

AI Trends Report



Introduction

Last quarter, we revealed in our *Content Matters: Martech Trends Report* the extent to which generative AI is already being used in marketing organizations. Across companies of all sizes, types, and industries, we found AI tools are being enthusiastically embraced and usage is growing, particularly for content creation.

Just how enthusiastically? Of our respondents, only 3% said they don't use AI, or don't know how their team uses AI.

Two words might best describe the prevailing atmosphere: momentum and opportunity.

In this report, we now take a closer look at AI adoption and reveal exactly how, and where, AI usage is happening. We also examine opportunities for growth beyond creating content, such as personalization and taxonomy use cases.

Right out the gate, our data confirms anecdotal observations: media and publishing companies are using AI most heavily at the moment—and the tool of choice for most industries is ChatGPT. But our data also reveals trends that countervail conventional wisdom: AI usage is rising in unexpected places, with an array of tools beyond just ChatGPT in play.

When it comes to how AI tools will be used going forward, we found intriguing anomalies to the fast-growth narrative and any potential backlash to an AI takeover. In a notable exception—financial services—a sizable number of respondents said they thought their companies would use AI slightly less next year.

We also asked if companies are willing to spend heavily on AI tools. What we found suggests the answer is not yet, but intriguing hints lead us to believe six-figure investments may be on the near horizon.

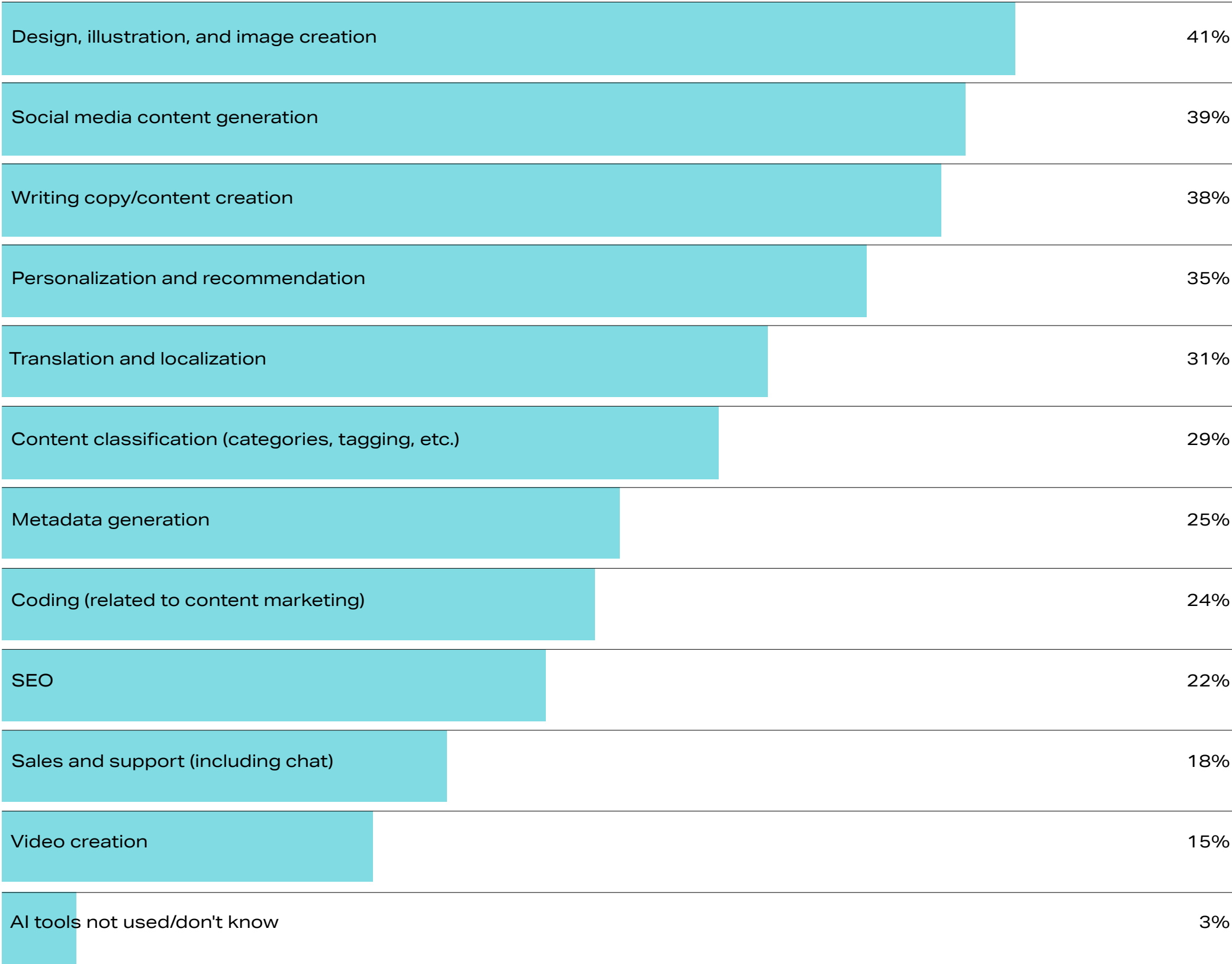
One thing is certain: The insights we uncovered rebut any suggestion that AI is a fad. To the contrary, they underscore how quickly teams have embraced this transformational technology.

As such, we hope our findings are a springboard and inspiration for your organization's adoption of generative AI.

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How teams use AI

When it comes to AI tool use cases, content creation is king. Design, illustration, and image creation (41%), social media content creation (39%), and writing copy/content creation (38%) were the top three uses for AI overall.

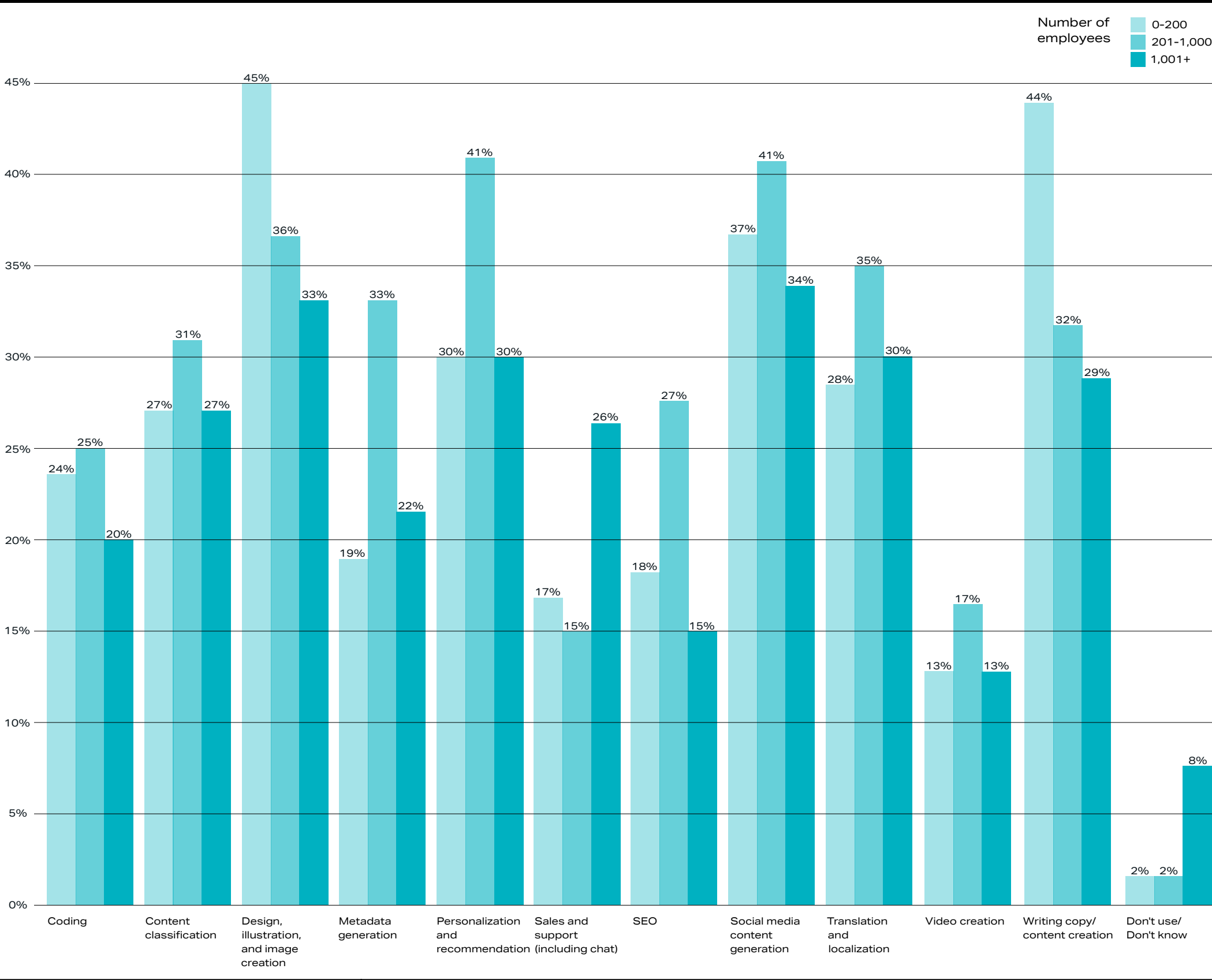


How teams use AI: By company size

Small companies lean in most heavily on those top overall use cases for AI tools. They lead in AI tool usage for illustration (45%) and writing (44%)—outpacing midsize and large companies here.

Midsize companies, however, lead in using AI for personalization purposes (41%).

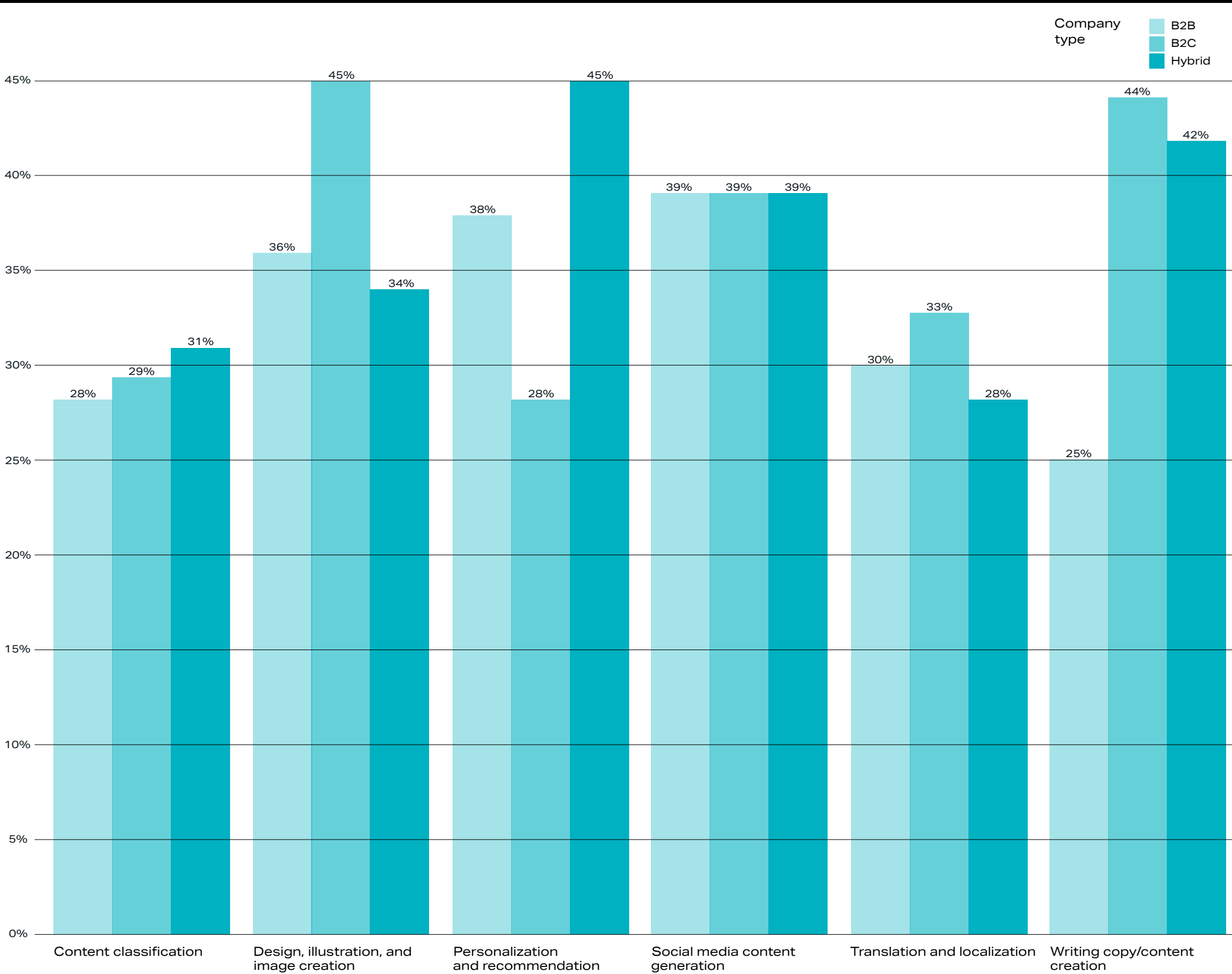
For sales and support, large companies are leveraging AI the most, with small and midsize companies further behind.



How teams use AI: By company type

Of all company types, B2C companies are leaning most heavily on AI for the overall top use cases—design and writing. Figures for those two tasks are both above 40%.

B2B companies, though using AI for the widely popular use case of social media content creation, are also using AI tools heavily for personalization (38%). Unlike B2C companies, B2B companies employ AI tools for personalization more than they do for design (36%).



How teams use AI: By industry

Research and consulting firms are far and away the leaders among industries using AI for the top overall use cases—writing content (68%) and design/illustration (64%). AI is least used in the Education/Arts/Public Sector space for these purposes.

While a laggard in many respects, Education/Arts/Public Sector does report using AI to create social media content at levels (35%) comparable to other industries.

Media and publishing companies are leaders in using AI tools (63%) for personalization. They also lead in using it to create video (24%). In general, AI video creation is far less prevalent across industries than for other forms of content creation.

How media and publishing companies use AI

Personalization and recommendation	63%
Writing copy/content creation	46%
Design, illustration, and image creation	45%
Content classification	41%
Metadata generation	34%
Coding	33%
Social media content creation	30%
SEO	25%
Video creation	24%

How research and consulting companies use AI

Writing copy/content creation	68%
Design, illustration, and image creation	64%
Social media content creation	33%
Personalization and recommendation	19%
Metadata generation	12%
Content classification	12%
Coding	11%
SEO	10%
Video creation	1%

Key takeaways

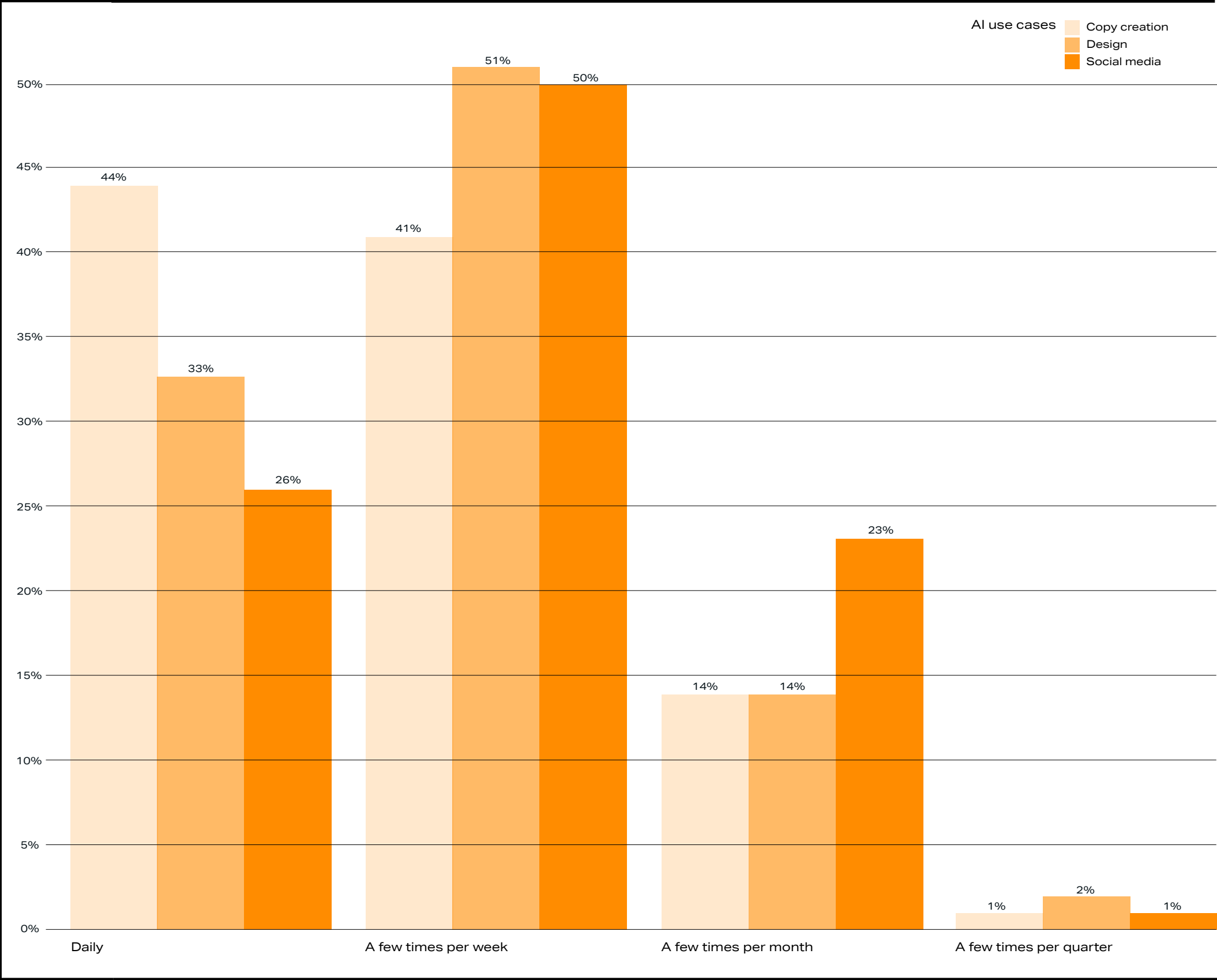
The smaller the company, the more it leans on AI for content and illustration creation, likely because it often lacks dedicated in-house talent to perform these tasks. Meanwhile, the larger the company, the more they leverage AI to enhance sales and support.

One major industry and use case stood out: Financial Services doesn't appear to be using AI at all for sales and support, an area that seems tailor-made for AI to deliver time and cost savings. A possible reason for this is the sensitivity of financial data and a wariness to share it with third-party AI platforms.

Similar to this, educational and government institutions show hesitancy in using AI tools (or lack the budget to invest in them). Regulatory concerns are one possible explanation for the lower usage. And educational institutions might be predisposed to be wary of AI, given rampant concerns about plagiarism. However, by not using these tools for personalization and social media creation, they are potentially missing out on ways to reach constituents and students who rely on their services.

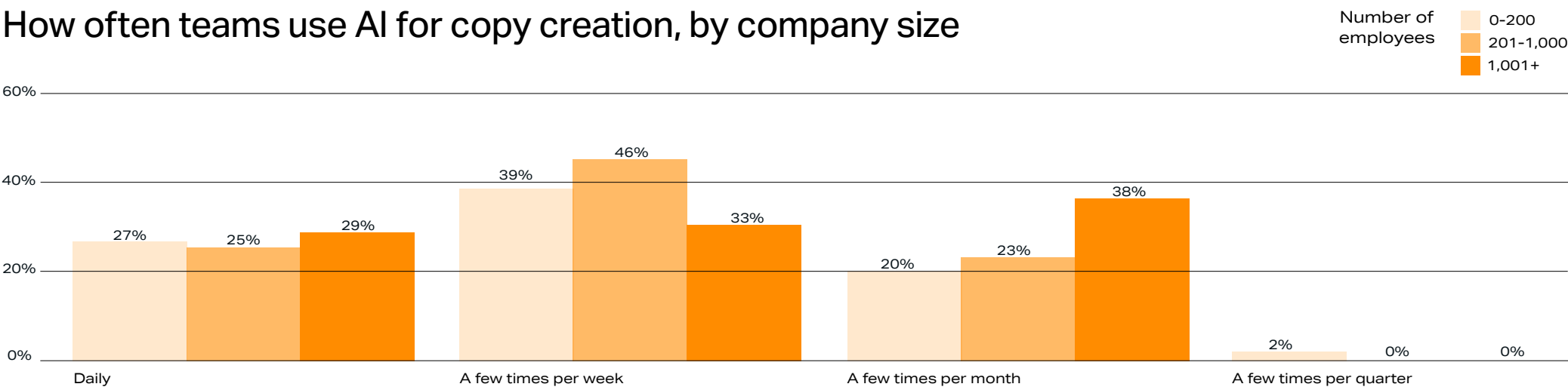
How often teams use AI for top tasks

AI is reshaping how we work. At many companies, AI tools have become so woven into workflows that usage is a daily or weekly habit. Across the board, AI tools are heavily used at least weekly for the overall top use cases—design, social media, and writing. Copy creation is usually a daily AI application, while design and social media are usually weekly.

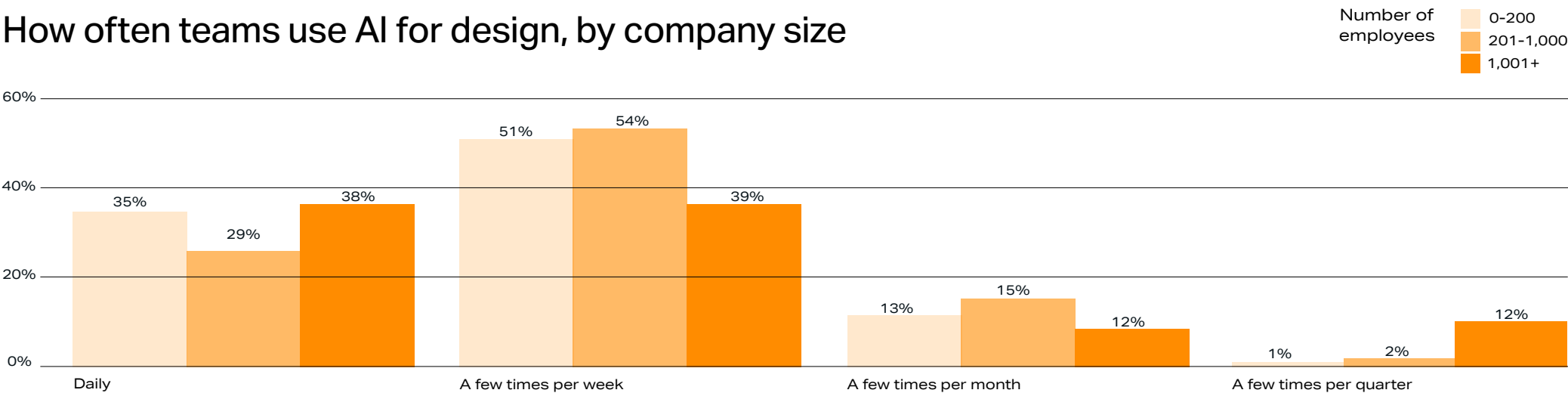


How often teams use AI for top tasks: By company size

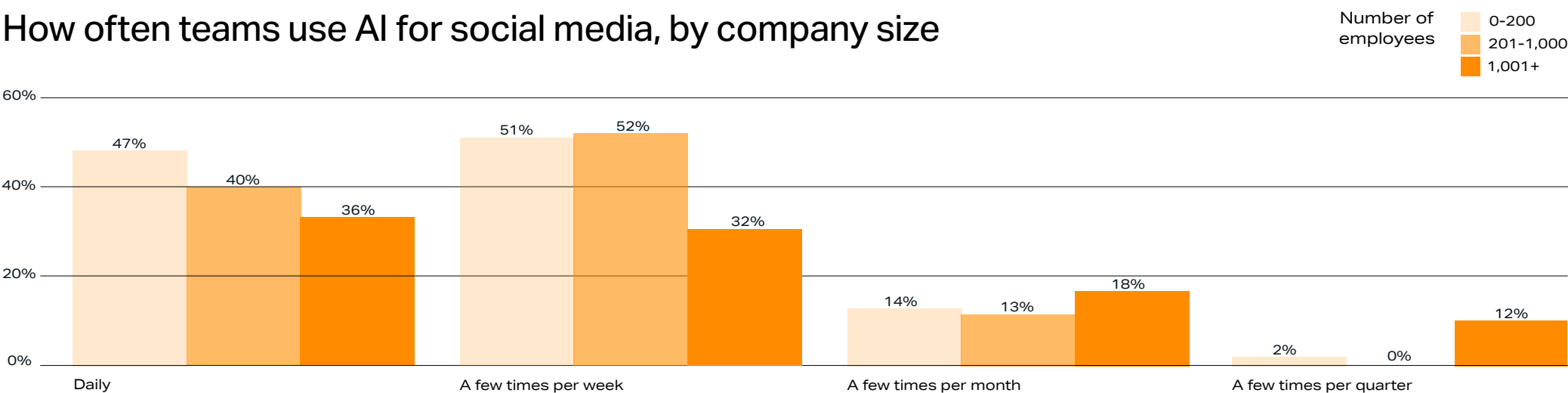
How often teams use AI for copy creation, by company size



How often teams use AI for design, by company size



How often teams use AI for social media, by company size



For companies of all sizes, at least 61% use AI on a regular basis (daily or weekly) for copy creation, design, and social media.

The smaller the company, the more often they use AI tools.

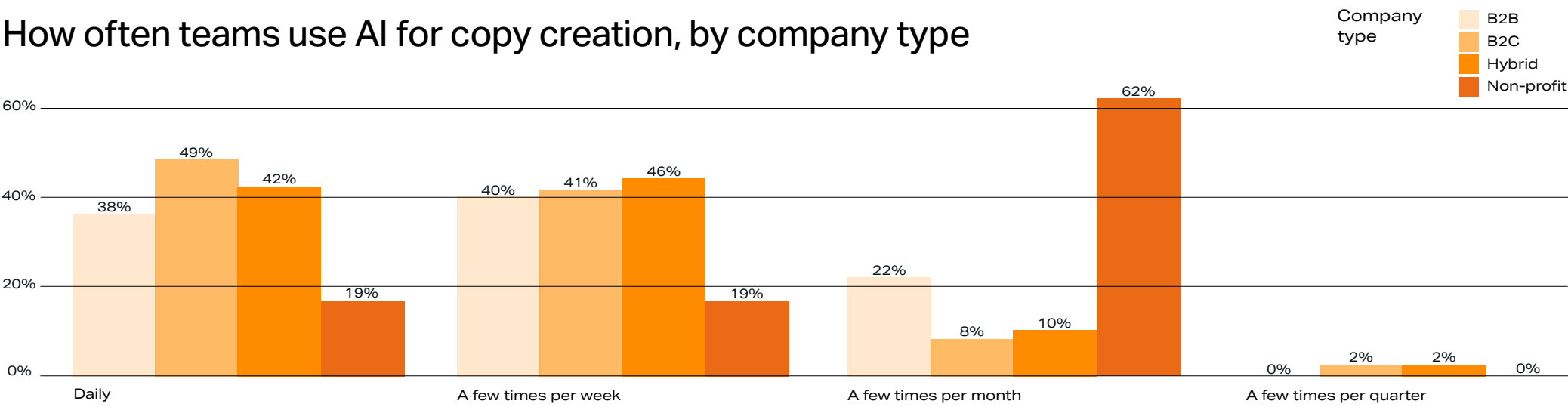
No matter the size, it is extremely rare for companies to use AI tools only a few times per quarter.

How often teams use AI for top tasks: By company type

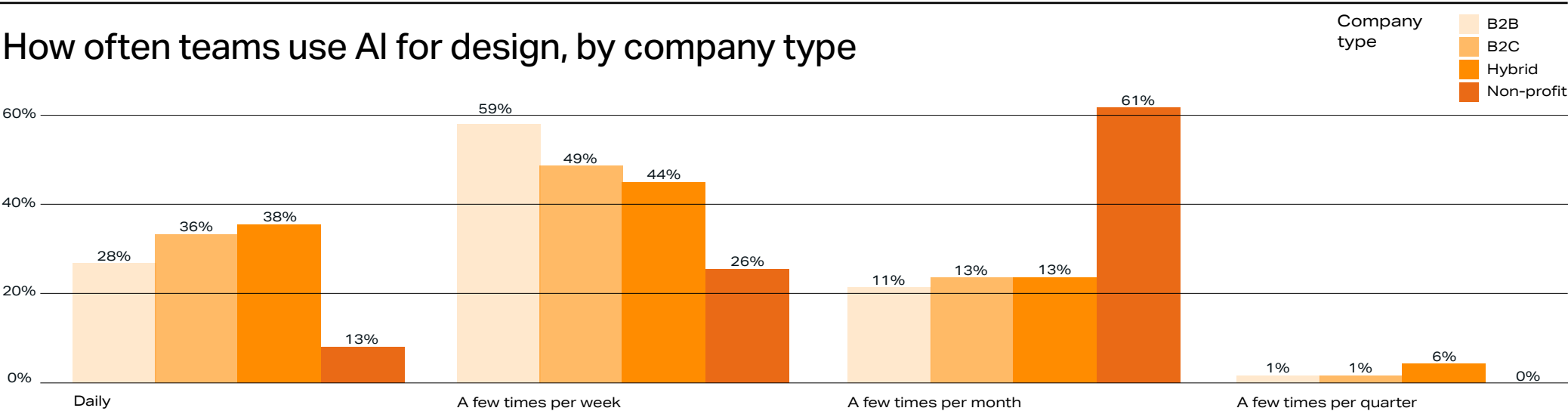
More B2C companies use AI tools to create copy than B2B companies—and those B2C companies also use it more frequently. On a daily basis, B2C companies are using AI tools for creating copy nearly 50% of the time, compared with B2B companies, which use them on a day-to-day basis 38% of the time.

Though design and social media content creation are the top AI use cases for companies across the board, usage is most commonly on a weekly basis, rather than daily, regardless of company type.

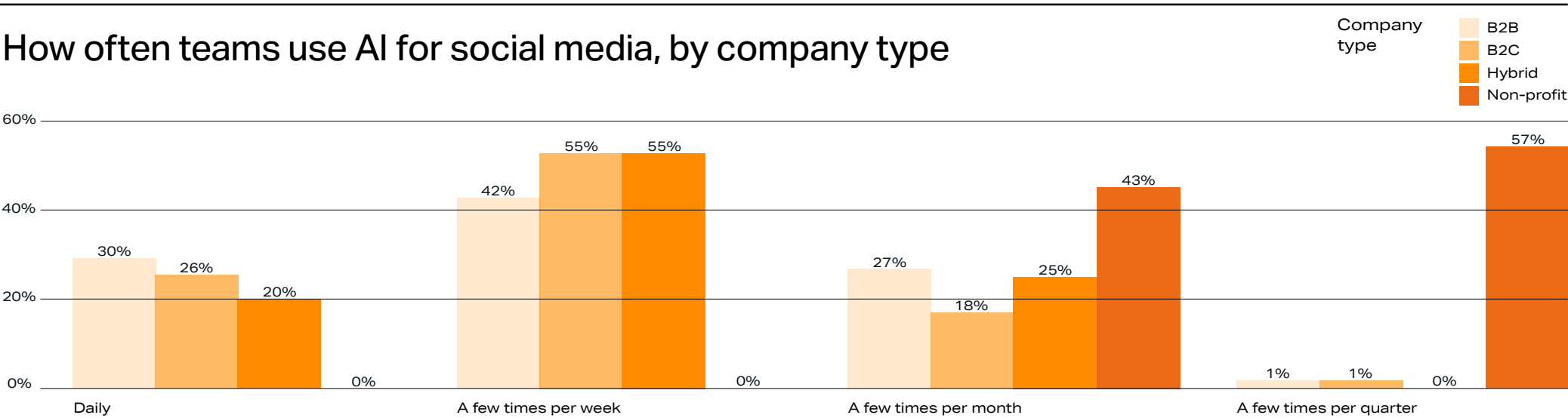
How often teams use AI for copy creation, by company type



How often teams use AI for design, by company type



How often teams use AI for social media, by company type



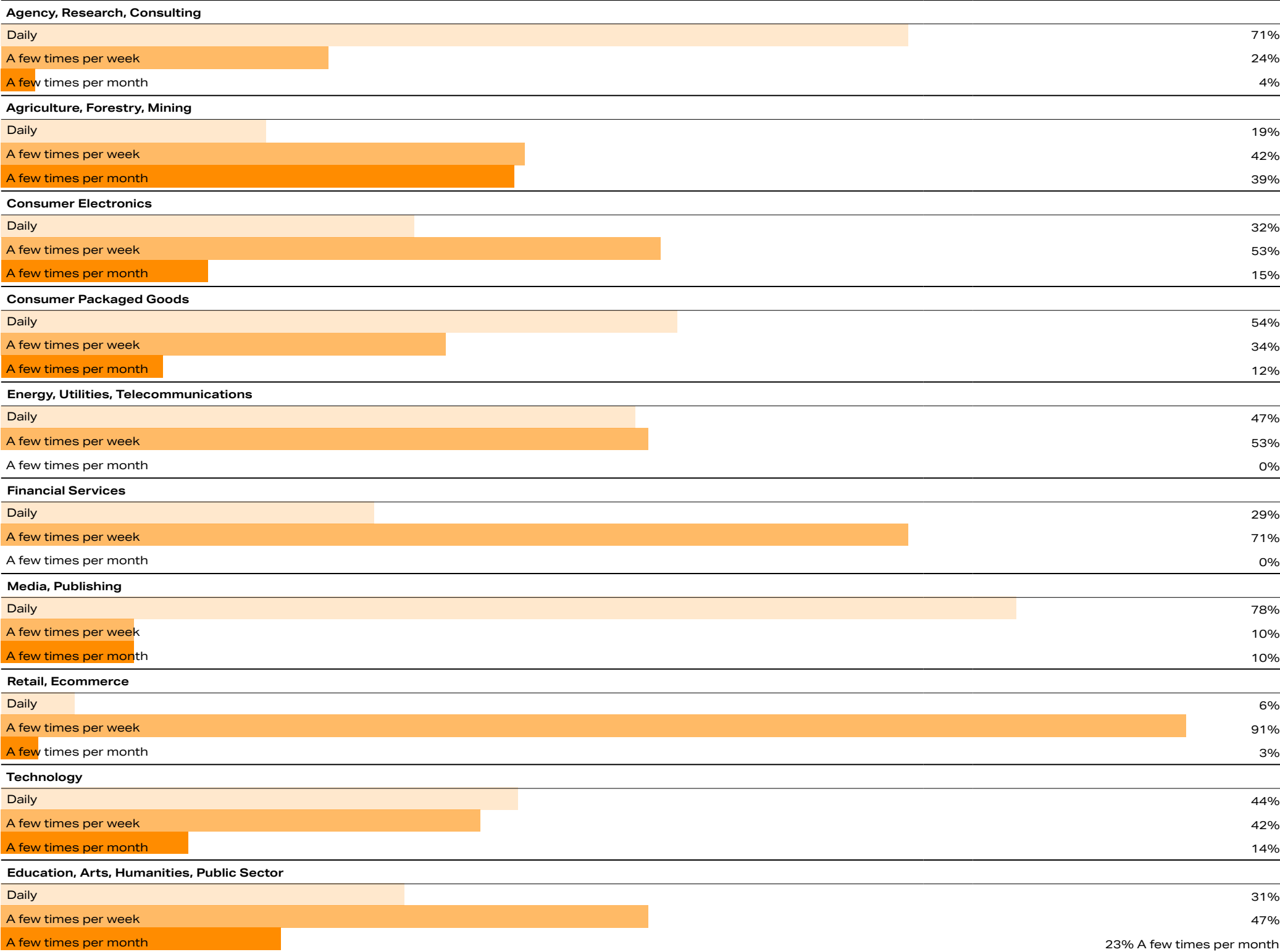
How often teams use AI for top tasks: By industry

Research and consulting companies continue to show that they’re leaning most heavily into overall AI tool usage, with 71% employing AI tools for copy creation on a daily basis. This is on par with media and publishing companies who, perhaps not surprisingly, lead the pack in daily use of AI tools for creating copy.

Retail and ecommerce companies are mostly deploying AI tools for creative purposes on a weekly basis. This is true for the hesitant Financial Services industry as well.

A large portion (82%) of government and educational institutions reported using AI tools for image creation a few times a week, far less for creating copy (47%) and social media content (44%).

How often teams use AI for copy creation, by industry



How often teams use AI for social media, by industry

Agency, Research, Consulting		
Daily		57%
A few times per week		23%
A few times per month		19%
Agriculture, Forestry, Mining		
Daily		20%
A few times per week		71%
A few times per month		9%
Consumer Electronics		
Daily		29%
A few times per week		44%
A few times per month		23%
Consumer Packaged Goods		
Daily		18%
A few times per week		43%
A few times per month		39%
Energy, Utilities, Telecommunications		
Daily		27%
A few times per week		53%
A few times per month		32%
Financial Services		
Daily		25%
A few times per week		66%
A few times per month		9%
Media, Publishing		
Daily		30%
A few times per week		56%
A few times per month		14%
Retail, Ecommerce		
Daily		5%
A few times per week		51%
A few times per month		39%
Technology		
Daily		34%
A few times per week		52%
A few times per month		15%
Education, Arts, Humanities, Public Sector		
Daily		15%
A few times per week		44%
A few times per month		40%

How often teams use AI for design, by industry

Agency, Research, Consulting		
Daily		64%
A few times per week		29%
A few times per month		7%
Agriculture, Forestry, Mining		
Daily		23%
A few times per week		65%
A few times per month		6%
Consumer Electronics		
Daily		5%
A few times per week		73%
A few times per month		18%
Consumer Packaged Goods		
Daily		14%
A few times per week		59%
A few times per month		20%
Energy, Utilities, Telecommunications		
Daily		39%
A few times per week		34%
A few times per month		27%
Financial Services		
Daily		24%
A few times per week		52%
A few times per month		17%
Media, Publishing		
Daily		43%
A few times per week		50%
A few times per month		5%
Retail, Ecommerce		
Daily		0%
A few times per week		81%
A few times per month		19%
Technology		
Daily		58%
A few times per week		19%
A few times per month		21%
Education, Arts, Humanities, Public Sector		
Daily		9%
A few times per week		82%
A few times per month		9%

Key takeaways

If they have it, they will use it—a lot. The numbers are clear: Most companies across size, type, and industry are frequently using AI tools for top overall use cases—creating copy, images, and social media content—on a weekly basis (and, in many cases, heavily on a daily basis.) This is the case with both B2B and B2C companies, as well as industries such as Research and Consulting, and technology firms. There, usage for tasks like design creation and generating social media content is more of a weekly occurrence.

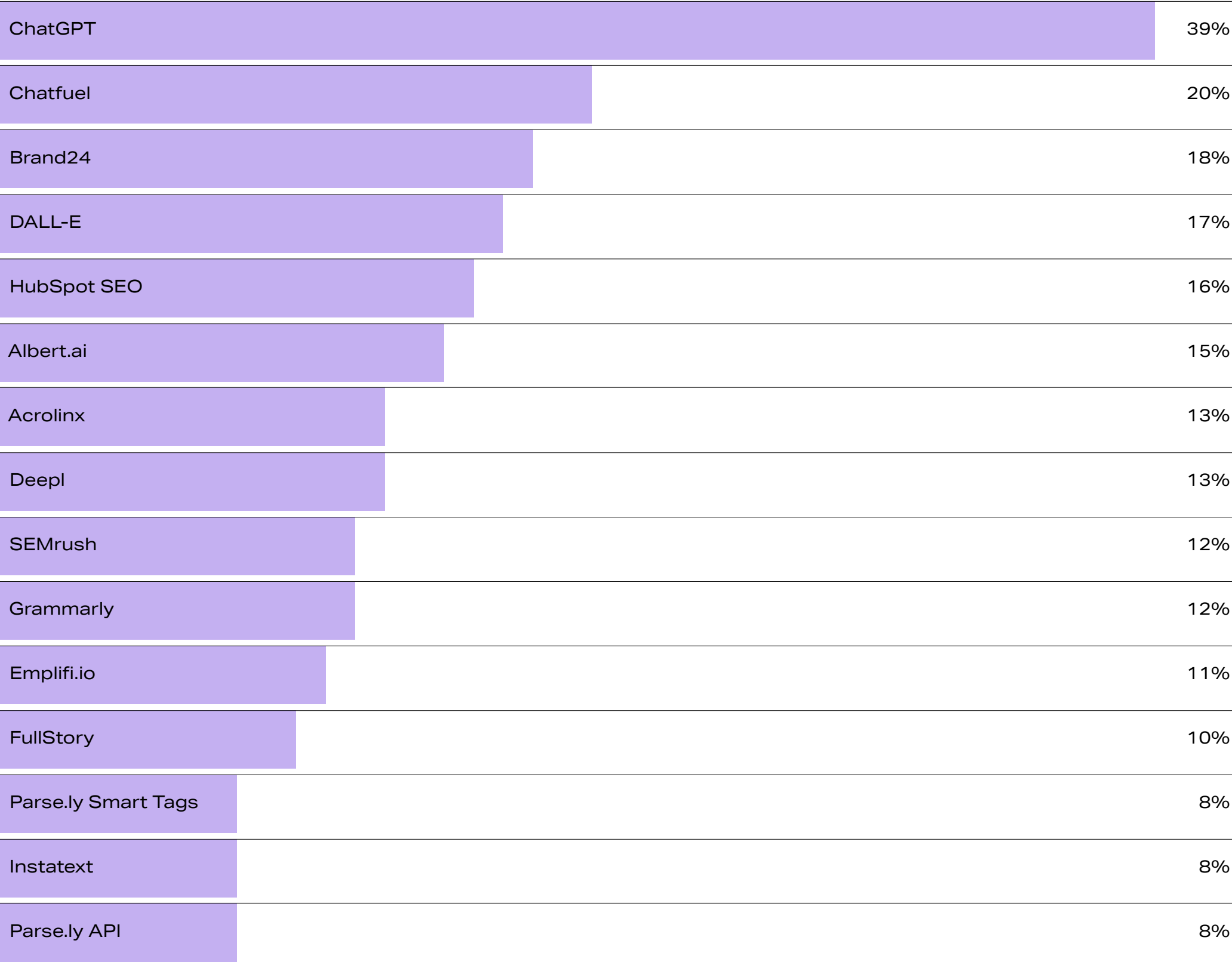
As noted earlier, it's likely smaller companies need to be scrappy and use these tools to compensate for a lack of creative resources. And with industries centered on executing creative tasks, like Publishing and Media, they appear to lean on AI tools to maximize the resources they already have.

What AI tools companies are using

One tool to rule them all, for now ...
ChatGPT is far and away the most popular AI tool for creating copy among respondents, used nearly twice as much as the next most popular tool, Chatfuel.

By company size

There was no notable difference in what tools are being used between companies of different sizes.
ChatGPT is by far the most popular AI tool across the board. Usage rates for the next most popular AI text generator, Chatfuel, are much lower.
For search engine optimization, HubSpot SEO was the top AI tool for all three company sizes.



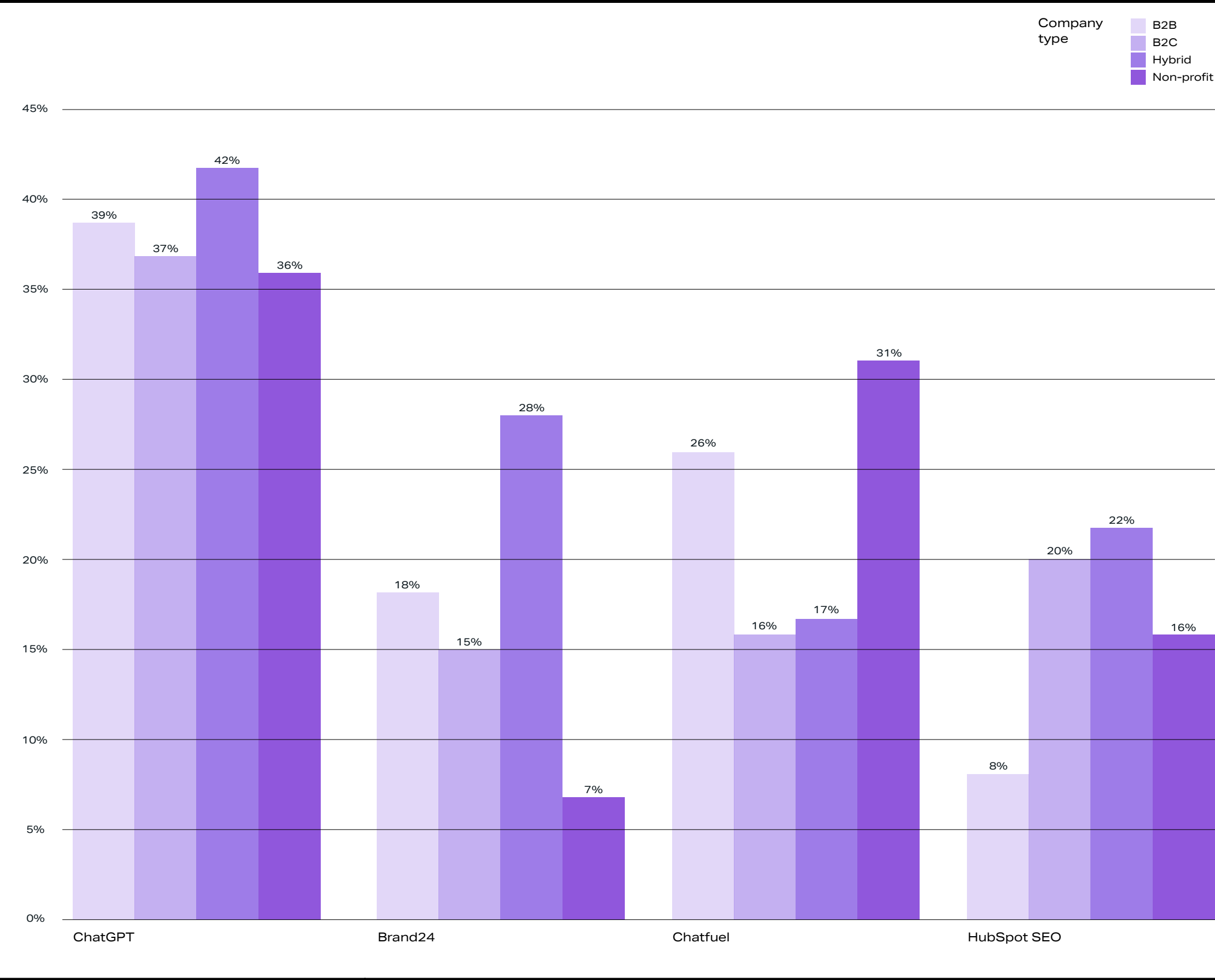
What AI tools companies are using: By company type

ChatGPT is the most-used AI tool for both B2B and B2C companies. It's used even more at B2B/B2C hybrid organizations.

The second-most used tool for B2B companies is Chatfuel; for B2C companies, it's Albert.ai. This stands out because, unlike text-generators ChatGPT and Chatfuel, Albert.ai is a marketing automation platform.

Similarly, the second-most popular AI tool for companies that are B2B/B2C hybrids is a social media listening platform, Brand24.

B2C and hybrid companies are using ChatGPT like everyone else, but they aren't investing as heavily as B2B companies in up-and-coming AI text generation alternatives.



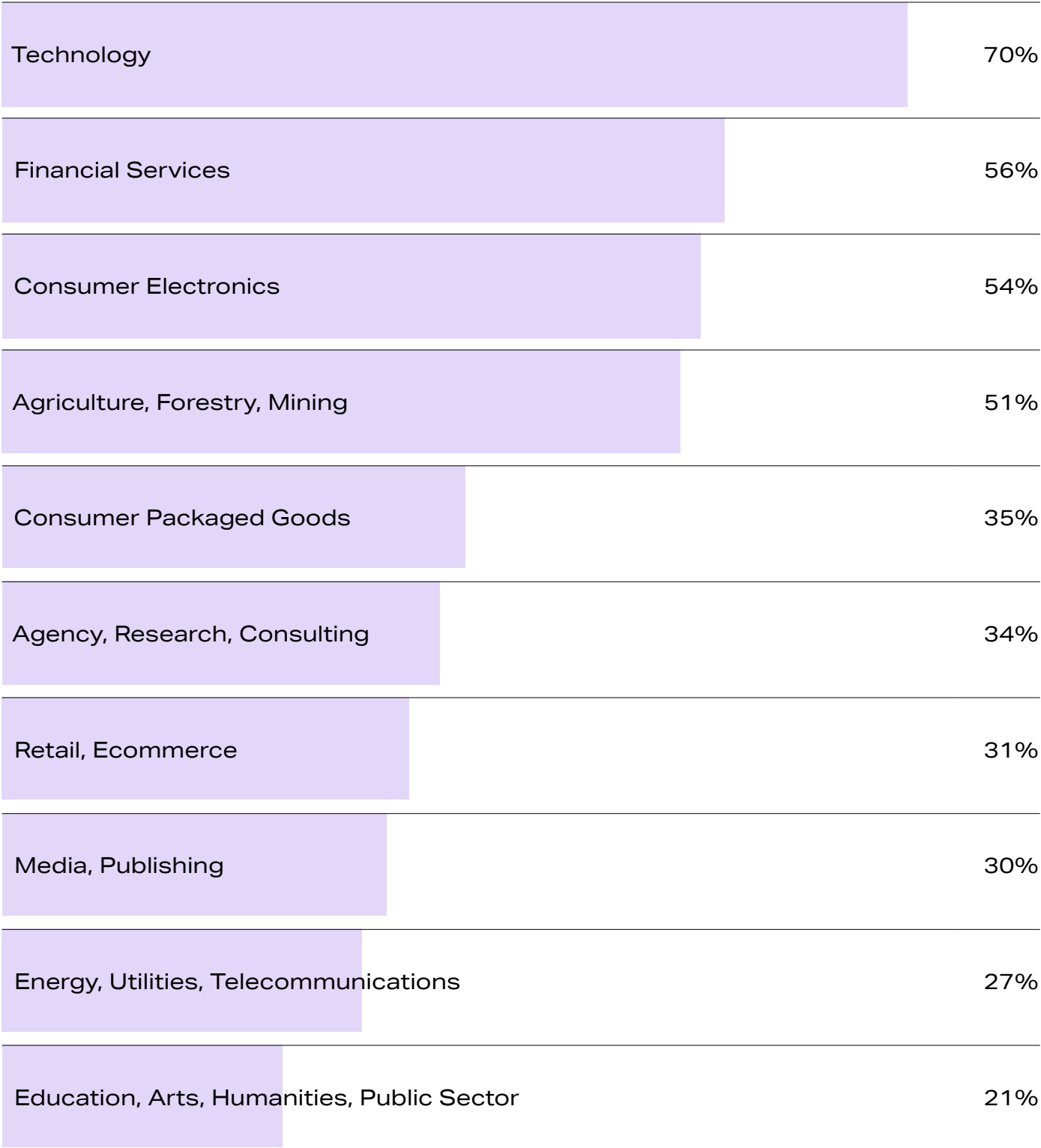
What AI tools companies are using: By industry

ChatGPT is used most often by tech companies (70%). The Financial Services and Consumer Electronics industries are the next most avid users, showing industries that while they are hesitant to use AI for sales and support, they are gladly using it for content creation.

Retail and ecommerce companies are relying less on AI for content creation and more for search engine optimization, using SEMrush and HubSpotSEO more than ChatGPT.

Chatfuel does have an edge over ChatGPT with energy, utilities, and telecom companies, as well as in the Consumer Packaged Goods industry.

Use of ChatGPT, by industry



Key takeaways

ChatGPT is the most popular AI tool for content creation across several industries and companies. It’s also the most well-known for the moment.

However, our data shows a willingness to explore other AI tools for tasks aside from creating copy. As companies look to AI beyond copy generation, competitive pricing, customizable tools (or both) could drastically alter how companies allocate marketing resources across a variety of tasks.

We expect there to be further market fragmentation as AI startups exploit that willingness and solve problems for specific industries and job functions.

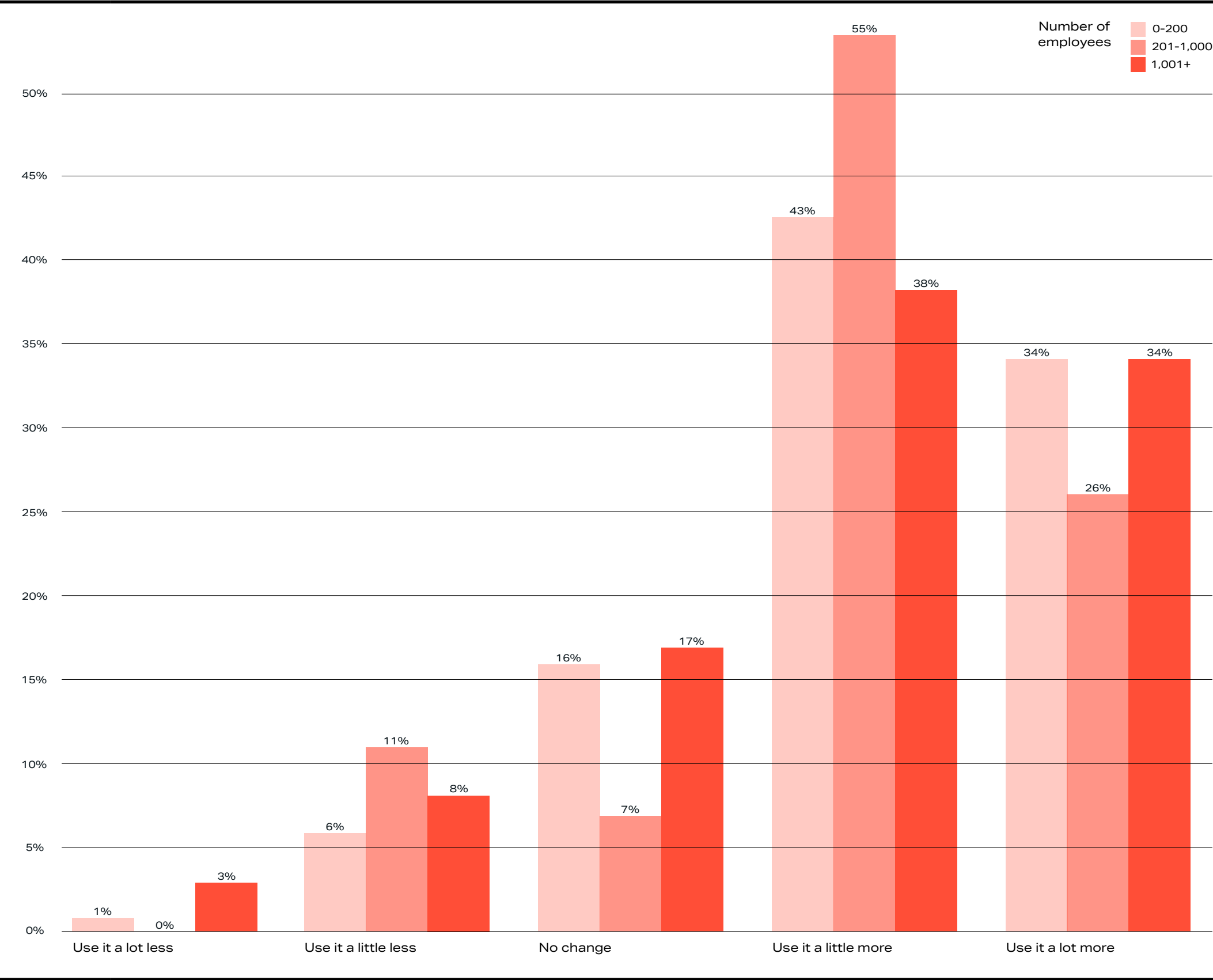
How teams anticipate use of AI technology changing

AI is universally entrenched. Across all company sizes, types and industries, the data shows expectations that use of AI tools will increase.

By company size

At least 72% of companies of all sizes expect to use AI tools more in the next 12 months.

Almost no one expects they'll be using AI tools a lot less in the coming year.



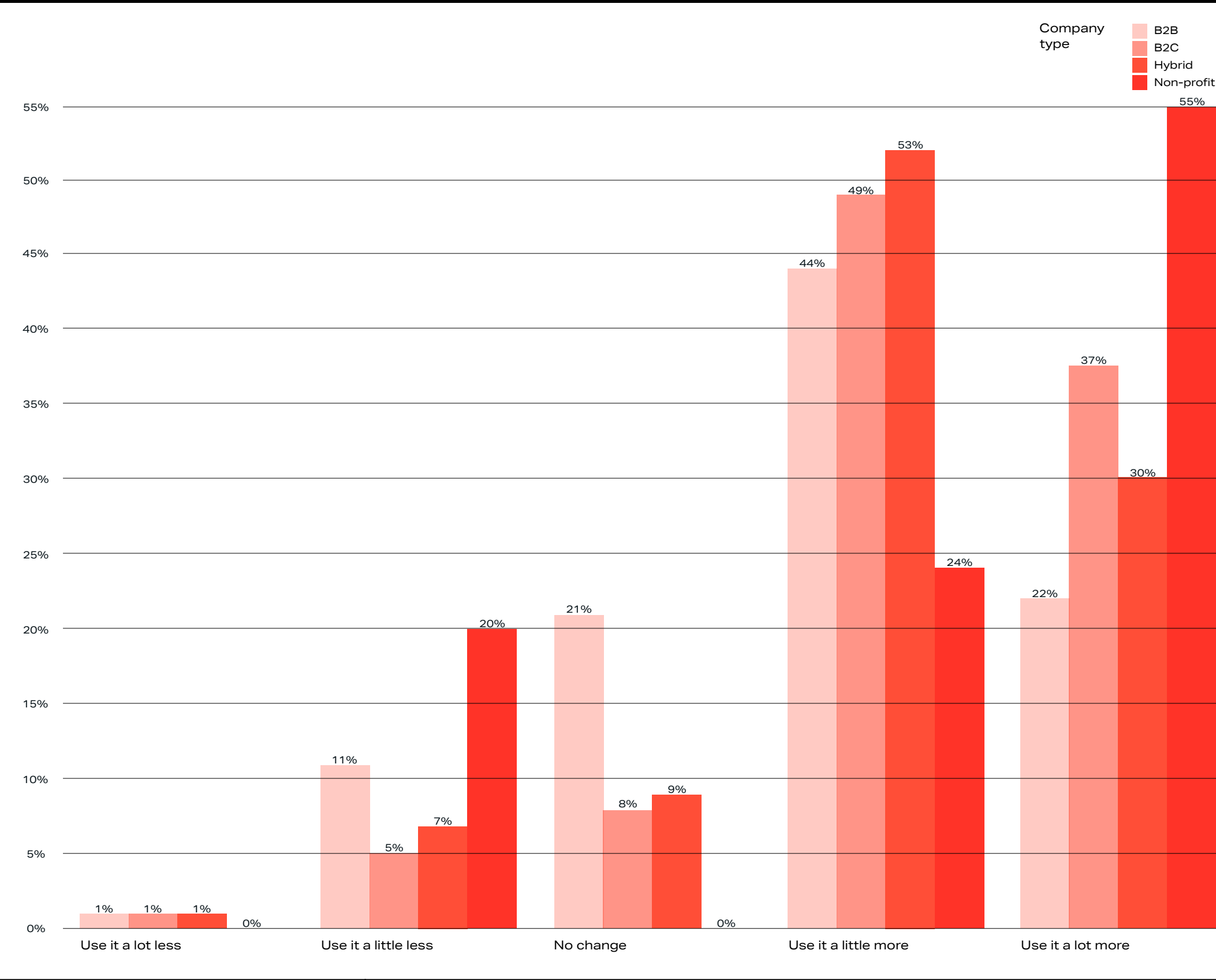
How teams anticipate use of AI technology changing

By company type

Large majorities at both B2B and B2C companies anticipate using AI tools more in the next 12 months.

B2C companies, though, appear more aggressive in their outlook: 49% said AI tools use would increase a little more, with 37% saying a lot more.

Contrast that with the 44% of B2B companies who see the use of AI tools growing a little more, and only 22% saying it would grow a lot more.



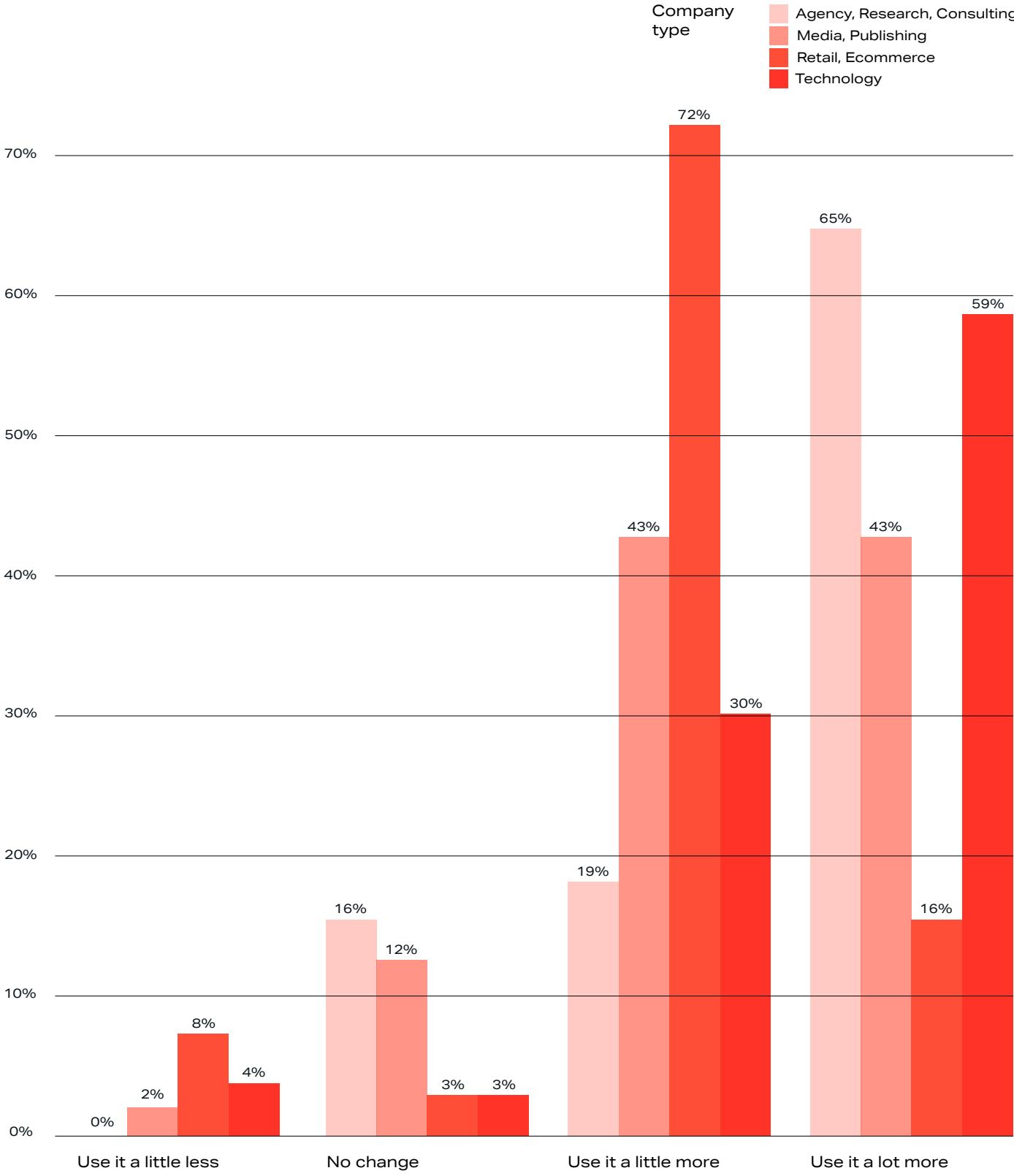
How teams anticipate use of AI technology changing

By industry

Again, the Research and Consulting industry is leaning heavily into the overall trends in AI. Research and consulting companies (65%), along with tech companies (59%) and media and publishing companies (43%) expect to use AI tools a lot more next year.

Among industries that see modest growth of AI tool usage, Retail and Ecommerce lead the way with 72% of respondents saying they expect to use AI tools at least a little more.

Two industries typically not included in conversations about AI tools seem eager to use them more—Agriculture, Forestry, and Mining (68%), Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications (54%).



Key takeaways

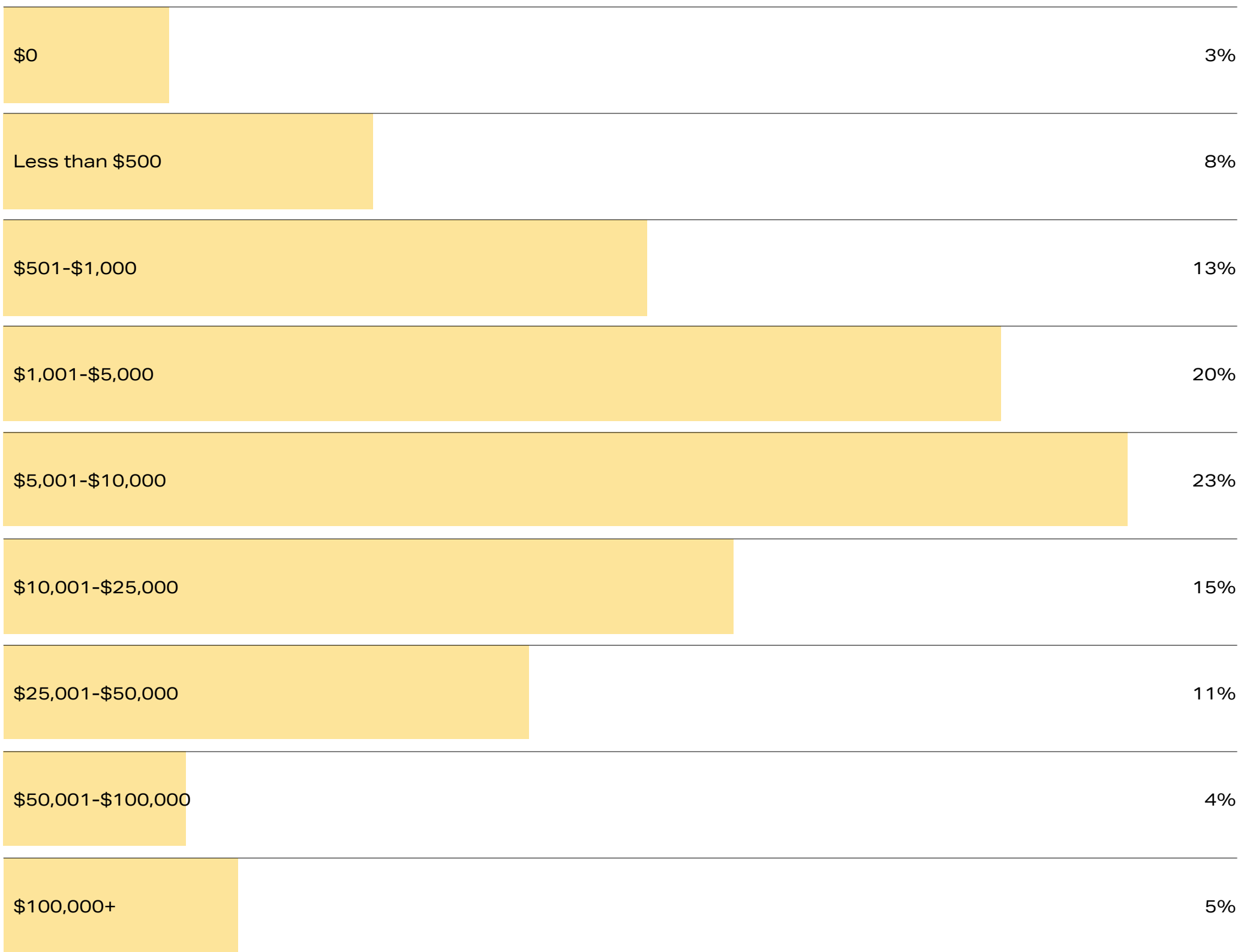
There's no denying the momentum of AI. Across B2B and B2C, across small, midsize, and large companies, almost every organization appears to be embracing and planning to increase usage of AI in the coming year.

That said, our data reveals interesting counterpoints. For example, 30% of respondents at consumer electronics companies anticipate no change in their use of AI tools. Consistent with their hesitancy in other areas of AI usage, 24% of respondents at financial services companies said they expect to use AI a little less, standing in sharp contrast to other industries. How are current AI tools not serving them? What's behind the lackluster adoption? What are the blockers?

Finding the answers could be lucrative for AI tools makers, as well as business leaders hoping to increase productivity from their creative teams.

How much teams are spending on AI

Caution is the watchword here. Company spending on AI tools is taking a wait-and-see approach, with nearly 50% budgeting between \$1,000 and \$10,000 (USD) this year.

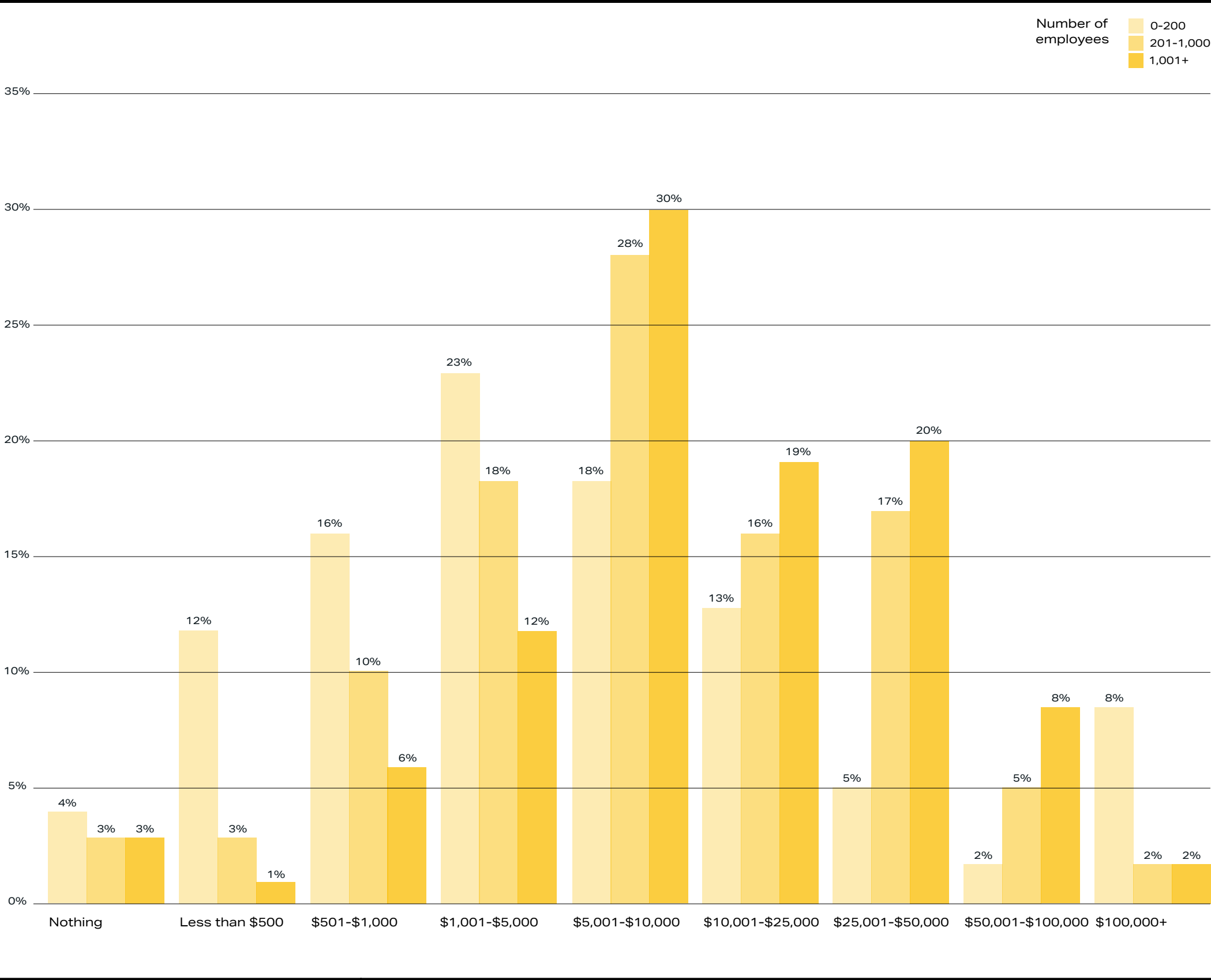


How much teams are spending on AI: By company size

Though most commonly investing \$1,000-\$10,000 (USD) annually on AI tools (consistent with large and mid-size companies), small companies are the wildcard.

They're the most likely of the three groups to spend little to nothing on AI tools (32% spend \$1,000 or less and 4% spend nothing at all). But they're also the most willing to spend big on AI tools (8% spent \$100,000 or more this year, compared to 2% for both mid-size and large companies).

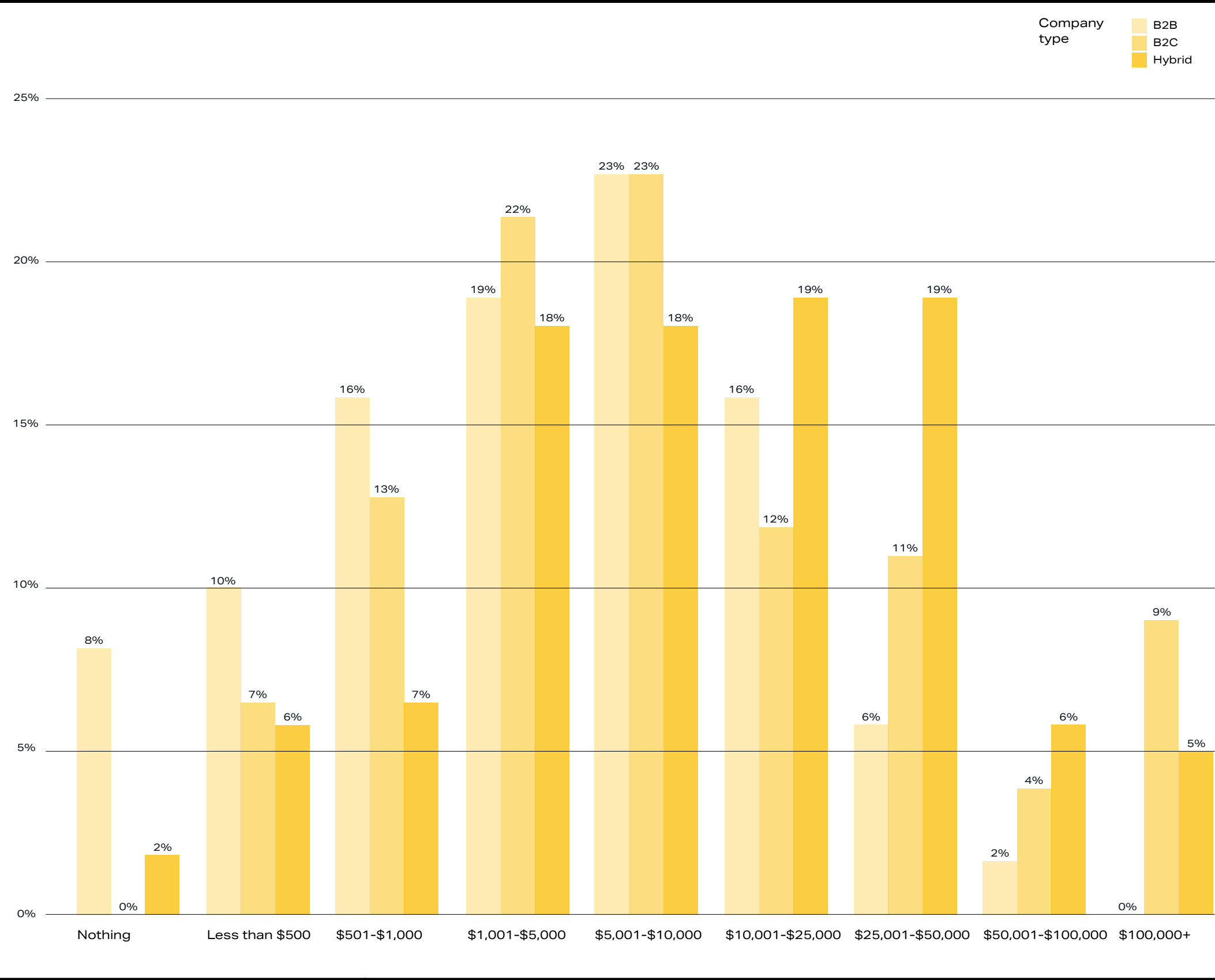
Midsize and large companies are more conservative with their AI budget, most commonly spending between \$5,001 and \$10,000.



How much teams are spending on AI: By company type

Most B2B (42%) and B2C companies (45%) using AI tools are spending between \$1,001 and \$10,000 (USD).

Companies of all types are being cautious about investing in AI while they experiment with the technology.



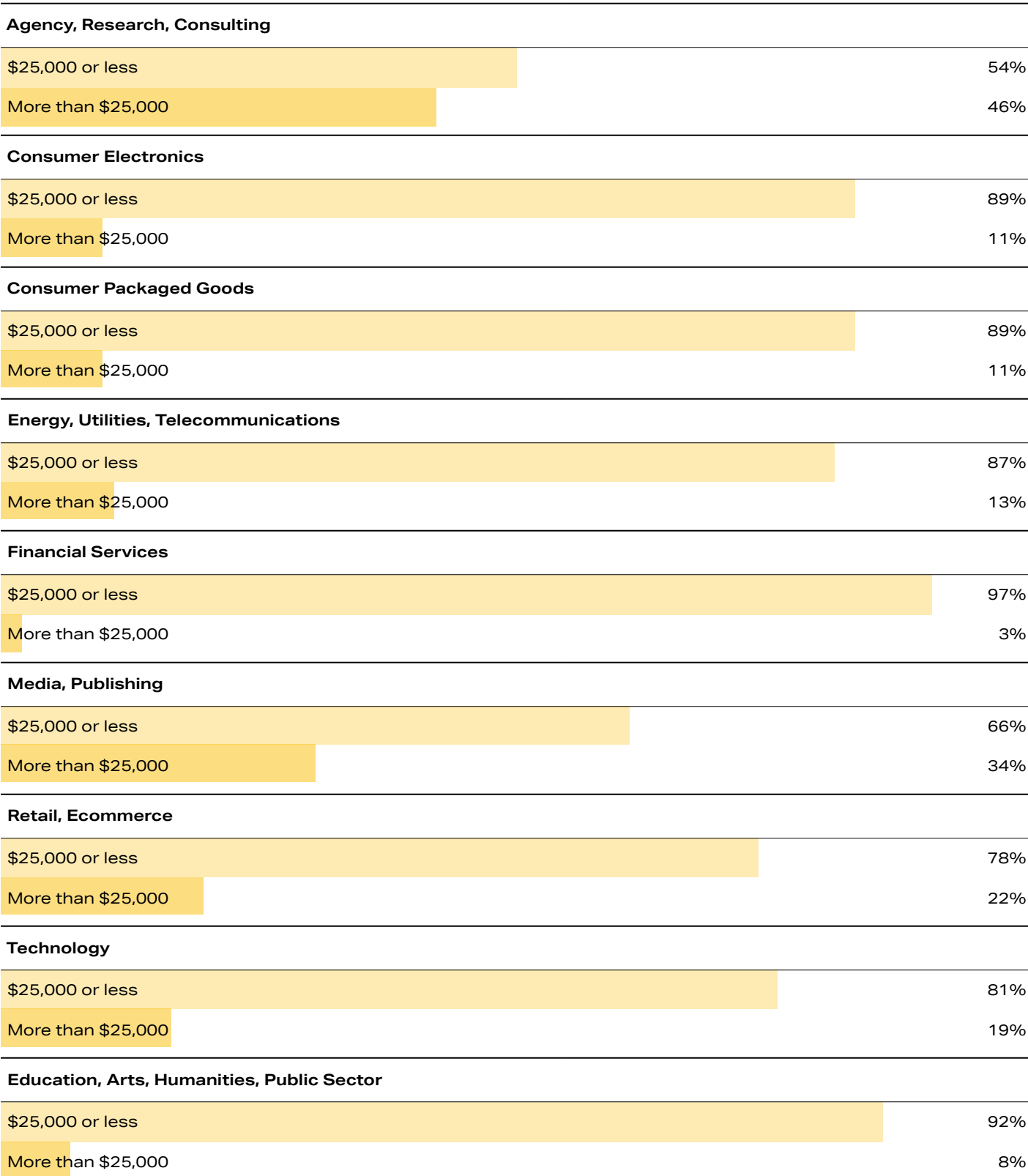
How much teams are spending on AI: By industry

Most companies are taking a cautious approach to spending on AI tools, but a few industries are looking to go big in the next 12 months.

The Research and Consulting industry spends more, by far, on AI tools than other industries, with nearly half of those surveyed saying they'll invest between \$50,000 to \$100,000+ (USD) in the coming year. It also has the highest AI usage for writing and illustrating—two of the three most common AI use cases across industries.

The Agency, Research, and Consulting industry is employing AI for common use cases more than any other industry, and they're investing accordingly.

Something else to watch: financial services companies are most likely to spend nothing on AI tools—again, likely because of the sensitivity of financial data and concerns sharing it with third-party AI platforms.



Key takeaways

Small companies and B2C companies have shown the most willingness to spend \$100,000 or more on AI tools. While the percentages for this kind of aggressive spending is still in the single digits, they do offer a roadmap for other company types and industries to open their budgets.

On the flipside, there are still many companies spending zero on AI tools, and they're the companies who use AI the least. The Financial Services industry, along with B2B and large companies, are again the most hesitant to use and spend on AI tools. One possible explanation: Finserv customers might reject advice or consultation that lacked a human touch. And large companies may be trying to develop their own in-house tools.

The state of AI and what's coming

Our examination of AI usage revealed the extent to which this embryonic technology has already found its way into companies' tech stacks. Yet despite the surge in adoption, companies' investment in AI tools is still moderate, hovering in the low five-figures.

Though design is the No. 1 use case for AI tools, it appears ChatGPT will remain the most popular AI tool.

However, companies seem open to deploying and exploring additional AI tools for other tasks (and be willing to pay for it). This could have the effect of initiating an AI arms race in years ahead.

Based on the data we collected, we expect companies of all sizes and types to keep exploring ways to utilize artificial intelligence to complete creative tasks—copy creation, design, and social media content creation. But there are many

greenfield opportunities to leverage AI tools to maximize an organization's resources.

We believe an industry to pay close attention to for growth in AI tools is Research and Consulting. They're the most aggressive adopters and spenders, and they're using AI for the most common overall use cases. We also see huge potential for AI tools for CX and sales operations at financial services companies.

The counterpoints we revealed, however, are worth noting. This isn't to suggest AI tools are a fad, far from it. Rather, the resistance to fully embrace them could be driven by specific needs that current tools don't meet or privacy concerns. For example, what is it about today's AI tools that make the Financial Services industry hesitant to use them in 2024? Is it regulatory and compliance concerns? Or use cases that haven't been addressed?

Our findings on budgets and AI investment also raised a fascinating possibility. Small companies, far and away, showed the most willingness to invest six-figures or more in AI tools. By investing more, it's possible they will be able to place themselves on more equal footing with larger rivals. This punching up will undoubtedly benefit consumers as competitors race to offer new and better products and services.

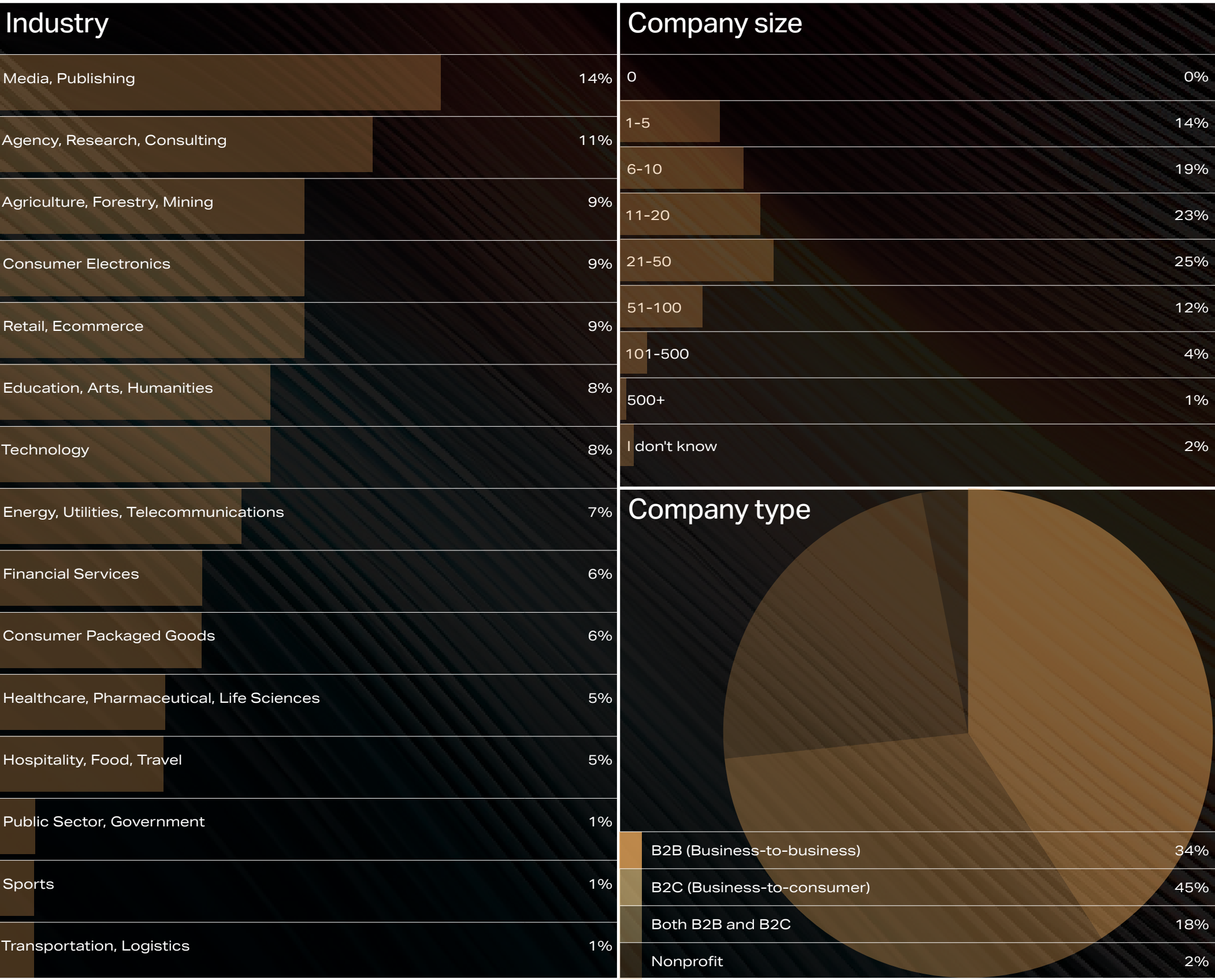
Finally, when we look back on 2023, we'll recognize it as a pivotal year for what was once considered a frontier technology, one that is now rapidly being integrated into how companies do business.

We may not be quite at the tipping point where AI tools are basic commodities, but that moment is drawing near. When it arrives, asking if your company uses AI tools will be like asking if your website is powered by the internet.

Proving the impact of AI on content

We wanted to understand the role AI is playing in content marketing for organizations today, and how these organizations anticipate the role of AI changing and growing in the future

We sent out a follow-up digital survey after our initial Content Matters 2023 survey. It was designed and built on the Crowdsignal platform and distributed in April 2023. We asked a series of content marketing-focused questions related to AI tools, usage, budgets, and predictions. There were 634 unique respondents across various roles, industries, company types, and geographic location.



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