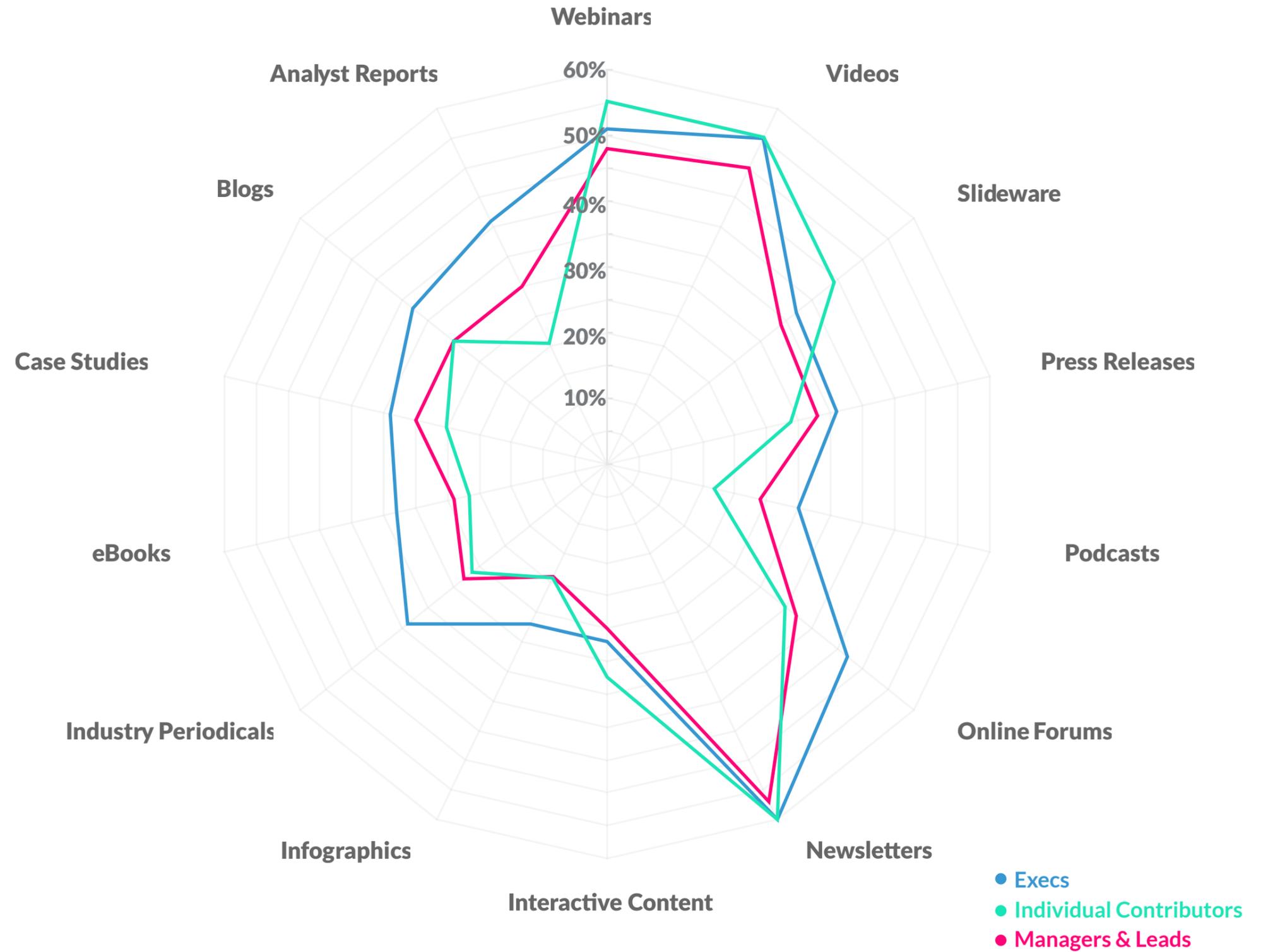
CULT CLASSICS
Fewer people are consuming these content formats, but those who do show a strong preference for them and consume them frequently. Does your target audience have an affinity for one of these alternative formats?

PREFERENCES

Execs crave variety

On average, executives consume a wider variety of content types than both managers and individual contributors. The most notable differences are analyst reports, online forums and industry periodicals.

WHAT TYPE OF CONTENT HAVE YOU CONSUMED IN THE LAST YEAR?



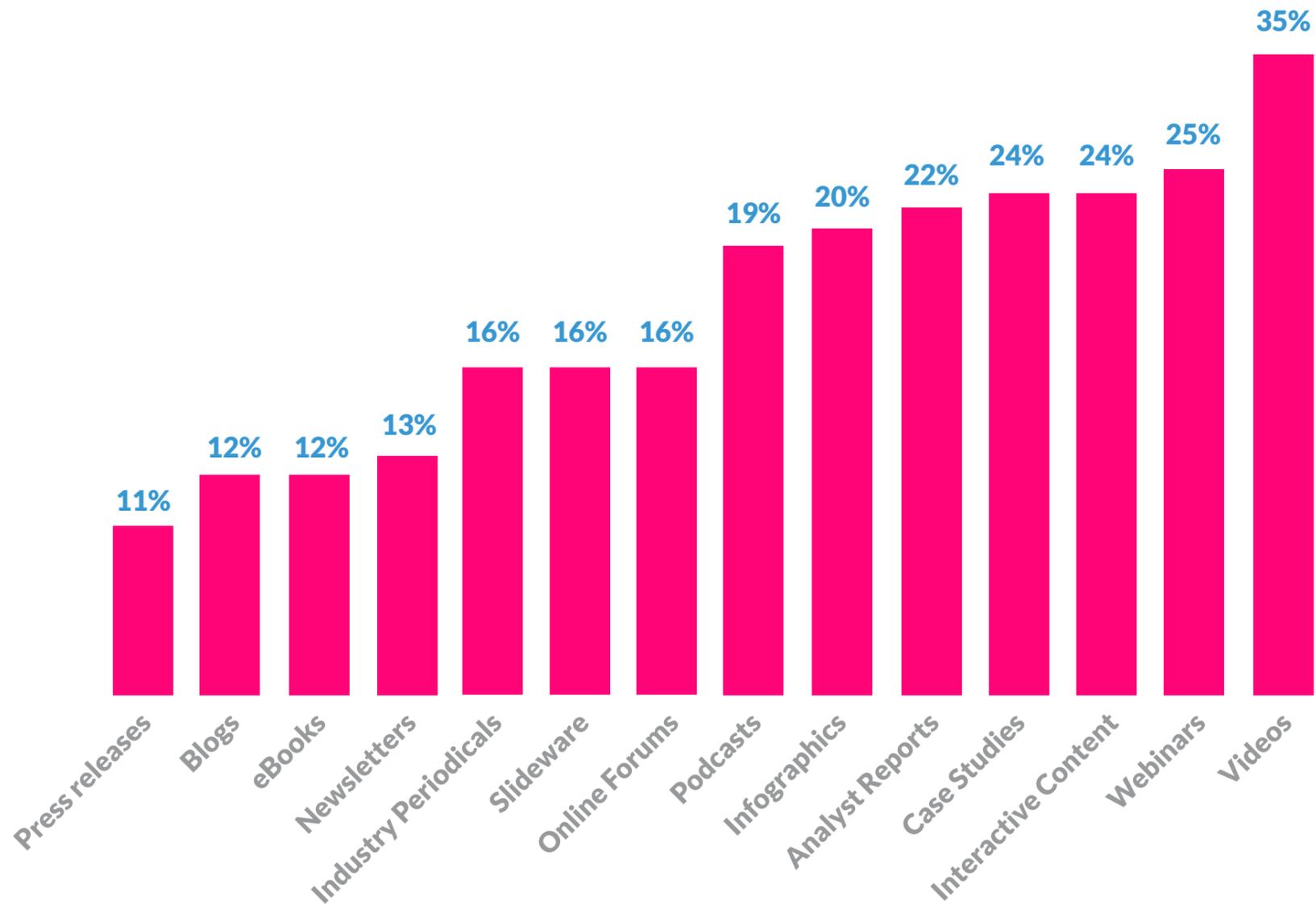
PREFERENCES

Most engaging content types

When it comes to captivating your audience, professionals find videos, webinars and interactive content to be the most engaging. These types of content are entertaining and created with the intent to keep people's interest.

The least engaging forms of content are static and text-based – ebooks/white papers, blogs and press releases.

WHAT TYPES OF CONTENT DO YOU FIND MOST ENGAGING?



35% of professionals find videos to be the most engaging.

PREFERENCES

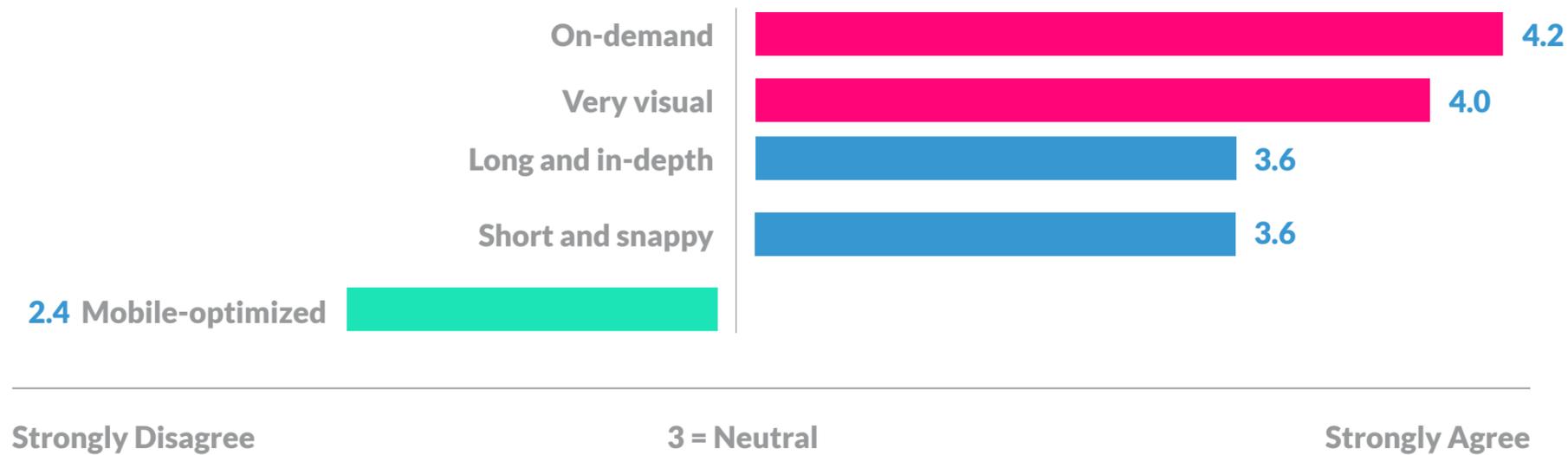
Winning characteristics

Busy professionals want to consume content at their convenience. That's why they prefer on-demand over live content.

They also favor very visual and engaging content over text-based content.

People didn't show a strong preference for mobile-optimized content. You may not score extra brownie points for having responsive design, but in this day, it's expected. You'll look slow and outdated if your mobile content experience is terrible.

I PREFER CONTENT THAT IS ...



Execs favor longer, in-depth content

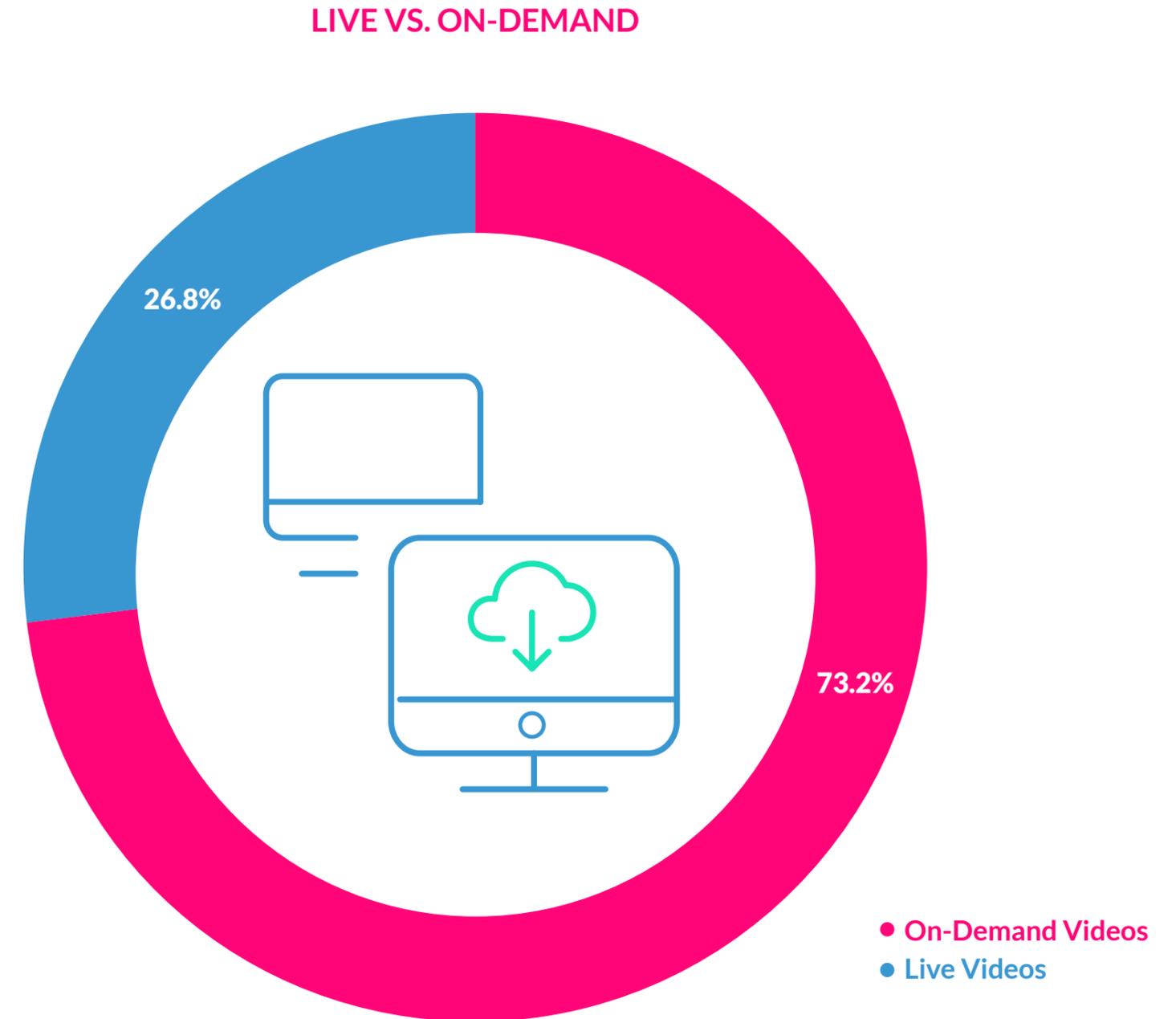
Compared to lower-level job titles, executives have a slight preference for long and in-depth content over shorter content formats. If you're developing content for VPs and the C-suite, don't be afraid to get detailed. They want to really understand a topic or problem, and they're likely to be looking for more information than a blog post or infographic can provide.

PREFERENCES

On-demand isn't optional

People overwhelmingly prefer on-demand over live videos. For webinars, live events are great for people who want real-time interaction, and on-demand versions reach those who want to view on their own time.

What does this mean for other types of content? Make your content available when and how your audience wants it. Create content that's bingeable, and then allow your audience to access content at their own pace.



7 deadly sins of content

Professionals don't have time to sift through mountains of content looking for nuggets relevant to their business. But you can be sure they'll skip your content if you make these seven deadly mistakes. Here are the top seven deadly sins of content, in order.



1. Too promotional

We get it; you want to sell your product. But you need to provide value if you want to build trust. So, go easy on the promotion, and give readers content they can use.



2. Too long

Get to the point. Don't add unnecessary filler content just to fill up a page. Ain't nobody got time for that – least of all business professionals.



3. Bad writing

It doesn't matter how good your information is; if your content is full of typos and bad grammar, you'll lose all credibility.



4. Doesn't deliver on promise

Your headline needs to be true to the rest of the content. While impressive headlines get clicks, honest and consistent content gets loyal followers.



5. Too high level

Professionals are looking for practical, concrete content. Don't speak in generalities; get specific and teach your readers something useful.



6. Not actionable

Professionals want to read or watch a piece of content and leave with a to-do list. Make sure your content incites action and gives readers a plan.



7. Ugly

Nothing is less appealing than poor design and formatting. Your design is the first thing people notice; keep it clean, current and easy to follow, and viewers will stay long enough to read it all.



PREFERENCES

Key findings

BLOCKBUSTERS VS. AWARD WINNERS

Just like movies, different types of content attract a different type of crowd. If you want your content to be consumed frequently and attract the largest crowds, newsletters, videos and online forums are your best bet. If you're more interested in hosting highly valued events that attract large crowds, try webinars.

EXTRA USEFUL, EXTRA VISUAL

Professionals find case studies, videos and analyst reports to be the most useful types of content – this is especially true when it comes to making purchase decisions. While having the right content mix is key, don't overlook design. Highly visual content is a top preference.

ALWAYS AVAILABLE ON DEMAND

73% of professionals prefer on-demand events over live events. Your move: create on-demand versions of all live webinars and other online presentations. And make types of content bingeable so your audience can consume it at their pace.

2 MOTIVATORS

What makes professionals tick, click and purchase?



MOTIVATORS

Strongest drivers: learning new skills and gaining knowledge

Learning new knowledge or skills is the primary motivation for consuming content. For content creators, this means you should make your content practical. Teach new concepts and skill sets.

While there's still a place for thought-leadership or product-focused content, your audience will love you for your actionable content that helps them do their jobs better.

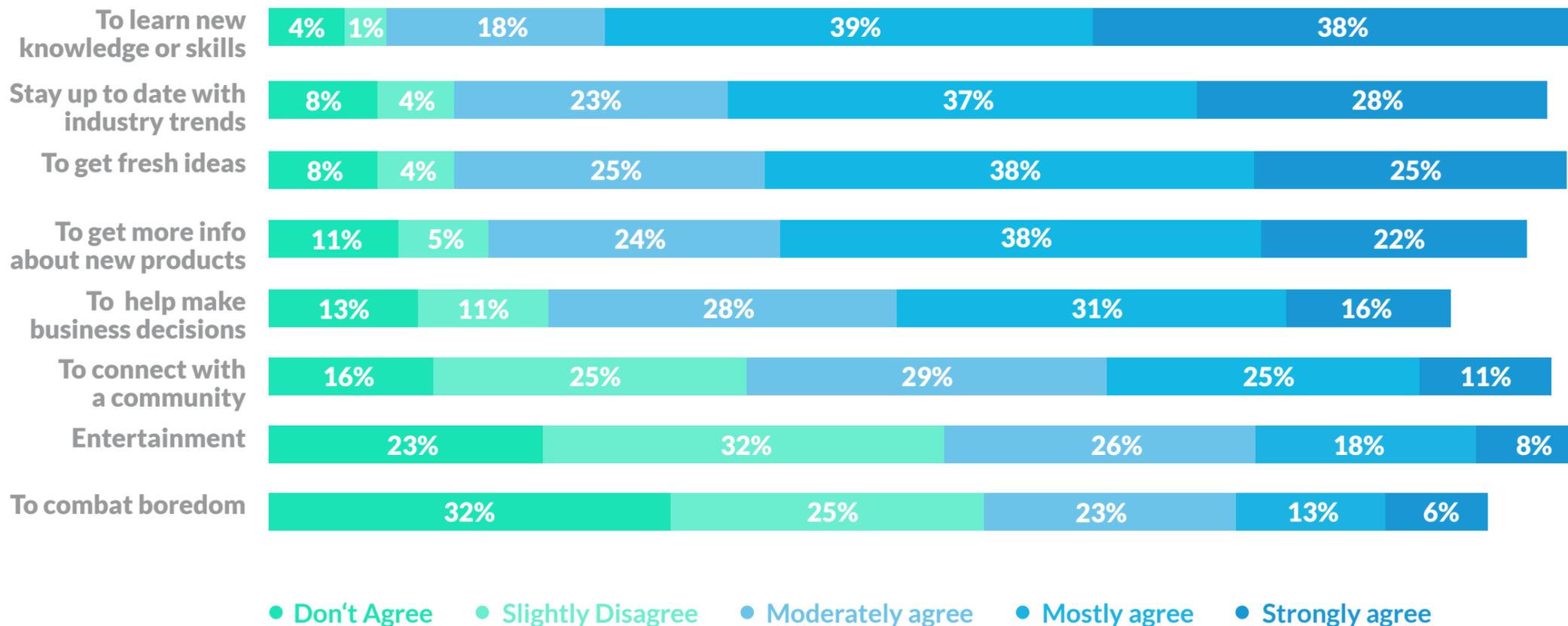


Execs vs. individual contributors

Gaining new knowledge or learning a skill was the primary motivation for consuming content across age groups, industries and job levels. However, executives and managers have a wider variety of motivations for consuming content. Compared with individual contributors, executives and managers demonstrated more interest in using content to:

- Make business decisions
- Get information on new products
- Stay up to date on industry trends

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO CONSUME CONTENT?

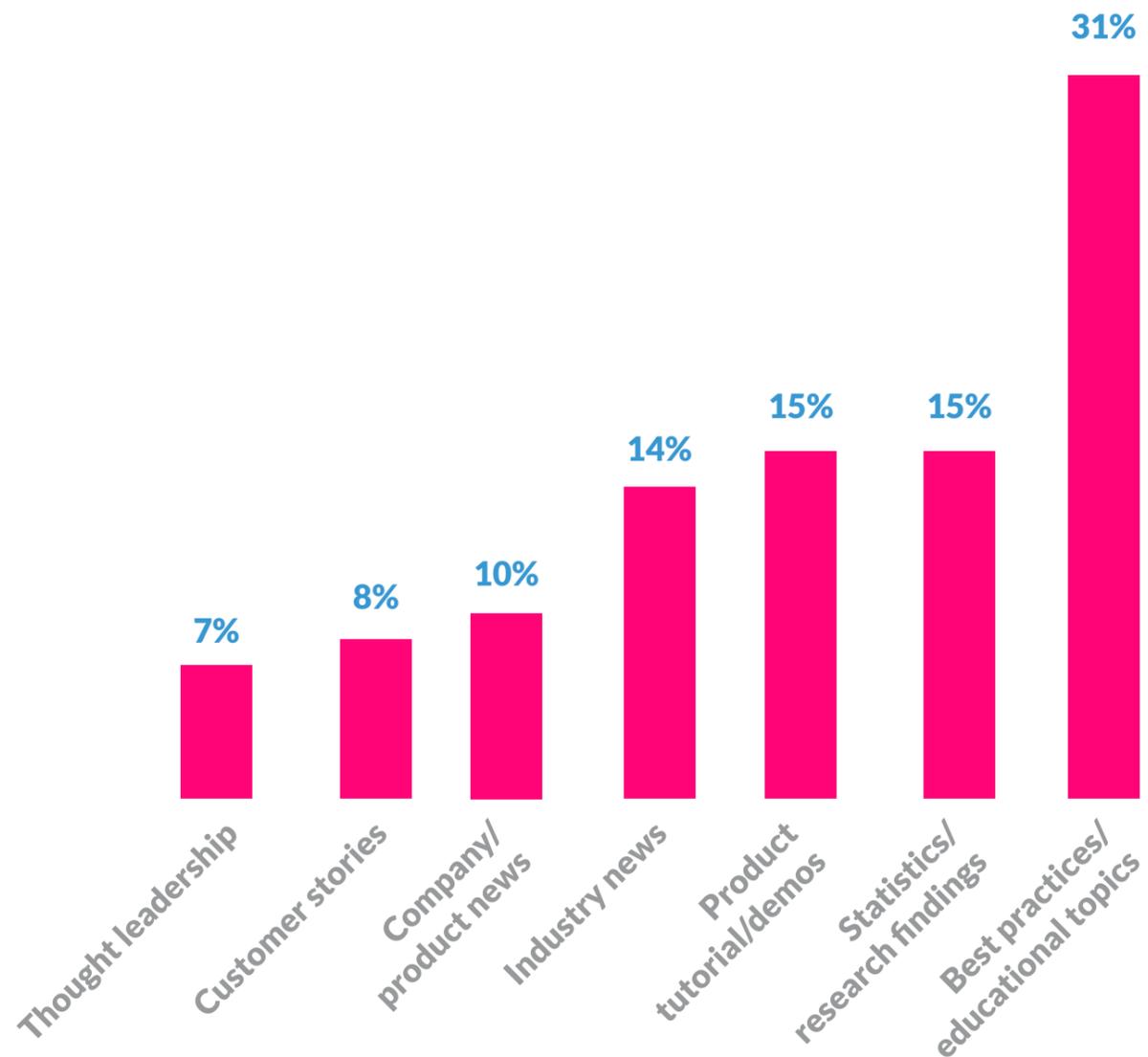


MOTIVATORS

Valuable topics

Almost a third of those surveyed consider “best practices/educational” to be the most valuable content topics. Coming in second is “statistics/research findings,” which goes hand in hand with educational content. It’s safe to say professionals value education and learning above any other topics, which complements their primary motivation for consuming content.

WHAT TOPICS DO YOU VALUE MOST?



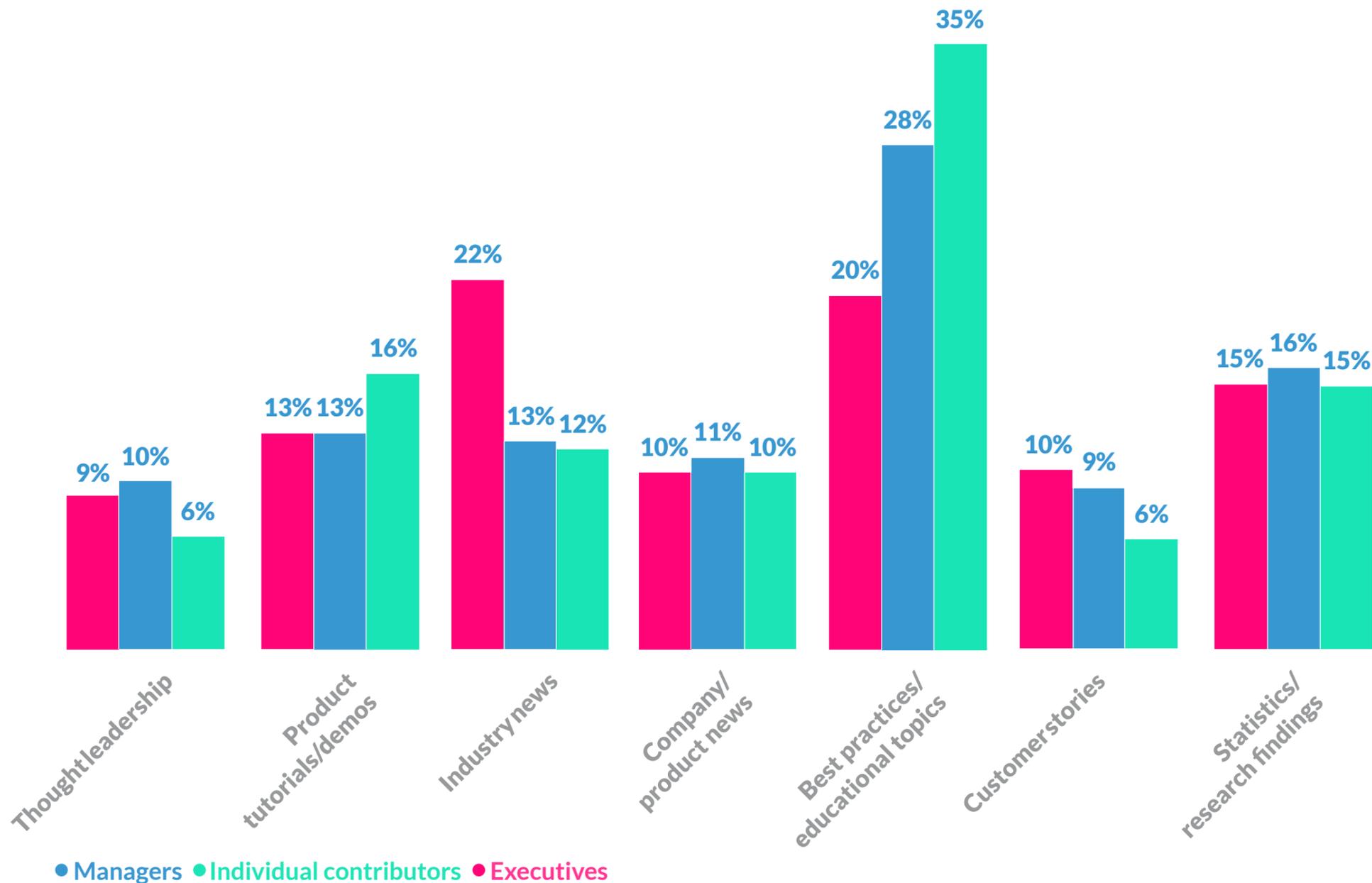
Almost **a third** of those surveyed consider “best practices/educational” to be the most valuable content topics.

MOTIVATORS

Execs vs. individual contributors: big picture or tactical topics?

Execs place higher value on thought-leadership content and industry news. Whereas, individual contributors lean toward more tactical content, including best practices and product tutorial content. When creating marketing content, the lesson is to know your audience and their job level, then cater to their specific needs!

WHAT TOPICS DO YOU VALUE MOST?



35% of individual contributors find best practices/educational content the most useful.

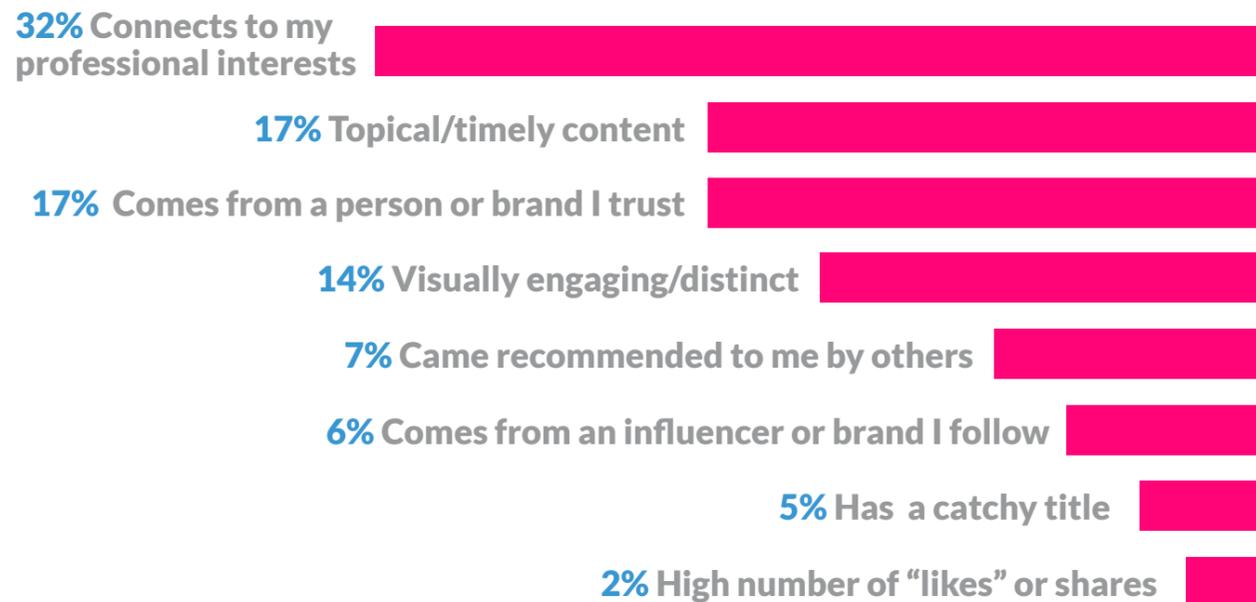
MOTIVATORS

What catches and keeps your audience's attention?

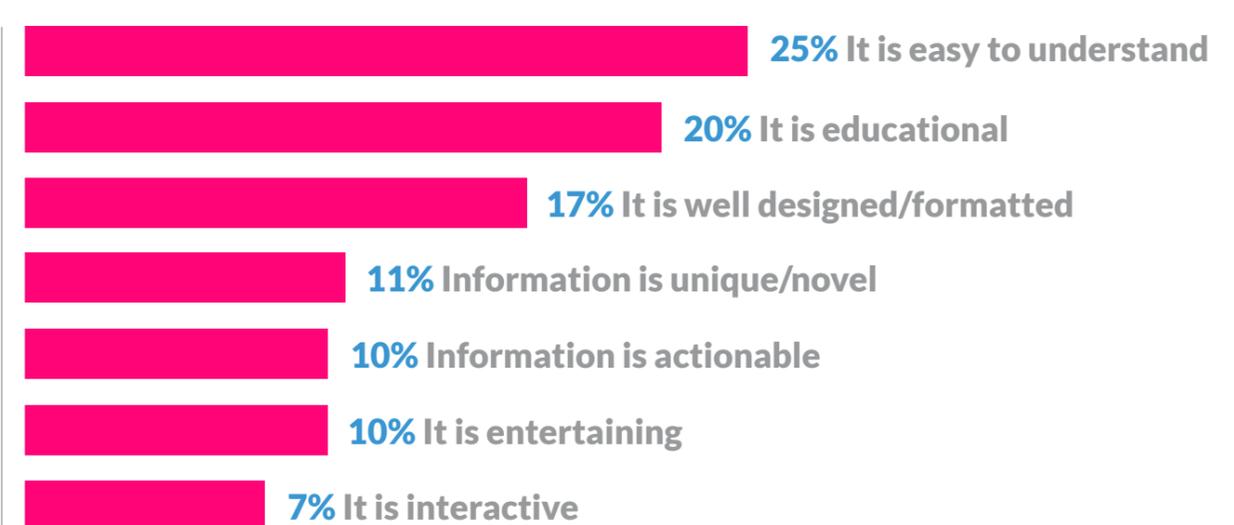
If you want your content to catch people's attention, valuable, relevant topics always win. The content also needs to be timely and up to date and come from a trusted brand or personal recommendation.

When it comes to keeping readers' interest, the key is to make your content easy to understand and educational. And informed readers always appreciate good design and straightforward formatting.

WHAT CATCHES YOUR INTEREST?



WHAT KEEPS YOUR INTEREST?



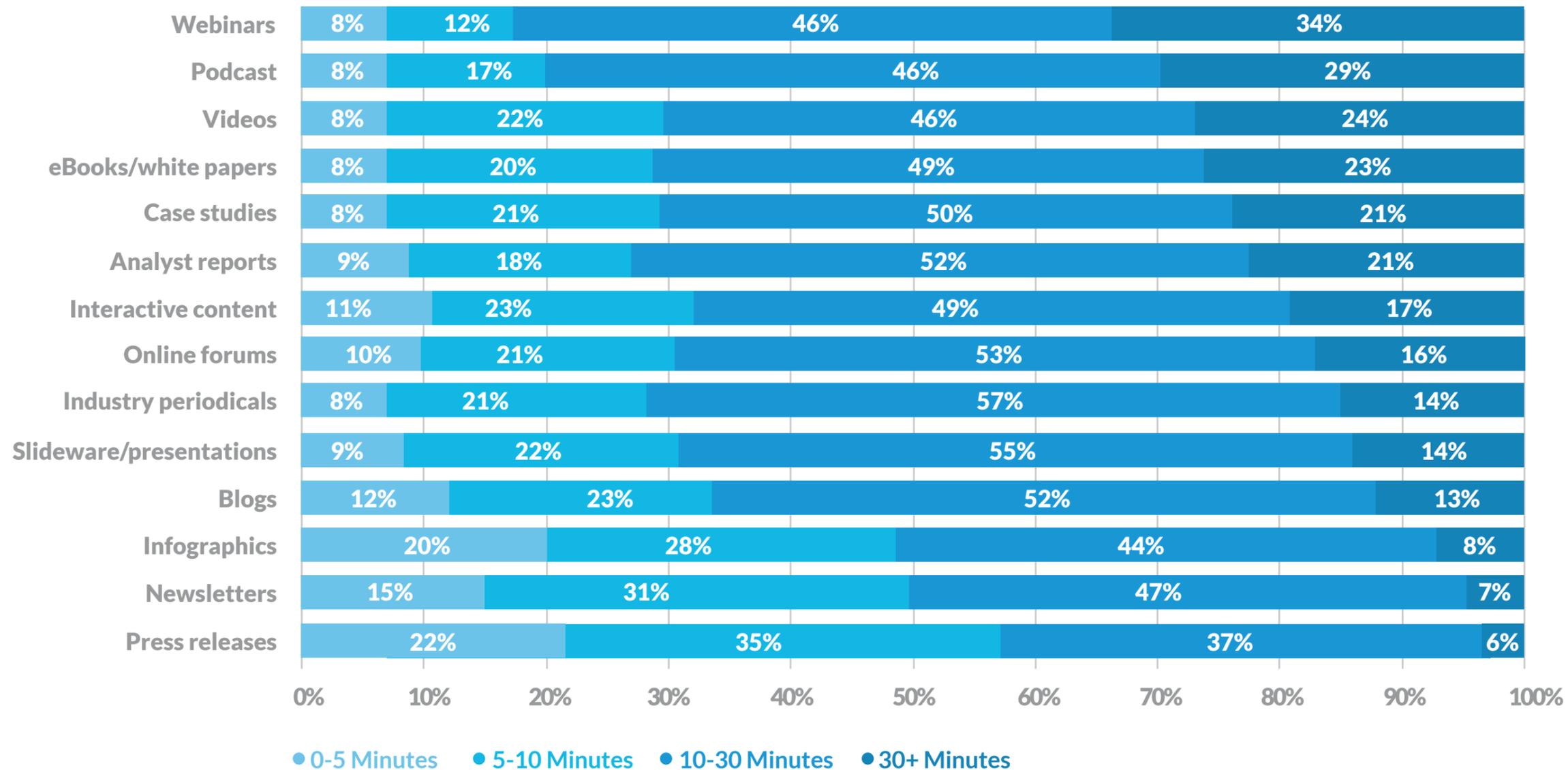
MOTIVATORS

What type of content is worth the time?

Now we know what attributes catch and keep your audience’s attention. But what formats do they think are worth their time?

People are willing to spend more time on webinars, podcasts and videos. In fact, at least 24% of respondents said they would spend more than 30 minutes on these top three content formats. Our tip to you: don’t be afraid to create longer, more detailed webinars, podcasts and videos.

HOW MUCH TIME ARE YOU WILLING TO SPEND WITH EACH TYPE OF CONTENT?





MOTIVATORS

Key findings

Professionals don't consume content to cure boredom or kill time; they consume content to learn something new and stay up to date on industry news. That's why they value best practices, research findings and educational topics. In order to catch their attention, content needs to be relevant and timely. And if you want to keep their attention for as long as possible, they spend the most time consuming webinars, podcasts and videos.

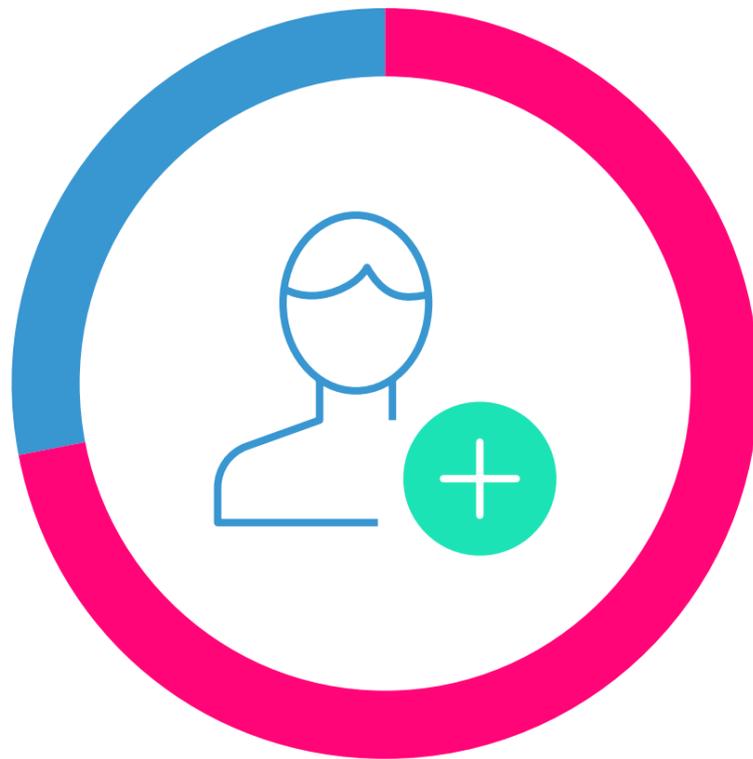
3 CUSTOMER JOURNEY

What role does content play in the buyer's journey?

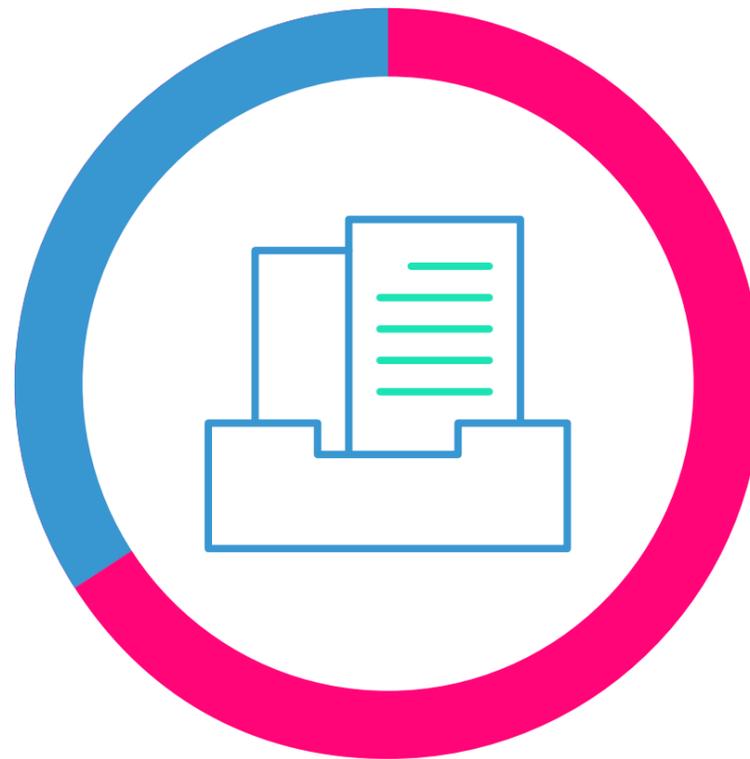
CUSTOMER JOURNEY

Content is key throughout the entire customer journey

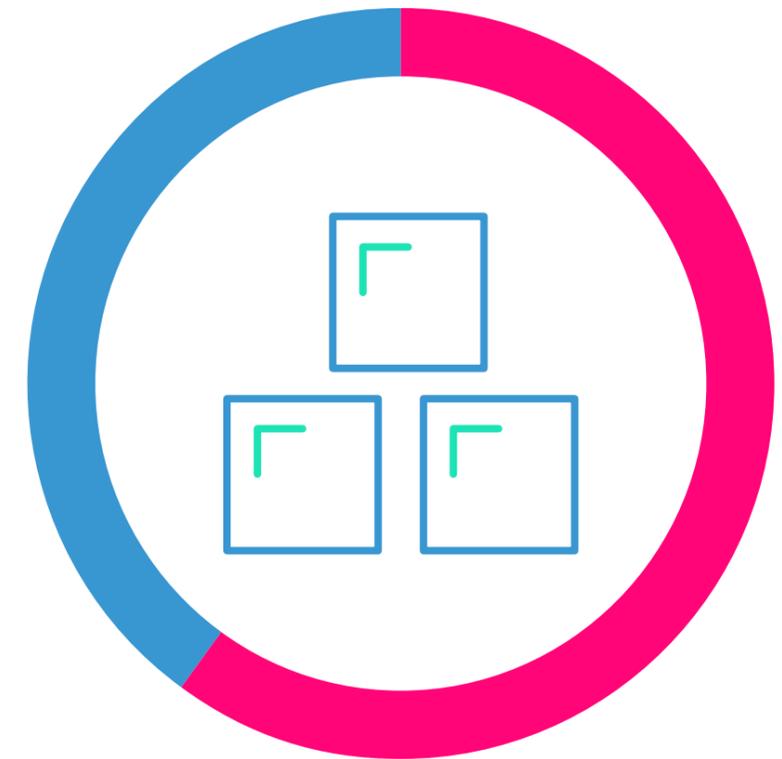
Whether buyers are early in their journey or ready to complete a purchase, company-produced content is a major part of their decision-making process. Create stage-specific content that speaks to customers at every step of their journey.



60% of people are somewhat or extremely likely to seek company-produced content throughout the entire buyer journey



66% are somewhat or extremely likely to seek out company-produced content when determining need



72% are somewhat or extremely likely to seek company-produced content in the evaluation stage

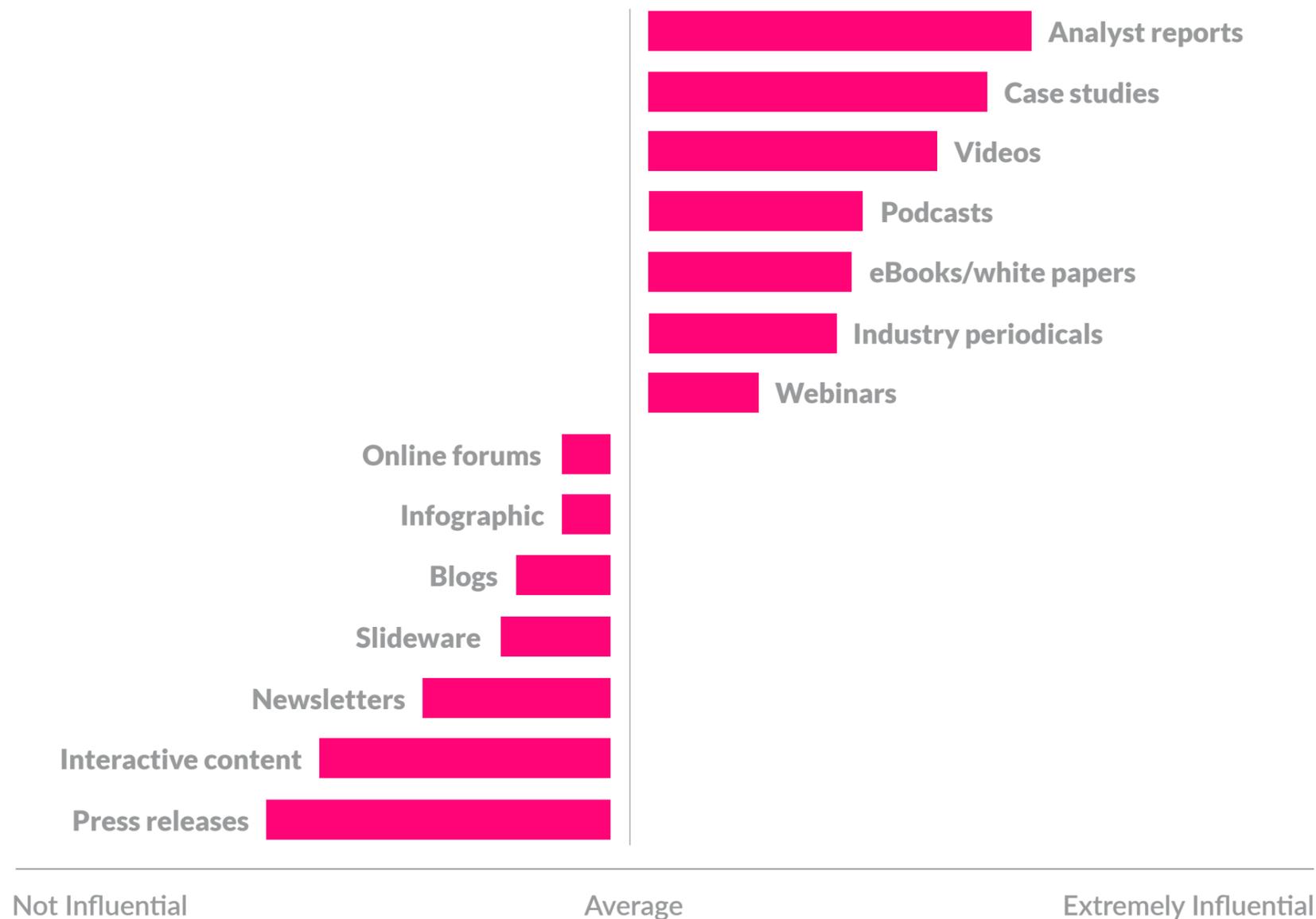
CUSTOMER JOURNEY

What kind of content has the most influence?

A buyer's decisions are most influenced by analyst reports, case studies and videos – these formats were also rated the most useful types of content. While vendor-produced content is important when making a purchase decision, buyers want to cross reference it with outside sources of information.² Analyst reports are a trustworthy source of information, while case studies provide the peer validation buyers are looking for.



LEAST INFLUENTIAL VS. MOST INFLUENTIAL



Don't overlook

third-party content

When creating content that helps move customers through the buyer's journey, be sure you have the right mix of resources and third-party validation.

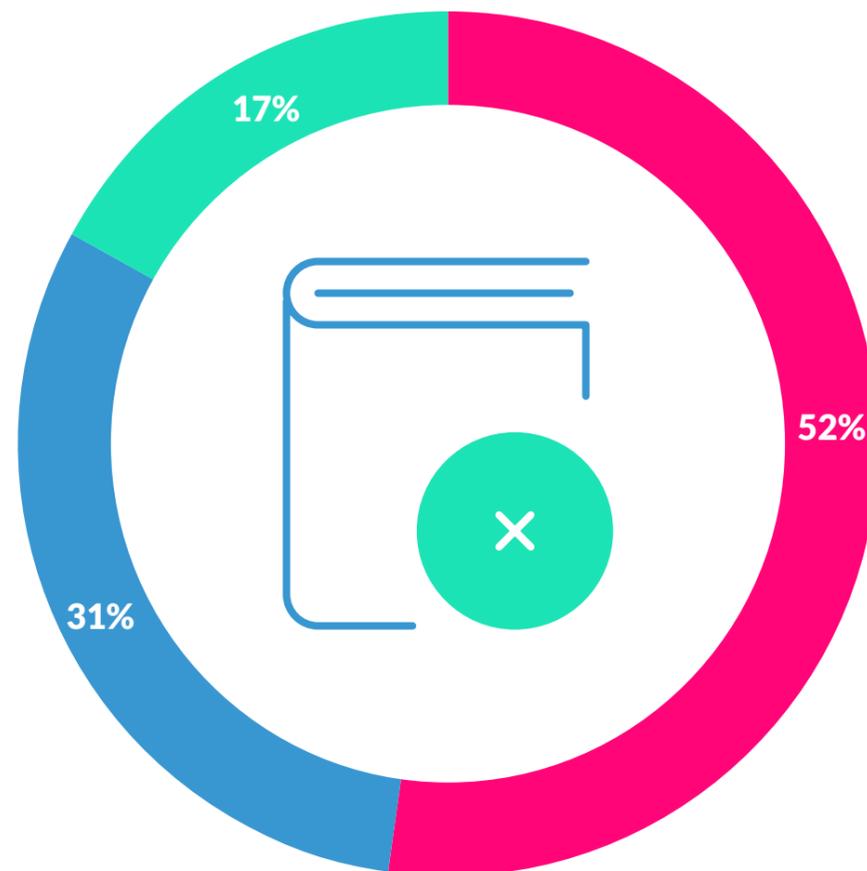
When making a purchase, B2B buyers use about five sources of information including:

- Product demos
- User reviews
- Vendor website and content
- Free trial
- Sales representatives

Lasting consequences of bad content

The vast majority of respondents (83%) said that a bad content experience would reflect negatively on their view of that company. And 31% said that the negative experience would result in them avoiding content from that company. The bottom line, bad content can leave a lasting impression on your audience.

HOW DOES A NEGATIVE CONTENT EXPERIENCE INFLUENCE YOUR NEXT INTERACTION WITH THAT COMPANY ?



- I will actively avoid content from this company. (1)
- It will reflect negatively on my view of the company but otherwise is unlikely to influence my behavior. (2)
- There is so much out there that I'm unlikely to remember a single, bad experience. (3)



83% of respondents said that a bad content experience would reflect negatively on their view of that company.



CUSTOMER JOURNEY

Key findings

Content has a huge influence on the decision-making process throughout the entire customer journey. Buyers are most swayed by research-backed content, like analyst reports and case studies. Provide your audience a balanced mixed of first-party and third-party resources and validation. But be careful about the content you produce; a bad content experience can leave a lasting impression on your audience.



4 TRUSTED SOURCES

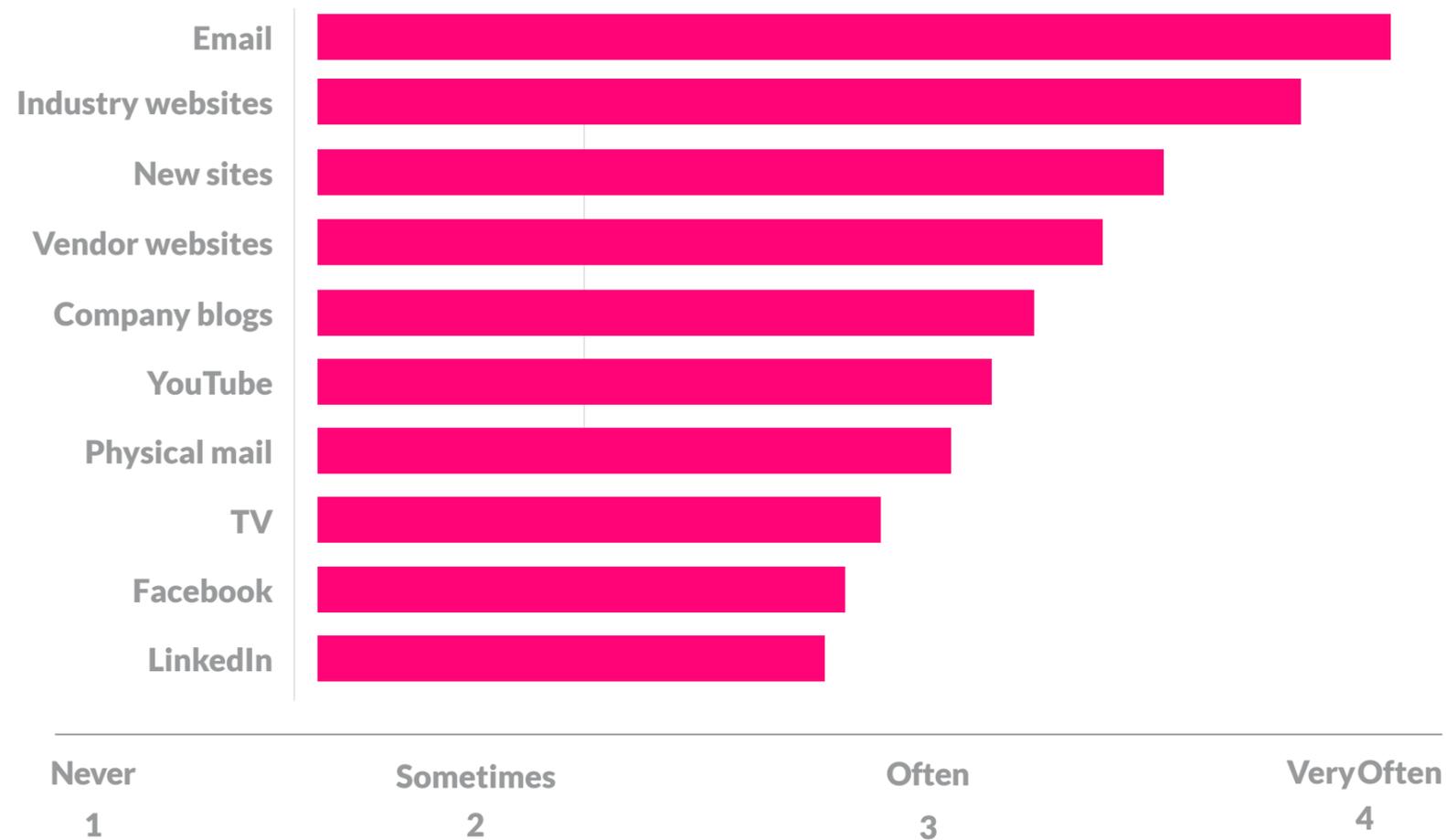
Where do professionals discover relevant content?

TRUSTED SOURCES

Most credible sources: email, industry websites and news sites

Professionals most often rely on information in emails, industry websites and news sites. These content sources often have higher standards for the content they produce and publish. On the other hand, the content that was scored least reliable is user-produced content on Facebook and LinkedIn. These sites don't filter what users share, which means posts are often unreliable. So if you want professionals to trust your content, go beyond social media. Create email campaigns around your content and get it published on trusted industry and news sites.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU RELY ON THESE SOURCES?



Credibility counts

64% place higher value on content that has been recommended to them.

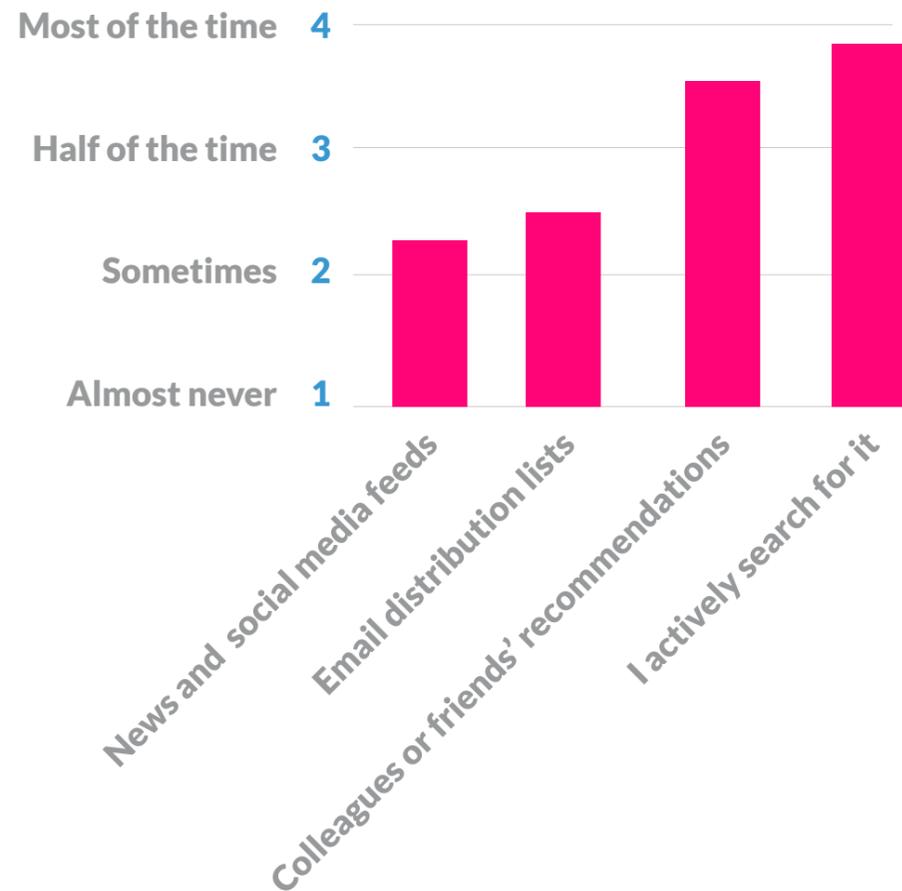
75% say they actively check if the content source is credible.

TRUSTED SOURCES

Most popular content discovery: active search

Most content is discovered when people actively search for it. That means SEO and paid search could offer a boost in traffic and sales. Then about half the time, professionals passively discover content when a colleague or friend recommends it or it's featured in an email distribution list.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU COME ACROSS CONTENT IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS?



Professionals report they actively search for content most of the time. Use paid search and SEO to make sure your buyers find the content they need.

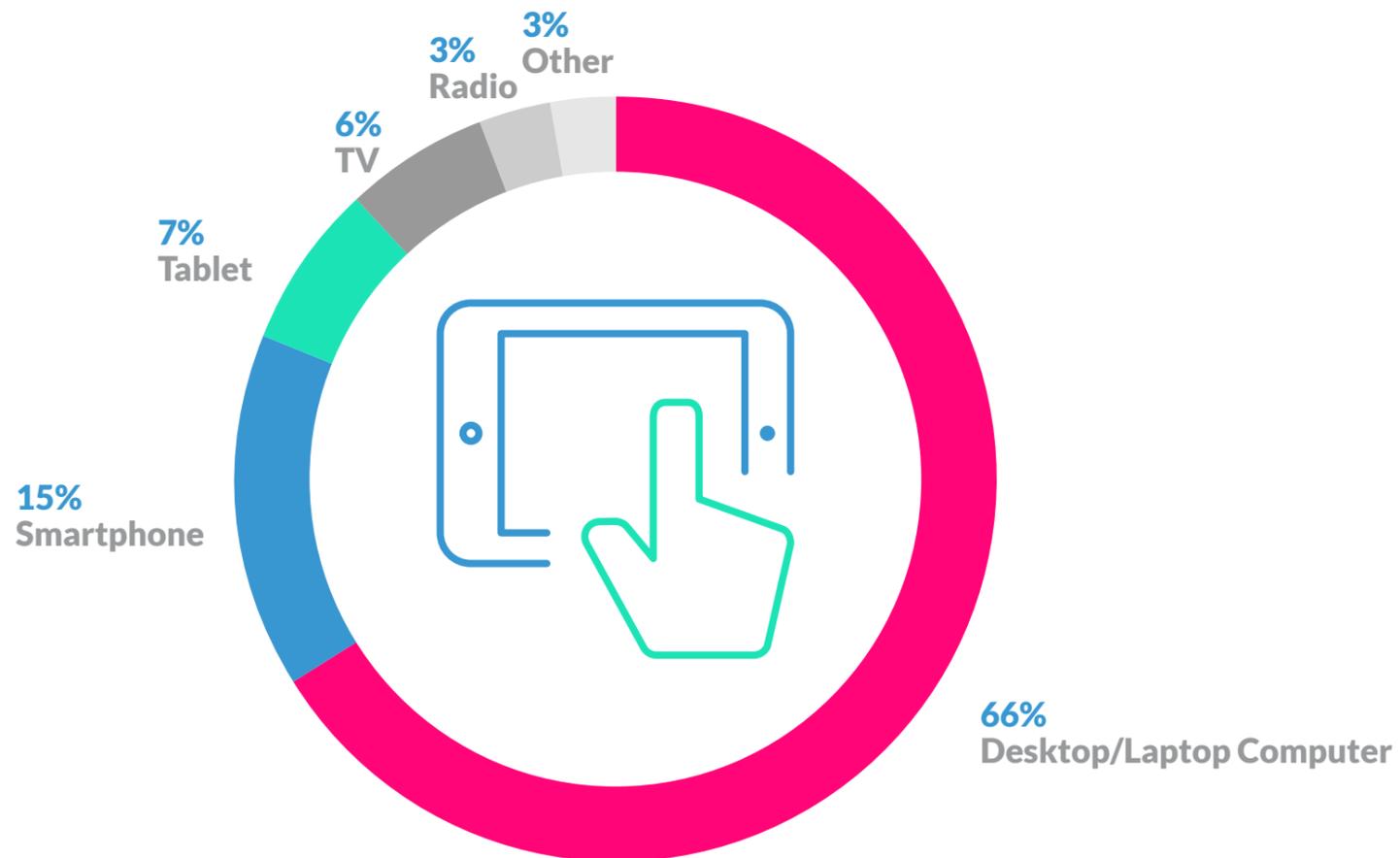
TRUSTED SOURCES

Most popular devices: desktops and laptop computers

Professionals don't passively search for and consume content. Which is why most of their time is spent on a desktop or laptop computer. The second most popular device among professionals is a smartphone, which only takes up 15% of their time.

Most consumers are glued to their phones, which is why B2C marketers are constantly hearing how important the mobile-first mindset is. But when it comes to B2B marketing, professionals are still all about the big screens. And while B2B content creators and marketers shouldn't ignore mobile, they shouldn't sacrifice quality content for a tiny screen.

AVERAGE PERCENT OF TIME ON DEVICE TYPES



The second most popular device among professionals is a smartphone, which only takes up **15%** of their time.



TRUSTED SOURCES

Key findings

Professionals are very particular about where they get their content. If they're not actively searching for content on industry websites or news sites, they're discovering new content through colleagues and friends. And when it comes to how they consume content, most of their time is spent on desktops and laptop computers, not mobile devices.

A person's hands are shown holding a lit sparkler. The sparkler is bright and glowing, with many sparks flying out. The background is dark with a blue tint. The text '5 KEY TAKEAWAYS' is overlaid on the image.

5 KEY TAKEAWAYS

Top 10 takeaways to drive content engagement

1

Go in depth.

When it comes to creating the kind of content people eat up, stick with newsletters, videos and webinars.

2

Engage your audience.

The best types of content to boost engagement are videos, webinars and interactive content.

3

Give them options.

Professionals prefer on-demand over live content. Always offer an on-demand option for webinars and other online presentations.

4

Create educational content.

Professionals most often consume content to learn something new.

5

Catch their interest.

Content that grabs interest is relevant, timely and from trusted sources.

6

Keep their interest.

Content that maintains interest is easy to understand and educational.

7

Produce multimedia content.

Professionals are willing to spend the most time with webinars, podcasts and videos.

8

Sway your audience.

Good content is critical throughout the entire decision-making process. Professionals are most influenced by analyst reports, case studies and videos.

9

Create search-able content.

Professionals actively search for relevant and useful content; use SEO and paid search strategies to drive more traffic.

10

Focus on big screens.

Professionals spend most of their time on desktops and laptop computers, so don't spend unnecessary time on mobile-optimized content.



6 METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY

This survey was conducted by a market research firm in December 2017 and had 3,032 respondents. Respondents comprised 31% millennials (at least 18 years old), 46% Gen X and 23% Baby Boomers. Countries surveyed included the United States (70%), United Kingdom (10%), Germany (10%), Australia and New Zealand (10%). Respondents were from organizations ranging in size from small (32%), medium (29%) to enterprise (39%). The following industries were surveyed: Advertising/Marketing, Consulting, Education, Financial Services, Government, Healthcare, Hospitality/Travel/Tourism, Legal, Manufacturing, Real Estate, Retail, Software/Technology, Telecommunications and Transportation.

Sources:

1. Animoto, Millennials Love Video (And Why You Should Too)
2. TrustRadius, The 2018 B2B Buying Disconnect

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